Respite, Relationships and Resilience:

An evaluation of a Therapeutic Inclusion program with specific reference to pupils' perceptions of the impact of Therapeutic Inclusion.

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List of Abbreviations

ADHD- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

AO- Attendance Officers

ASD- Asperger's Syndrome Disorder.

ASD- Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

BESD- Behavioural, Emotional, Social Difficulties.

BSP- Behaviour Specific Praise.

CAMHS- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

CASEL- Collaborative to Advance Social and Emotional Learning.

CBI- Cognitive Behavioural Intervention

CBM- Cognitive Behaviour Modification.

CP- Child Protection.

CRC- Convention on the Rights of the Child

DfCSF- Department for Children, Schools and Families.

DfE- Department for Education.

DfEE- Department for Education and Employment.

DfES- Department for Education and Skills.

DoH- Department of Health.

EBD- Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties

ECHP- Education Health and Care Plans.

GCSE- General Certificate of Secondary Education

HMSO- Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

HoY- Head of Year

HoYs- Head of Years.

IEP- Individualised Education Program.

ILEA- Inner London Education Authority

ITT- Initial Teacher Training.

LEA- Local Education Authority

LM- Learning Mentors.

LS- Learning Support.

LSD- Learning Support Department.

MLD- Moderate Learning Difficulty.

NC- National Curriculum

NEET- Not in Education, Employment or Training.

NG- Nurture Group.

NGs- Nurture Groups.

ODD- Oppositional Defiance Disorder

Ofsted- Office for Standards in Education

PD- Physical Difficulty.

PSHE- Personal, Social and Health Education.

QTS- Qualified Teacher Status

RQT- Recently Qualified Teacher

SCD- Severe Conduct Disorder

SEAL- Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning.

SEBD- Social, Emotional and Behavioural difficulties.

SEMH-Social, Emotional and Mental Health

SEN Code – Special Educational Needs Code.

SEN- Special Educational Needs

SENCO- Special Educational Needs Coordinator.

SEND Code- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code

SEND- Special Educational Needs Department.

SEND- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

SGO- Safe Guarding Offices.

SGT- Safe Guarding Team

SLT- Senior Leadership Team.

SMT- Senior Management Team.

SpLD- Specific Learning Difficulty.

TA- Teaching Assistant.

Th. Inc. - Therapeutic Inclusion.

Th. Inc. Room- Therapeutic Inclusion Room

UN- United Nations.

UNESCO- United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization.

UP- Universal Provision.

USA- United States of America.

Abstract

This research follows the application of a programme, which uses therapeutic inclusion to determine its merit based on its perceived impact on a group of students with apparent social and emotional needs, staff and the whole school. Therapeutic Inclusion is a variant (a different form) of the Classic Boxall Nurture Group, developed by Marjorie Boxall; and is used to help adjust the social, emotional and behavioural skills of students. Past interventions have included strategies based on learning models that rely on behavioural, behaviour-cognitive and eco-systemic approaches. Recently there has been renewed interests in Nurture Groups as well as programmes that model positive behaviours within a supportive and child friendly environment. Structured and un-structured interviews from students and some staff, participant observations and documents are used to gather data. A thematic analysis of data suggests that while considered a 'variant' of the Classic Boxall Nurture Group, Therapeutic Inclusion does impact positively on students in many ways, including the acquisition of social and emotional skills, providing respite, building relationships and developing resilience. Other areas of impact include personal and professional gains to staff as well as positive gains at the whole school level. This research therefore has implications for the use of therapeutic approaches to dealing with students who experience Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, as well as staff who work with them. In particular, findings highlight the significance of supportive relationships as well as a culture of inclusion that supports the adjustment of all students, but in particular, those with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties. However, full benefits of the programme are compromised by gaps in communication systems, issues regarding the monitoring of approaches and its dissemination of practises into mainstream classrooms and a failure to embed the intervention into the 'whole-school' culture. Findings are discussed in relation to the pressing need for approaches to dealing with children who experience Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, as well as the need for these to be integrated into whole school priorities and strategies within a context that supports inclusion.

Declaration

No portion of the work referred to in this thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institution of learning.

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work as it is mine. Thank you for believing in me when I didn’t know my own capabilities. Your love will always be greater than any measurement. You are my magnificent motivator.

Dedication

Dedicated to my Mother, Gloria Walters.

My magnificent motivator. My fortress. Forever my strength.

Chapter One:
Introduction to the study.

Origins of the research.

This research began with a desire to understand more about Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD), as a distinct Special Educational Need (SEN); and to comprehend the ways in which children with SEBD are supported in one mainstream secondary school. Although SEBD is a common descriptor used within the educational literature to refer to students who experience 'social, emotional and behavioural difficulties,' terms such as Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (EBD); and Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) are also used. With the publication of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (DfE, DoH, 2015) (The SEND Code, 2015) (DfE, DoH, 2015), the term Social, Emotional, Behavioural Difficulties was subsequently replaced with Social, Emotional, Mental Health (SEMH). Additionally, a statement, a document that sets out a child's SEN and any additional help he should receive was replaced by the Education Health Care Plan (EHCP). Like statements of SEN, an EHCP outlines the child's SEN, the special educational provision needed to support the child, outcomes covering education, health and social care; as well as the views, interests and aspirations of the child and parents with regards to special provision. While such terms are now commonly used within educational contexts, in the current research, the term SEBD will be the chosen descriptor used to refer to children who experience these difficulties. Other terms such as EBD, BESD and SEMH will be used when citing references within the literature.

My initial perception of children who display 'difficult' or 'challenging' behaviour was grounded in my cultural beliefs that such children lacked discipline, the parent having 'spared the rod to spoil the child.' Originating from a Western Indian background where I taught English in one of the most challenging secondary schools on the island, aggressive forms of behaviour are often perceived as a child displaying 'bravado.' Moreover, ignorance at this time about the fluid nature of SEBD led me to perceive that children displayed introverted behaviours due to 'shyness,' 'naivety' or a child being 'slow or retarded.' Such perceptions were highly prejudiced, based on ignorance and failed to make any connection between the physiological, social or cultural causes of SEBD. In earnest, my perceptions were grounded in the medical model of disability; a view which holds that behaviour originates within the child and failed to consider the impact of external influences on behaviour. It was during the first year of teaching in England, after having a rudimentary understanding inclusion, that these beliefs were challenged during a conversation I held with a student who had a statement for SEBD.

At this time, I was employed as a teacher of English, having recently attained Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) in England, in a mainstream secondary school. Along with this primary role, I was also Form Tutor to a group of sixteen boys, all of whom presented as having SEBD and five of whom had statements of SEN for SEBD. As a recently qualified teacher with limited knowledge or understanding of this SEN, I found it challenging and was often daunted by my daily experiences, as my attempts to manage the varying types of behaviours proved futile. In earnest, some of the strategies were quite punitive, outdated and based on my early perceptions and prejudices regarding challenging behaviour. Faced with the need to develop a more inclusive pedagogy and ensure that all students within my form and classes felt welcomed and appreciated, the interest to learn more about SEBD and consider worthwhile strategies I could use to manage such behaviour was peeked. An initial opportunity presented itself during a conversation I held with a male student.

Nicolai, who was in Year 9 at the time, was considered by teachers, one of the many ‘banes’ within the school. Like many children who experience SEBD, he presented the externalising behaviours associated with this difficulty. His school experiences were often negative, he was a regular internal truant, he challenged authority and disrupted his, as well as the learning of others. He often described school as ‘rubbish,’ blamed many of his teachers for triggering his conflicts and he experienced difficulty in learning. Despite these negative school experiences, Nicholai stated one of the many reasons he enjoyed attending school is because of the time he would spend within the Therapeutic Inclusion Room (Th. Inc. Room); and, in contrast to the school and classroom experiences, he spoke quite positively about his experiences there.

I was later informed that the Th. Inc. Room is the physical space in which a programme of Therapeutic Inclusion (Th. Inc.) is performed with students who experience difficulty in adjusting fully to school. Initial conversations with staff regarding the programme, however, countered Nicholai’s view and included, “as far as I know, it’s for the naughty kids;” and, “they don’t do nothing in there but eat biscuits and play games.” Yet another stated, “it’s a room where the kids go to have fun and play in a sand pit.” These contradictory accounts from staff and one student further peeked my interest to understand more about Th. Inc. as a school based intervention that helps support students like Nicholai.

Rationale for the research

There are a number of reasons for which this research is justified. In England, inclusion remains a national priority and since an initial commitment in 1997, the Inclusion Agenda has been at the fore of educational policy, perceived in part as a vehicle through which social inclusion can be achieved. Statutory consideration exists to safeguard the rights of children with SEN and ensure their full integration within an education system that prior to, provided only functional representation. To ensure this, schools have undergone tremendous changes to improve their curricula, pedagogy and organizational climate to ensure they cater to and support a student population with varied needs.

Concurrent with this is the Standards Agenda: the drive to improve standards in education and make schools more effective. However, the dominant ideology within the school effectiveness movement suggests that schools are effective if they attain high examination results and are near the top of the league tables. Other schools are judged effective in relation to ‘value added’ measures which take into account their location, intake and recent history. Here in lies the contradiction as under such a climate where schools are set in competition with one another, there appears little incentive to promote their commitment to supporting less able learners (Corbett, 1999). Consequently, for those who adjust well to school, academic success may be easily attained. However, unless appropriately supported, others who fail to make the required age appropriate and academic expectations are almost destined to underachieve and remain on the margins of schooling.

This is especially the case with SEN students who continue to achieve less well compared to non- SEN students. In particular, one group of learners remain on the margins of schooling, students who experience SEBD. They are the most at risk of dropping out and being suspended from school, they continue to achieve less well academically and they are the only group for which permanent exclusion is still permissible in England. They are then placed at an even greater disadvantage as their impaired needs, social, emotional and behavioural often affect their ability to learn. As these pose a direct challenge to the ideals of Inclusive Education, as well as continue to be a perennial problem to teachers, schools, administrators and the society, it seems worthwhile to evaluate any intervention that can offer some promise in supporting the needs of some of the most vulnerable students in education today.

A personal rationale also drives this research and that is to gain a better understanding of SEBD as a distinct area of SEN. As previously mentioned, my understanding of SEBD, the causes, nature and scope was extremely limited. Prior to the experience I gained in England, my knowledge of SEN was also limited as my Initial Teacher Training (ITT) focused more on pedagogical practices and less on developing pedagogy that identifies and differentiating for the range of SEN within classrooms. Many students are undiagnosed and teachers are simply not trained to deal with the diversity of needs presented in their classrooms. A research of this scope is therefore opportune as it will provide me with an even greater understanding of SEBD as well as approaches that can be used to manage the range of needs that constitute this difficulty. With these ideas in mind, we begin our research.

Introduction to the research

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989, (UNESCO, 1989) was among the first international treaties to set agreed minimum standards to secure children's rights in education as in other areas of social policy (Osler and Starkey, 1998). In Article 19, attention is drawn towards ensuring the protection of the child, mandating protection, 'from all forms of physical and mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse…. It admonishes the right of the child, to receive appropriate information and education that allows him to express his views and be able to participate in decisions about his own life. In particular, Article 28 recognises that children have an entitlement to primary education as a minimum standard along with opportunities to learn about and be educated in the spirit of human rights. The suggestion is that education is the key to fulfilling a healthy and productive lifestyle. Future international agreements have furthered this agenda to improve the learning outcomes of children, focusing on the need for them to become 'active agents' in their learning to ensure they establish their distinctive voices and increase their independence (see for example, Education for All (UNESCO, 1990) and The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Educational Needs (UNESCO, 1994) (The Salamanca Statement, UNESCO, 1994).

In support of these international initiatives, England remains fully committed towards raising the standards children achieve in schools, through its national Inclusion Agenda, which encompasses all children with SEN, to ensure they achieve excellence. It states, the majority of children with SEN will, as adults, contribute economically as members of society (The Green Paper: Excellence for all children: meeting Special Educational Needs, (DfEE, 1997) (The Green Paper, DfEE, 1997).

Thus, while international and national agendas are geared towards fostering young, resilient individuals, these efforts have been marked by a deterioration in the moral fabric of society and with it, the social and emotional well-being of many children. Trends common today include widespread fear of violence, rampant competition, excessive consumerism, increasing social inequality (Layard and Dunn, 2009) and a decline in social mobility (Sutton Trust, 2008). Along with technological advancements has been the role of the mass media, which now acts as a major socialising agent by replacing personal interaction by spectator mass media relationship (Sebald, 1984). There is also widespread migration and the merging of varying cultures, increased drugs and sex; as well as alcohol abuse. The changing structure of the modern family has also brought an erosion of the traditional nuclear base type to more single parent families, same sex parents; higher divorce rates and increased numbers of children in care. The most adverse effects of this shift is manifested in the declining role of the family and a deterioration in the levels of traditional support systems that nurture values, develop socialisation and nurture social and emotional competence.

The accompanying growth in the dominance of individualism and the associated abdication of social responsibility in Western culture have thus become a major threat to the social and emotional well-being of children and young people. The result is the inability of some children to deal with the pressures of a modern day existence due to phobias and disorders, which impede their social and emotional competence.

As general success and well-being in adulthood is contingent upon learning how to employ social and emotional skills to negotiate life's challenges productively (Cherniss and Adler, 2000); the inability of some children to have a normal adjustment to education and life not only challenges the more traditional view of education as designed to teach core curriculum subjects but remains one of the biggest challenges to the success and effectiveness of Inclusive Education (Cefai and Cooper, 2011). Within a national context, it also undermines the ambitions set out in The Green Paper (DfEE, 1997) for improving the achievement of all children as well as England's Children's Plan to make England the best place in the world to grow up, (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Review, 2008) (CAMHs). Educational stakeholders have now turned attention from the home, which was previously the major agent of socialisation and nurturing, to schools to provide this need and support for its students.

Programmes trialled that aid students in making the age required adjustments to school by improving their social, emotional and behavioural skills are based on learning theories. These range from behavioural, cognitive behavioural and systemic approaches. Recently, there has been a resurgent interest in psychodynamic approaches with an emphasis on Nurture Group (NG) principles, an intervention designed to meet early unmet social and emotional needs of young children. Since its conception, there have been ‘variant’ forms of the NG predominantly in secondary schools to aid in supporting students with a range of unmet needs. The term ‘variant’ will be used to refer to a different form of the Classic Boxall NG originally designed by Majorie Boxall. However, these have been met with much controversy regarding their suitability in meeting the needs of older children as it remains questionable, the extent to which an intervention designed for children of primary ages can actually be applied to older children and have any impact.

This then is the main aim of this research. It seeks to determine the merit of a programme used in one mainstream secondary school, by evaluating its perceived impact on a group of students with impaired social and emotional skills. A secondary aim is to determine its perceived impact on staff and the whole school. The programme evaluated is referred to as Th. Inc., the theoretical orientation of which is the Classic Boxall NG. As a variant or different form of this intervention, Th. Inc. adheres closely to the principles of this NG model. Prior to evaluating this feature, however, we will consider SEBD as a distinct SEN in greater detail.

> "There can I think be no doubt at all that in the future the maladjusted child will more and more call for consideration by Local Education Authorities and the Board. The right line seems to me to be to respond to such a call with sympathy, knowledge and circumspection."
>
> (Sir George Newman, Chief Medical Officer, Board of Education, cited in The Warnock Report, DfES, 1978).

Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties: An overview.

As children grow, they learn the types of behaviours that are appropriate and inappropriate to their respective societies and cultures. Such an understanding forces them to behave in a manner that is socially and culturally acceptable and allows them to manage their own actions and emotions, making adjustment to school seamless. For some children however, this is challenging and they may interface with others around them in negative ways and exhibit behavioural problems, which can be classified into two main syndromes (Achenbach and Edelbrock, 1986). The first can be grouped as externalising as they are strongly oriented toward the outside world and may include aggression, hyperactivity, bullying, lying and stealing. The second may include behaviours such as loneliness, social withdrawal, anxiety and depression and are classed as internalising (Scholte, 1992). While it may be common for such behaviours to be present in normal children, when they are persistent or considered serious enough to cause harm or injury to the child or others with whom he interacts, such children may be referred to as having SEBD (Shim, 1995).

As a field, SEBD has always provoked professional tensions and sparked controversies. One of the reasons may be the varied terminologies that have been used to describe the behavior of children termed unacceptable and detrimental to their intrapersonal and social-interpersonal development; and behaviors symptomatic of these (Shim, 1995). Such terms include maladjusted, deviant, defiant and disturbed. In the United States of America (USA) for example, Public Law 94-142 defines children who need 'special attention' due to their 'social and/or emotional behaviour' as being 'emotionally disturbed' (Shim, 1995). Within the USA, the latter term has also been used to include a range of pathologies that include autism, schizophrenia, psychosomatic disorders, phobias, withdrawal, depression, anxiety, elective mutism and aggression (Coleman, 1986).

In England, the term ‘challenging behaviour’ is used to include examples of ‘disruptive behaviour,’ commonly applied to children who might be seen as ‘disaffected’ and/or ‘disturbing’ and/or ‘disruptive’- ‘troubled’ and/or ‘troublesome.’ Under official government documents, some in England would now be termed as having BESD, which has been used to refer to problematic behaviour (Cole, 2007).

Confusion further abounds as terminologies tend to differ depending on the professionals and agents who identify and treat these children. Hobbs (1975) notes for instance that a child may be labelled, ‘emotionally disturbed’ by a psychologist, possess a ‘behaviour disorder’ by a special educator or be termed ‘mentally ill’ by a psychiatrist. Mental ill-health in children can often result in behavioural and conduct problems such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Oppositional Defiance Disorder (ODD), Severe Conduct Disorder, (SCD) (Cole, 2007). Each term therefore associates its own specific ideas of behavior depending on the discipline.

The connotations associated with the terms and aetiology of the words further lends to misconceptions. We commence with a common perception of EBD as a form of challenging behaviour. Such behaviour is defined as ‘culturally abnormal behaviour(s) of such intensity, frequency or duration that the physical safety of the person or others is placed in serious jeopardy, or behaviour which is likely to seriously limit or deny access to the use of ordinary facilities’ (Challenging Behaviour).

The first term, ‘emotion’ can further be used to explicate this idea. An understanding of this is drawn from Salovey and Mayer (2004) who suggest emotions are viewed as organised responses, crossing the boundaries of many psychological subsystems, including the physiological, cognitive, motivational and experiential systems. Emotions typically arise in response to an event, either internal or external that has a positively or negatively valence meaning for the individual. They can be distinguished from the closely related concept of mood in that emotions are shorter and generally more intense. This definition construes the idea that emotions can be strong, externalising and negative. This contrasts with that of ‘rationality,’ ‘something that is characterised by conformity with reason, adhering to qualities of thought such as intelligibility, coherence, consistency, order, logical structure, completeness, testability and simplicity (Australian Theological Forum, 2006). Consequently, the term emotion is associated the idea that it contributes strongly towards irrational behaviour (McPhail, 2004). This then construes the expression of emotion as potentially distorting and dangerous.

Despite behaviour being relative to social contexts, early perceptions of SEBD suggested the conflict or root of behaviour existed within the individual; that it resulted from a problem that is inherently human and behaviour is then an overt reaction. Such a belief failed to acknowledge the role of factors external to the individual and led to the widely accepted medical view of disability.

At the start of this century, the ill- defined word ‘maladjusted’ was in official use in England and referred to anyone who failed to achieve any real adjustment to the environment. As early as 1909, such persons were reported as having, “a spurious form of mental deficiency not infrequently associated with bad home conditions.” Identifiable characteristics included being insecure and unhappy with such persons tending to get on badly in their personal relationships, (Report of the Committee on Maladjusted Children, 1955) (The Underwood Report, 1955).

Treatment of such individuals further supported a medical, psychological and psychiatric model with expertise being perceived as a medical responsibility (Cooper, 1996) and involving therapeutic methods in a small number of residential schools (Bridgeland, 1971). Even when wider provision was made in day and residential schools, this was usually administered by child guidance clinics, which worked as if they were the psychiatric department of a hospital with special schools acting as something like its observation ward. The role of educational psychologists in testing; the role of psychiatric social workers in counselling families and the role of teachers in providing reports on behaviours, which all fitted neatly with the concept of a medical team (Cooper, 1996).

Statutes further supported the medical view as provision for treating maladjusted children was only enshrined in The Education Act 1944, which only accorded full and official recognition of a sixth category of SEN, that of maladjusted, as a distinct and separate area of need. Previously, only five categories of handicapped were recognized. Specific duties were then placed on Local Education Authorities (LEAs) to determine those children within the authorities who have SEN, to submit such children over the age of two for a medical examination; and to provide special educational treatment as appropriate. Consideration was also granted to those suffering from any disability of mind or body by providing either in special schools or otherwise, special educational treatment defined as education by special methods appropriate to the particular disability from which the child is suffering. This then acknowledged those who suffered from disabilities of body or mind including emotional or psychological troubles.

Formal recognition of maladjusted as a SEN, as well as the predominance of a psychodynamic approach to treatment based on the work of Sigmund Freud (Cooper, 1989) subsequently led to changes in how maladjusted was perceived over time. Freud’s theories explain an individual’s emotional disturbance and/or failure to conform to socially desirable norms in terms of failures in the individual’s early environment. Such theories focus on the mother-child relationship in early infancy and the failure of this relationship to provide the child with an adequate measure of love and support in the early stages of his life (Cooper, 1989). The most central of these is Attachment Theory, proposed by John Bowlby, which will be discussed in a subsequent chapter.

In 1955, the Underwood Committee provided further insight into the concept of maladjusted offering as a definition, those who show evidence of emotional instability or psychological disturbance and require special educational treatment in order to effect their personal, social or educational re-adjustment. It identifies both the internalising and externalising forms of behaviours symptomatic, recognising that ‘maladjustment is an individual matter, which is hard to generalise. Among the symptoms identified include nervous disorders (a disorder which is primarily emotional), habit disorders, behaviour disorders, organic disorders, psychotic behaviour; and educational and vocational difficulties. The Committee also identifies contributing factors to include, the family environment, community influences, physical factors, educational factors and personal relationships.

These findings added another dimension to the term ‘maladjustment’ recognising that it can manifest itself in internal, (feelings) as well as external, (behavioural) ways. They also highlight the specificity of maladjustment or the need for individualised approaches to treatment (The Underwood Report, 1955). Finally, they give prominence to a sociological view of behaviour, recognising an individual’s relationship at a particular time to the people and circumstances that make up his environment. Formal recognition was subsequently granted to the term SEBD by the Report of the Committee of enquiry into the education of Handicapped Children and

Young People, (The Warnock Report, 1978) and recognition of the significance of context in defining behaviour considered 'maladjusted.'

Since this time, definitions of SEBD from official sources have enhanced our understanding SEBD. Circular 9/94, the Department for Education (DfE) provided a detailed definition of EBD (DfE, 1994b) reflecting an increasing recognition of the bio-psycho-social and eco-systemic nature of EBD (see Cooper, Smith and Upton, 1994; Cooper 1996a). The executive summary states:

> 'Children with EBD are on a continuum. Their problems are clear greater than sporadic naughtiness or moodiness and yet not so great as to be classed as mental illness.' (DfE, 1994b)

The first SEN Code of Practice (DfE, 1994c) offered a shorter definition stressing that:

> 'Emotional and behavioural difficulties may result from abuse or neglect, physical or mental illness; sensory or physical impairment or psychological trauma. In some cases, emotional and behavioural difficulties may arise from or be exacerbated by circumstances within the school environment. They may also be associated with learning difficulties.'

The Revised SEN Code of Practice (DfEE, 2001a) also states:

> 'Emotional or behavioural difficulties as indicated by clear recorded examples of withdrawn or disruptive behaviour; a marked and persistent inability to concentrate; signs that the child experiences considerate frustration or distress in relation to their learning difficulties; difficulties in establishing and maintaining balanced relationships with their fellow pupils or with adults; and any other evidence of a significant delay in the development of life and social skills.' (DfEE, 2001).

Later definitions also include an overlap with mental health problems. Examples of overlapping in key areas include terms such as disruptive, anti-social and aggressive, problems, or difficulties; over-activity, attention and concentration problems, somatic, emotional and related symptoms; peer and family relationships and poor school attendance (Visser, 2003).

Successive reports and government circulars have also greatly influenced the change brought about in the way SEBD is perceived and treated. Discipline in Schools: The Elton Report, 1989 (The Elton Report, 1989) emphasises the problem of discipline is commonly the product of environmental influences within schools and calls for solutions to consider the development of whole school behaviour policies, school ethos, positive behaviour management; and improved teacher effectiveness in relation to classroom management and communication skills. The Elton Report (1989) also had direct bearing on Pupils with Problems (DfE, 1994) and The Education of children with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties Circular 9/94 (DfE, 1994b). The latter defines SEBD as lying on ‘a continuum between those that are challenging but within expected bounds and those that are indicative of serious mental illnesses. It suggests it ranges from social maladaptation to abnormal emotional stresses, which are persistent (if not necessarily permanent) and constitute learning difficulties. It also recognises they are multiple and may manifest themselves in many different forms and severities; becoming apparent through withdrawn, depressive aggressive or self-injurious tendencies.’

Developments over the past seven decades have added even further clarification to understandings of SEBD. What was initially perceived as ‘a spurious form of mental deficiency,’ is now understood and accepted as a difficulty that can result from an interplay of factors including physiological, social, cultural and family. How these factors interplay to contribute to the broad range of behaviours will be discussed in the following section.

A socio-ecological view of SEBD.

The importance of environmental factors as determinants of human behaviour was given prominence during the 1960s, arising in part from an understanding that SEBD can be accounted for by situational and environmental variables. This view not only emphasised the specific context in which behaviour is manifested but also the highly subjective nature of SEBD. Also referred to as the interactional view, it argues that SEBD results from transactional processes between at-risk traits in the personality of the child and at-risk rearing and socialization conditions in the child's social environment (Rutter, 1985, 1987; Sameroff and Chandler, 1975). Three main areas of socialization include the family, the school and peer groups and the interplay of these agents on behaviour reflect the basic premise of a socio-ecological approach to studying behaviour. This view is partly explained in the work of Ludwig von Bertalanffy on general systems theory.

Von Bertalanffy (1968) defines systems as consisting of independent, yet interacting parts, which interact to create a balance for both the individual and the entire system. He perceived the world as empirically knowable, observable and anchored in behaviour. He disregarded that a system's individual components could be evaluated as independent entities but was characterised by the interactions of its parts and the nonlinearity of their interactions.

Bronfenbrenner also progresses our understanding of human development with his work on 'Ecological Systems Theory.' This views a child's development within the context of the 'system' of relationships that form the child's environment. A system, Bronfenbrenner explains, is a comparatively bounded structure consisting of interrelated or interdependent elements that form a whole. Within this ecological framework, there exists the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem and the macro-system.

The microsystem is the small, immediate environment of the child and will include any immediate relationship or organisation they interact with, such as their immediate family or caregivers, as well as school. How these groups interact with the child will affect his level of development as the more nurturing these relationships, the better the child will be able to flourish.

The second level is the mesosystem. It describes how the different parts of a child's microsystem work together in the interest of the child. It is suggested, the more active parents are in a child’s school, for example, attending Parent’s Evening, the better the child’s overall growth. In contrast, if there is disagreement as to how best to raise the child, the child’s development will be hindered in many ways.

The third level, the exosystem, includes other people and places the child may not interact with but may still have an effect on the child’s life. This can include the community in which he grows and extended family members.

Bronfenbrenner’s final level is the macro system and includes the largest and most remote set of people and things to a child but can still impact on the child’s overall development. Things at this level include cultural values, the economy and wars.

Bronfenbrenner explains that each complex layer of the environment can produce an effect on the child’s development. The interaction between factors in the child’s biological maturing, his immediate family, the community and his societal landscape are then all responsible for fuelling his development.

Bronfenbrenner’s theory then emphasises that a child’s development must be viewed not only from his immediate environment, the family, but from the interaction of the larger environment as any changes or conflict within one layer can affect the other. Additionally, while interactions at the outer levels are significant, bi-directional influences at the microsystem level have the greatest impact on the child; as these include relationships and interactions a child has with his immediate surroundings such as family, school and the community. It is this system that stands as the child’s venue for learning about the world and provides the nurturing centrepiece for him being the first and primary agent of socialization. It stands as the real source of power as what develops is trust and mutuality with significant others. The family then represents the child’s early microsystem for learning how to live, as the caring relations between child and parents are what influence a healthy personality. Notes explaining Bronfenbrenner’s System’s Theory can be viewed in Appendix A.

The socio-ecological view then perceives human beings as social animals whose behaviour is developed from and aims at interaction within the environment. Interpersonal relationships are then viewed essential to the mental well-being of individuals. Applied to the study of SEBD, this theory explains that SEBD must be seen in its interactional context (Shim, 1995) as behaviour is perceived to result from complex and differential interactions within and among biological, psychological and social phenomena and their reciprocal interactions.

Having discussed the major tenets of the socio-ecological perspective and considered their significance to human development, we are made to consider the following, if the family and school are two key socialising agents, in what ways do they impact on a child's development? How important are family structures on the psychosocial development of a child?

The school is also a key agent that drives the formation of a healthy personality and must be viewed as an integral part of the system. Here children acquire the knowledge and skills needed for adjusting in society. Behaviour, values and norm patterns that regulate social life are also transferred to children in school (Shim, 1995). Children may also feel secure in their peer groups to explore social roles, behaviours, norms and values without responsibility that would be held in the adult world (Scholte, 1992). How then can interpersonal relationships between teachers, students, peer groups and hierarchies impact on students' development? As school and the family are the main socialising agents, their significance will be discussed in the following section, as we review some of the research literature on the role of these agents in shaping behaviour.

The antecedents of SEBD.

Introduction

In an earlier section of this chapter, I explained the socio-ecological view to human development will be taken as a starting point to understanding SEBD. To reiterate, this view recognizes that SEBD can result from the dynamic interrelations among various personal and environmental factors. It views human beings as social animals and understands that behaviour stems from and aims at interaction with the environment. From this standpoint, the role of core socialising agents such as the family and school must be given consideration.

Numerous studies have shown that children with various kinds of behavioural problems tend to come from homes or schools that are disadvantaged (Hinde, 1980; Rutter, 1981a, 1982, 1984a; Rutter & Madge, 1976; Rutter and Giller, 1983). It therefore became widely accepted that family difficulties caused by factors such as broken homes, child neglect or marital discord can cause children to have psychiatric disorders (Rutter, 1985). In summarising some of his findings on the factors related to conduct disorder, Rutter (1985) also includes emotionally discordant patterns of social interaction, weak family relationships, inefficient supervision and discipline; and deviant models of behaviour. He argues that these mechanisms can be applied as much to school influences (Rutter, 1983b) as to family effects. The following section will explore some of the literature on these in greater detail.

SEBD and home related factors.

Home is first school and the role of the family in developing children's emotional competencies is crucial. It is through this key socializing agent that children learn values, develop interpersonal relationships and gain a sense of identity and self. Home is therefore formative in molding children into who they are to become in life.

Rutter (1990) identifies six psychological mechanisms within the family that are essential for children with SEBD. A crucial role is the provision of emotional bonds and relationships as the way in which parents interact with their children and the extent to which they are responsive to their needs can contribute to the development of children's emotional bonds and interaction with others.

The family also acts as a secure base that allows children to successfully develop emotional bonds with their parents and experience less anxiety in a new or stressful situation. Within the home, models of behavior and attitudes are also learnt as children often imitate their parents' behaviors and attitudes. In this vein, children are more likely to follow the models when they have a warm and loving relationship with their parents.

Another mechanism is the provision of life experiences, which may not always be related to intellectual development and education but to social and emotional development. In this Rutter (1990) again argues the child who has been 'tied to his mother's apron strings' is likely to be much less able to cope with going to school compared to the child who is used to playing with friends and staying with relatives in happy circumstances. Providing life experiences therefore makes it easier for children to have greater adjustment in school, from school to school or in different social contexts.

Social skills are also learnt, just as other skills, as a child's experiences in being with and playing with other children will help determine how easy it is for him to make friends. Those who are used to being in a wide range of situations and have learnt to cope with and enjoy many social experiences may adapt more easily and be more likely to enjoy changes of environment.

There is also the shaping of behavior by means of their selective encouragement and discouragement of particular behaviors, by their discipline and by the amount of freedom they allow. In the early years, children essentially learn from their parents what behaviors are permissible and those that are forbidden. In this, there are two chief elements: one is the parental choice regarding the behaviors they want to encourage and discourage and the efficiency of their discipline in bringing about the desired aim.

Finally, the family is considered a communication network through which children can set standards, establish norms, develop expectations and let ideas grow. Conversations with family members are very important not only for trying out children's ideas but for working out the relationships with others. Through conversations, feelings and attitudes are transmitted by gesture, facial expression and posture. Children's development would then be influenced by the extent to which there are good opportunities for free communications, by the content of communications and by the clarity of communication within the home (Shim, 1995).

In discussing the impact of the family on children's emotion, regulation and adjustment, Morris, Silk, Steinberg, et al (2007) also propose an interesting tripartite model. They posit that children learn through observation, modelling and social referencing and that specific parenting behaviors and practices related to the socialization of emotion affect emotion regulation. The emotional climate of the family (the degree of attachment, parenting styles, marital relation and expressivity) are all linked to emotional regulation and adjustment. These processes are influenced by parent characteristics (parents' own attachment styles, levels of stress and social support, mental health, family history) and child characteristics (temperament, reactivity, development).

Given the changing structure of the 'modern family' and the stresses of a modern existence, many of the traditional support systems are noticeably absent today. This leads one to consider the emotional states of many young people and the role of the family as a contributor to deviant behavior.

Clear links have also been found between sibling conflict and deviant behavior. Garcia, Shaw, Winslow, et al (2000) for example, report on a sample of 180 five-year-old boys and their close age siblings and found a high correlation between maternal and teacher report of conduct problems caused by sibling conflict in a low-income sample. They also report on a rise in aggression scores for children who had high levels of both sibling conflict and rejecting parenting.

Some studies also report on the effects of early parenting in explaining the emergence of externalizing problems in childhood (Campbell, 1995) with parent–child conflict identified as a consistently robust childhood predictor of these problems and playing a prominent role in models of early aggression and delinquency (Patterson, Reid and Dishion, 1992; Scaramella and Leve, 2004).

The high correlation between family background variables and juvenile delinquency (Weinberg, 1964) is also shown with social-class indicators bearing the strongest relationship to delinquent behavior (Gleuck, 1950). There is also evidence that children in single-mother families, compared to children in "intact" mother-father families, are at greater risk for antisocial behavior (Achenbach, Howell, Quay, et al, 1991; Haurin, 1992; Cox and Cox, 1982); and children in single-mother families are more at risk for behavior problems because their mothers face greater financial stresses (Acock and Kiecolt, 1989; Blechman, 1982). Economic hardships are also thought to result in maternal psychological distress (Mc Lloyd, 1990).

Rutter (1971) also investigated children who were separated from their parents due to family problems among a group, which experienced severe early family stress and found a marked reduction in the risk of conduct disturbance when there was a cessation of open discord.

Christie-Mizell (2003) report on the relationship between inter-parental discord, the child's self-concept (the positive or negative view one holds of oneself); and the extent to which this shapes participation in bullying. Their findings show that inter-parental discord had not only heightened instances of bullying among children but resulted in significantly poor self- concepts, as a positive self-concept acts as a protectant against aggression.

Kiernan, Ialongo, Pearson, et al (1995) who studies the relationship between family structure and children's aggressive behavior argue that the contemporary family structure can influence the 'developmental curse' of aggressive behavior in urban children. They found boys in mother-alone families were over four times more likely to be in the top third of teacher-rated aggression two years later, than boys in the mother-father and mother-male partner families. Pearson, Ialongo, Hunter, et al (1994) also share that boys who reside in mother-alone families show more behavior problems than boys in mother-father families. Their results for mother-father families support previous research that demonstrate families with two adults present may provide protective contexts for children (Kellam, Ensminger, and Turner, 1977; Pearson, Ialongo, Hunter, et al, 1994).

Finally, investigating the relationship between difficult home circumstances and deviant behavior in young people, Weinberg (1964) concludes that the physical disorganization of the home (a home in which there is separation of family members), is slightly related to membership in the deviant group as 23% of deviants in his sample came from broken homes. He lists six types of family backgrounds. These include one in which the home is physically disorganized or broken- (a broken home being one in which both natural parents are not living in the same household with the child) versus intact homes (representative of one in which both parents are present); sibling position and family size. Socio-economic status and the working situation of mother were also noted and physical mobility, measured by the number of schools attended during the child's school history.

Research then suggest a direct relationship between home variables and the degree of deviant behavior. We move now to a discussion of the role of the school as a contributing factor in deviance among students.

SEBD and school related factors.

Children spend an enormous amount of their time at school. According to Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, et al (1979), 15,000 hours are spent by the end of secondary years. The argument then that schools can and do impact on students' development has been extensively researched. Such studies illustrate the ways in which schools are organized, the culture or ethos, pedagogy, teacher cognition as well as peer interaction can produce either positive or negative outcomes for all students especially those with SEBD.

One of the key functions of schools is that of imparting knowledge and skills necessary for students to progress to further education and ultimately gain employment. They also aid in the transmission of cultural norms and values, commonly referred to as 'culturization' as within schools, diverse populations are moulded into one society with a shared identity. Here students are taught about laws, civic lessons and patriotism.

Schools are also a major element of socialization as they allow students to network, meet and make friends, make dates, test their popularity and seek peer group support (Kimmel and Weiner, 1985). Young people can therefore find social acceptance or rejection within the confines of schools, as for some, school is filled with pleasurable experiences that help facilitate their adjustment to the physical, social, emotional and academic demands. For others, however, the reality is such that the demands of school combined with personal factors exacerbate the difficulties they experience and these manifest themselves in behaviors commonly associated with disaffection and disruption.

Some of the negative effects of schools are reported in the study by Wise and Upton (1998). Their participants report that their school was too large, impersonal and institutionalized and this led to the social and physical vulnerability they experienced. Some perceive that the size of their classes contributed to their difficulties in learning as they received inadequate help from teachers. Students also report feeling bored, frustrated and sometimes humiliated, which resulted in their highly destructive behavior. There was also the view that approaches to discipline were often ineffective, authoritarian and closely linked to the large and impersonal nature of schools and classes.

In their attempts to describe the difficulties they experienced, these students recalled the negative perceptions of teachers, their need to feel recognized as individuals, their yearning for individualized help and support; and for teachers to better understand them and nurture the teacher/student relationship both in and out of classrooms. Consequently, unlike their successful mainstream peers, they expressed difficulties in meeting the social, academic and psychological demands of secondary school.

Negative peer groups have also been cited as a powerful influence in the quality of student behavior in schools. In a cross cultural review in Malta, Cefai and Cooper (2010) present the views of secondary school students who experience SEBD. Some report feeling hurt and angry at being bullied and teased by peers and this added to the sense of feeling victimized.

These students also recall feeling disconnected with school due to poor relationships with teachers. Their grievances, they argue, stem from a lack of understanding and support received from classroom teachers; feeling humiliated and inadequate when teachers shout at them in the presence of their peers; in addition to feeling ignored when teachers refused to listen to their views.

A related sub-theme is the autocratic and rigid behavior management approach adopted by many teachers in their response to misbehavior. This, students recall, led to them feeling victimized due to the perception of being picked on by teachers.

Added to this were feelings of boredom and frustration that stemmed from being disconnected with the learning experiences. Many students found the curriculum boring, too academic and unrelated to their lives and careers and this led them to find their own ways to subvert the system.

The general experience of school by students in this study is then an unpleasant and unhappy one. Schooling is perceived as a negative and destructive experience with frequent physical and psychological bullying, feeling oppressed and a sense of having no voice or choice as they could do little to change their circumstances. They also believe that school failed to address and accommodate their needs and labelled them as difficult and antisocial (cf. Cooper, 1993; Wise, 2000; Baker, 2005). This often led to them protesting against a system that was exclusive and discriminative, the result of which was a negative impact on their self-esteem at a critical stage in their development. This, they suggest, led to the self-fulfilling prophecy in which students themselves began to doubt their own capabilities and resources to face the challenges presented as young adults in society.

The negative relationship between teachers and students has been consistently identified within the literature as a factor influencing the behavior of children with SEBD. Research has found that teachers' perceptions and expectations of children with SEBD are often described as negative and stereotypic (Hannah and Pilner, 1983) as teachers often ascribe excessively negative characteristics to children with SEBD.

Marlowe, Maycock, Palmer, et al (1997) suggest that these students are often described by teachers as 'aggressive,' 'anxious,' 'affectionless,' 'unmotivated,' or 'hostile.' Negative expectations can often result in a sense of futility felt by both teachers and students (Brendtro, Brokenleg and Van Bockern, 1990) and result in behaviors and achievements consistent with those expectations (Brehm and Kassin, 1996). This argument is concerning as children with SEBD are even more likely to experience academic failure and increased social, emotional and behavioral problems (Soles, Bloom, Heath, et al, 2008). Furthermore, such negative perceptions may exacerbate students' presenting difficulties, leading to a further breakdown in the teacher/student relationship and diminishing the attachment to school (Cooper, 2006; Smith, 2006).

Attwood and Croll, (2006) found a direct relationship between high levels of truancy and negative attitudes towards teachers, particularly, poor relationships, including teachers failing to match their expectations and the value of education. Turner (2000) who shows the relationship between school-related factors and negative behavior in one student with SEBD found other than communication with peers and his low attention span, the breakdown in the teacher and student relationship was a key factor responsible for his negative behavior.

In commenting on the acute differences between primary and secondary school experiences, Cole, Visser and Upton (1998) and Daniels, Cole, Sellman, et al (2003) interviewed excluded students who account to having a reasonable relationship with their class teacher and expressed satisfaction with their primary schooling. On speaking on their secondary school experiences however, they report on the acute differences that developed in large, impersonal secondary schools where they went to many specialist teachers. These students describe feeling rootless and unsupported with many staff having little appreciation for their feelings or factors impinging on their lives outside of school. Consequently, this, they state caused them to ‘switch off’ from most lessons, not attend school or seek solace in challenging behaviours, thereafter, slipping into a downward spiral of increasing learning and social difficulties (cited in Visser, 2003)

Finally, in his seminal study on the effects of residential schooling on boys who experience SEBD in two special schools, Cooper (1989) reports on some of the difficulties his boys experienced in adjusting to the demands of mainstream secondary school; difficulties that led to truancy and other forms of deviant behaviors. These boys describe their relationship with mainstream teachers as being:

1. Too formal in their behavior towards students.
2. Too strict.
3. “Stuck up.”
4. Unfriendly.
5. Intolerant.
6. Humorless.
7. Uninterested in their students’ personal welfare.
8. Not having time to take a personal interest in individual students.
9. Treating some students unfairly.
10. Conducting boring lessons; and
11. Offering insufficient help to students with learning difficulties.

A composite of these students’ perceptions of mainstream schools then projects an image of such schools as uncaring rejecting places, which ultimately “chucked”/ “threw”/” kicked”/ them out or “sent”/” put” them away. Their experience of mainstream schooling has been a source of unhappiness and distress; their relationships with teachers and other children conflict ridden and destructive to their self-esteem (Cooper, 1989).

Summary discussion

By their nature, secondary schools demand of young people a degree of psychological and emotional maturity, an almost immediate transition from the sheltered nurturing environment accustomed to in primary schools. As a distinct stage in human development, adolescence also ushers in physical, psychological and emotional changes that leave many young people uncertain, confused and unstable. For some, this transition into secondary school is almost seamless. Yet for others, the reality is that school can be a daunting place because of daily negative experiences. The degree of support provided by the school often determines the rate and degree of adjustment of the student.

Peer groups are increasingly salient as potential sites for emotional development, providing opportunities for new types of learning, including socialization experiences. Children who experience peer acceptance learn empathy, skills of cooperative behavior, perspective taking and social problem solving (Dodge, Lansford, Salzer-Burks, et al, 2004). Equally, peer rejection and problematic peer relationships may prevent a child from learning social skills and cause antisocial behavior.

Conclusions on SEBD

This short account of some of the related triggers of SEBD highlights the complex and iterative nature of SEBD (Smith and Cooper, 1999). Rather than be seen as irrational, disturbing or aggressive, SEBD can incorporate a range of behaviors that vary enormously and at times, are seemingly paradoxical. It also ranges from social maladaptation to abnormal, emotional stresses. At one level, the student may simply be preoccupied with emotional concerns to the extent that this interferes with the learning process. Others may be involved in bullying, either as victims of perpetrators; they might be violent towards others and also engage in attention seeking behaviors, which can involve activities that attract the positive or negative attention of others (Cooper, 1999). Such behaviors can also manifest themselves in terms of extreme withdrawal from social involvement, leading to social isolation from school, truancy, school refusal and in some cases, self-harming.

There are also a number of defining features that are common to all children who experience SEBD. Their behaviour continues to be a perennial problem for parents, teachers, administrators and society. They are usually the least liked and least understood by teachers preferring other students, including those with learning difficulties (Baker 2005; Kalambouka, Farrell, Dyson, et al, 2007). Added to this, they are the students most likely to have learning difficulties, to end up as school failures, to leave school prematurely (Farrell, Critchley and Mills, 2000; Groom and Rose, 2004) as they are the most at risk of dropping out (42% of those 16 or older drop out in comparison to 26% of all students identified as having some form of handicapping condition) (Steinberg and Knitzer, 1992). They are at risk of social exclusion and mental health difficulties in childhood and later life (Maes and Lievens, 2003; Ferguson, Horwood and Ridder, 2005; Colman, Murray, Abbott, et al, 2009) and they are the most at risk of being suspended or excluded from school, being the only group for whom punitive, exclusionary responses are still permitted by law (Cooper, 2001). With high rates of school drops outs and risks of mental health issues, the economic costs to society is therefore staggering as most remain 'Not in Employment, Education or Training' (NEET); and become dependent on state's resources while making no meaningful contribution to society.

While it is difficult to provide precise figures of the number of children in England the schools' annual returns (PLASC figures) and numbers in Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) suggest about (150,000) students or (c.2%) of the school population have behavioral issues.

Cole, Daniels and Visser (1999, 2003) also provide an estimate for January 1998, of the number of pupils in EBD schools, schools catering for pupils with moderate learning difficulties (MLD) as well as EBD and PRUs in Table 1 below:

Table 1 shows numbers of EBD special schools and PRUs and numbers on roll in January 1998.

	Numbers of schools/units	Numbers on roll, January 1998	Notes
EBD schools	c. 280	c. 11,400	(about 30%of pupils were boarders)
MLD/EBD schools	c.70	c. 6,500	
PRUs	c.300	7740	Numbers in PRUs rise to c.10,000 in 2002

Table 1: number of EBD special schools and PRUs and number of students on roll as at January, 1998 (Source: unpublished DfE/ DfEE statistics for 1994 and 1998.

[NB PRUs can be single or multi-site and in 1998 sometimes had less than 10 pupils on roll and sometimes over 300]

They add that while most pupils with EBD remain on the rolls of mainstream schools, an estimated 0.3 to 0.4% of the compulsory school-aged poplation (c.20,000 to 25,000 pupils) were solely registered in English EBD special schools and PRUs.

Additionally, in 2005, the Office for Standards in Education, (Ofsted) in estimated many children have serious challenging behaviors that are not included in these figures as many may have unidentified - or what are sometimes known as 'internalizing' - mental health problems, that do not seriously disrupt or disturb staff (Cole and Visser for Ofsted, 2003). On this issue, Cole, Visser and Daniels (1999) and Cole, Daniels and Visser (2003) provide estimates of prevalence of serious EBD/mental health problems in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Estimates of prevalence of serious EBD/mental health problems.

	Country	5 of pupils	Further details
Cole, Daniels, Visser, (1999, 2003)	England	4-5%	0.3 %- 0.4 % of school population in EBD special schools and PRUs
Kauffman (2001)	USA	3-6 %	Numbers relate to resources
Fortin and Bigras (1997)	Canada	c. 4%	
Egelund and Hansen (2000)	Denmark	7-11 %	(based on teacher perceptions) 0.3 % excluded from mainstream for social and/or emotional problems.
Egelund and Hansen (2000)	Norway	c. 11%	
Audit Commission (1999)	England	c. 5% have ADHD	Also c.20 % have mental health problems.
Cooper (1999)/ Young Minds	England		10- 20 % of children have EBD that causes ‘significant impairment.’

Table 2: Estimates of prevalence of serious EBD/mental health problems. Source: The University of Birmingham.

Additionally, Cole, Sellman, Daniels at al (2002) suggest there may be twice or three times more the number of children with serious and enduring difficulties depending on broad definitions that may be favored by health professionals.

Earlier approaches to dealing with SEBD have focused on a range of strategies based on learning theories. Limitations on space do not permit a full exploration of the literature on such approaches. However, a summary of these will be provided in the following section. A more detailed review of some of the literature can be found in Appendix B.

Approaches based on Behavioral theories.

Some of the strategies used to encourage children with SEBD to conform to behaviors considered acceptable advocate behavioral approaches that use rewards and sanctions to promote acceptable behavior. Strategies underpinned by a behavioral model rest on the principles of learning theory, the assumption that learned, unwanted behaviors can be modified in the short term, through programs of selective reinforcement (Evans, Harden and Thomas, 2004).

Behavioral Theory stems from the work of B. F. Skinner who called his approach to the study of behavior, 'Radical Behaviorism.' Skinner (1961) was convinced to learn, a student must engage in behavior and not just passively receive information. Effective teaching must therefore be based on positive reinforcement, which is more effective at changing and establishing behavior than punishment.

Skinner distinguished between two forms of behavior, the first, *respondent* behaviors, which are elicited by stimuli and may be modified through respondent conditioning. "*Operant* behaviors, in contrast, are "emitted," which are not induced by any particular stimulus. Such behaviors are strengthened through operant conditioning, sometimes called, "instrumental conditioning," in which the occurrence of a response yields a reinforcer.

Behavior modification proposes that an observed behavior is changed by the systematic application of techniques based on learning theory and experimental research (O'Leary and O'Leary, 1972). These have given rise to measures such as behavior modification or behavior therapy, in the use of strategies to deal with complex problems in ordinary schools (Cooper, Smith and Upton, 1994).

The latter have argued the actual program of behavior modification begins with the process of defining the target behavior that needs to be changed, measuring or monitoring the frequency of such behavior to provide a baseline against which the success of any intervention can be measured and setting goals, which outline ways in which the behavior can be improved. Such an approach looks outside the child to the classroom environment and learning experiences to find ways of changing behavior, as the child's behavior is not conceptualized as being caused by internal drives and forces but shaped by the effect of external cues and rein forcers.

Approaches based on the Systemic or Ecological model.

Approaches based on the socio-ecological model begin with the assumption that socio-cultural factors are more influential than individual factors in determining behavior. These are founded on the notion that the origins and purposes of human behavior are essentially interactional; and the product of ongoing interaction between environmental influences and internal influences, derived from social experience. As behavior is perceived to be the product of the interaction between the individual and his environment, interventions within an eco-systemic framework start by examining all contributing factors to a problem situation, including the role of the teacher (Avramidis and Bayliss, 1998) as there is a concern with classroom environmental variables and their effects on children's behavior (Wheldall, Morris, Vaugh, et al, 1981). Attempts to improve behavior therefore combine approaches that recognize both the individual and the social context in which behavior occurs.

Cooper and Upton (1991) add that within the eco-systemic approach, problem behavior does not necessarily originate from within the individual who displays the behaviors but from within the interaction between that individual and other individuals. They argue that each individual has a rational basis for behaving as they do, based on their perception of the situation. Different parties will have different perspectives on the same situation, which can lead to conflicting views as to what is rational, justifiable behavior. This implies a rejection of the idea that problem behavior originates within the individual and indicates that all parties in an interaction are involved in the maintenance of problem situations. This approach also highlights the rather subjective or context specific nature in which behavior can occur as a child can be perceived as deviant in one context and well- adjusted in another.

Glen (1981) further explains the nature of this ecological system by adding within the classroom environment, a wide range of stimulus conditions will influence behavior. These can range from physical events like noise level and seating arrangements to the presence or absence of particular curriculum materials, to social events such as the presence or absence of an audience, adults or peers. These social-environmental variables or setting events can strongly influence the quality of teacher/child interaction. Knowledge of their operation is thus vital to a behavioral approach to teaching.

Other ecological or environmental variables that can influence children's behavior (Wheldall, Bevan and Shortall, 1981) can include the effects of temporal and climatic variables on students' behavior (Russell and Bernel, 1977); research on setting events as seen in the presence of adults in the playground and its effect on student participation (O'Rourke and Glynn, 1978); the quantity of work set by teachers and the influence of on-task behavior (Wheldall and Austin, 1980); as well as the effects of classroom seating arrangements on student behavior.

Causation patterns in interactional behavior are circular or recursive rather than lineal and change in any part of a system will change the whole system and reverberate through related systems (Cooper and Upton, 1991). Intervention strategies must therefore be based on a recognition of the contribution made to a problem situation, by all participating parties, in the interactions surrounding the problem. Resolution therefore relies on a series of interventions through which individuals can initiate positive change in their interactions with others with a view of promoting co-operative rather than conflict relationships (Cooper and Upton, 1990). Some of the elements which such interventions can assume include a management function that aims to control and change behavior, a developmental function with its emphasis on the building of co-operative relationships and a reflective function with its dependence on self-scrutiny by teachers.

Approaches based on Cognitive-Behavioural model.

Strategies that use the Cognitive-Behavioural model reflect the cognitive shift away from a strictly behaviourist model of the person and rests on the assumption that 'faulty' thought patterns can be modified with long term impact on behaviour (Evans, Harden and Thomas, 2004). They recognise children's ability to form mental representations, including representations of social behaviour and reflect upon their own behaviour. Through recognition of the interrelationship between thoughts; emotions and behaviours, Cognitive Behavioural Interventions (CBIs) primary goal is to teach students how to manage their academic and non-academic behaviours (Yell, Meadows, Drasgow, et al., 2009).

Self-instruction (or management) and verbal mediation are two procedures used in CBIs to control behaviour. Self-management interventions teach students how to observe, record and reinforce their own behaviour. Three components to self-management interventions are self-monitoring, self-evaluation and self-reinforcement. Self-monitoring has been used to successfully improve social skills behaviours by being aware of the behaviour and being able to record data on the behaviour. By forcing the student to monitor his own behaviour, students' awareness around social skills issues increase and targeted behaviours are reduced.

Self-evaluation also requires the student to compare his behaviour against a standard while engaging in self-monitoring. Students are taught how to (a) compare the behaviours they monitor to a pre-set criterion and (b) evaluate their performance. Initially the teacher and student set daily goals and systematic reinforcement is implemented with fading by the teacher, as the student becomes accurate and independent in self-evaluation.

Finally, self-reinforcement is a traditional behaviour modification program whereby students get a preferred object, privilege or some form of positive reinforcement as behaviour improves. The operative word through the self-management intervention is 'self,' which emphasises the need for students to learn how to recognize, analyse and change behaviours themselves under the guidance or facilitation of educational professionals.

Verbal Mediation is another technique empowering students to change behaviour. Such interventions are basically positive self-talk phrases that teach students to overcome the negative deficient or maladaptive self- statements ruminating in their heads (Yell, Meadows, Drasgow, et al, 2009). The latter also identifies that verbal mediation based approaches include self-instructional training in which students are taught verbal prompts to help them make choices that affect non-verbal behaviour, problem-solving training that teaches them to recognize, define, generate alternative solutions, evaluate those solutions and implement a plan to work through the conflict. Students are also taught about anger-control training in how to give themselves self-instructions to facilitate the use of anger control procedures and finally, the student monitors the solution to ensure quality results.

Cognitive Behaviour Modification (CBM) is also an intervention used to manage challenging behaviour. This involves using cognitive, self-instructional strategies to guide and control behaviours (Meichenbaum, 1977) in a fashion analogous to Vygotsky's description of the acquisition of self-regulating behaviours. The approach has been used with a variety of clinical populations, often applied in one to one settings between patients and a therapist. However, its success has motivated its application to non- clinical settings (Manning, 1998) such as educational settings among students whose behaviour is difficult to manage.

Such programmes for adolescents typically include providing information on the cognitive and behavioural components of anger, teaching cognitive and behavioural techniques to manage anger and facilitating the application of newly acquired skills such as relaxation, assertiveness, anticipation, self-instruction, self-evaluation, role- play or rehearsal and problem solving (Humphreys and Brooks, 2006).

Summary of ideas

The growing concern over children’s mental health has led to guidance on how schools can support the social and emotional adjustment of young people. Programs such as Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (DfES, 2005, 2007) (SEAL) are introduced in schools to promote social and emotional skills through embedding a social and emotional language across the whole curriculum (Learoyd-Smith, 2010). This has led to a resurgence of interest in programs that focus on individual therapy and counselling and providing therapeutic help for individuals experiencing emotional difficulties. Based on the principles of psychotherapy, these share a common focus on the inner world of feelings and emotions and a belief that change occurs by helping the troubled individual to gain insight into the links between present events and previous experience (Smith and Cooper, 1996). Such approaches also emphasize the deep and complex roots of behaviour problems and the possibility of long term change through personal development (Evans, Harden and Thomas, 2004). Within the school, this involves a focus on relationships and efforts to uncover anxieties, build firm attachments and strengthen self-esteem (Smith and Cooper, 1996).

Within primary and now secondary schools, there has been a revival of NGs, with a focus on psychotherapeutic approaches focusing on early childhood experiences (Evans, Harden and Thomas, 2004) aimed at building social and emotional skills. This approach will be discussed in the following chapter.

Overview of the study:

This study is structured into six chapters. The preceding chapter, entitled, 'Introduction to the study,' provided an introduction to the research, establishing the research aim and justifications for the study. The research follows the application of an intervention used in one mainstream secondary school to support the social and emotional adjustment of a group of students. The aim is to determine the perceived areas of impact. A discussion on the nature of SEBD as well as some of the antecedents and strategies used to support students with SEBD was also undergone.

Chapter Two is entitled, 'A discussion of the Research Literature' and will present a discussion of the literatures researched for this study. This looks especially at the Inclusion literature, both international and within a national context to provide the theoretical frameworks for the research. A range of official DFE and DfES documents, official guidance, circulars and legislation is also reviewed. The literature on NGs will also be reviewed as this is the theoretical orientation of the programme being evaluated.

Chapter Three is entitled, 'The Methodological Approach to the Research,' and will discuss the methodological approaches taken in conducting the research as well as a justification of the chosen methodologies. In this I will also discuss the instruments used to collect data for the study as well as the approach to analysis.

In Chapter Four presenting the main findings of the Research and provides a discussion of these findings. I present all key findings of the research in relation to each Research Question as well as provide a discussion of these findings in relation to relevant research literature.

Chapter Five presents a critical discussion of the study's findings. In this, I reflect on the key findings of the research as well as the significance of the three overarching themes to emerge from the study. Ideas are discussed and supported with existing literature in the field. The contribution to knowledge is also be presented.

The study concludes with Chapter Six, which is entitled, 'Respite, Relationships and Resilience: The impact of Therapeutic Inclusion. This chapter summarises the key findings, discusses the implications of the research, as well as provides a number of recommendations along with suggestions for future research.

Chapter Two:
A discussion of the research Literature.

Introduction.

The main aim of this research is to determine the merit of a programme used in one mainstream secondary school, by evaluating its perceived impact on a group of students with impaired social and emotional skills. A secondary aim is to determine its perceived impact on staff and the whole school. The programme evaluated is referred to as Th. Inc., the theoretical orientation of which is the Classic Boxall NG. As a variant or different form of this intervention, Th. Inc. adheres closely to the principles of this NG model.

Therapeutic Inclusion is recommended for students who are failing to access school fully due to poor self-awareness and/or self-management; underachievement and those who experience withdrawal. It helps support students who struggle with making or maintaining friendships and others who may have experienced severe trauma in their lives (Th. Inc. Document). As this study will evaluate school level support designed to ensure the inclusion of students at risk of exclusion, one aspect of the research literature will review documents on inclusion. This will be discussed in the following section. Following this, I will discuss Attachment Theory as a prelude to discussing the transitional period of adolescence. The remainder of the chapter will review some of the literature on NGs to discuss their efficacy in meeting the needs of students who access them.

Literature on Inclusion

Inclusion is a complex educational model, which has been discussed in terms of social justice (Richler, 1991; Rioux, 1991), pedagogy (Wang and Zollers, 1990), school reform (Lipsky and Gartner, 1997; Porter and Richler, 1991); and improved program models (Zollers, Ramanathan and Yu, 1999). It is based on the principle of 'equity' or 'equality' in education, espousing the ideology that every child should be given as equal an opportunity to achieve, regardless of his specific area of need; by removing existing barriers that may inhibit learning. Within this movement is a concern with providing appropriate responses to a broad spectrum of learning needs and perceiving individual differences not as problems but opportunities for enriched learning.

One strand of the inclusion literature therefore examines school level variables, identifying organizational structures and practices that may be associated with facilitating or impeding the inclusion of diverse groups of students (Florian and Rouse, 2001). Underpinning this is the idea of schools as organizations, characterised by particular systems, structures, practices and an ethos that is distinctively different from non-inclusive schools (Daniels and Garner, 1999).

Dyson, Howes and Roberts (2002), in providing a systematic review of this literature, describe such schools as having an inclusive culture reflected in an internal commitment to transform their 'old institutions' into a community of learners. There is a consensus amongst adults that centres on values of respect for differences and a commitment to offer students access to learning opportunities (Booth, Ainscow, Black-Hawkins, et al, 2002). Reflected within an inclusive culture is the concept of 'support for learning,' which focuses on providing appropriate school level support to ensure all students access learning, but especially those who are most vulnerable to exclusion. Suggested here is the notion that a culture that provides adequate organizational support and embraces diversity among students would therefore reduce exclusionary pressures.

This idea will be the focus of the first part of the literature discussed in this chapter. It begins with a discussion of inclusion as an international educational model and will reference a number of policies. Following this, we will progress to discuss inclusion within the national context of England, referencing legislations, policies, circulars and national guidance introduced to support the inclusion children with special needs and in particular, those with SEBD. The concept of school level support will also be examined through the literature on NGs to comprehend the ways in which it impacts on students who access it.

Inclusive Education: The International Agenda.

Within the literature published by the United Nations (UN), the rights of children with SEN have always been afforded special attention. The right to special care, among children with disabilities is especially emphasised in the Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNESCO, 1989). This document urges that disabled children have effective access to and receive education, training, health care services, rehabilitation services, preparation for employment and recreation opportunities, in a manner conducive to the child achieving the fullest possible social integration and individual development, including cultural and spiritual development (UNESCO, 1989). The aim, it is argued, is to reduce social exclusion by ensuring the holistic development of the child.

Despite this initial concern, growing concerns over the persistent inequalities regarding disadvantaged groups and in particular, the learning needs of disabled children was reconfirmed at the Education for All Convention (UNESCO, 1990). The issue of ‘equity’ was again raised and the dual system (separate institutions and modes of instruction) that exists was criticised on a number of bases, including providing disabled students with ineffective, lower quality instructions (Biklen and Zollers, 1986; Wang and Birch, 1984) and affording them second class status by instructing them outside the dominant system (Brown, Schwarz, Udvari-Solner, et al, 1991).

The movement to ensure equitable access and improve the quality of basic education for all children, youth and adults with a special focus on ‘vulnerable’ and ‘disadvantaged individuals’ was then reignited (Nguyen, 2010) and resulted in ‘The Framework for Action: Meeting Basic Learning Needs,’ (UNESCO, 1990). This document sets out strategies to achieve education for all, as well as outlines the measures that should be taken to reduce disparities.

Concerns, however, over the vagueness in definitions of ‘disabled,’ ‘disadvantaged’ and ‘vulnerable groups’ led to much disquiet among proponents of special education who urged that ‘education for all’ should represent a complete break with the parallel or “second system” (Wang, Reynolds and Walberg, 1988) of education for students with disabilities, which was the norm for much of the century (Zollers, Ramanathan and Yu, 1999) and incorporate a system in which the learning needs of all children should be met in ordinary schools, including those with SEN.

A revised concept of ‘education for *all*’ then became the agenda at The Salamanca Conference on Special Needs Education in 1994 when greater consideration was given to policy shifts that would be necessary to enable schools to serve all children but particularly, those with special educational needs (UNESCO, 1994). The result, The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994) (The Salamanca Statement, UNESCO, 1994) became the guiding principles upon which the ideological movement of inclusion is based.

Above all, The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) re-affirms the right to education of every individual, enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNESCO, 1948). It builds on the commitment to The Education for All Conference (UNESCO, 1990) by reaffirming this right and it recognises the urgency in providing education for all children, youth and adults with special educational needs within the regular education systems (UNESCO, 1990) by highlighting 'the right of those who have special educational needs to access regular schools that should accommodate them with a child-centred pedagogy, capable of meeting these needs (UNESCO, 1994). Further clarification of the term, 'disabled' is provided and the idea of 'special needs' is extended to include all children and youth whose needs arise from 'disabilities,' (presumably physical and/or mental), or 'learning difficulties;' but also any condition that may be a hindrance to the child.

This philosophy is expressed in one of its principal statements, which urges that 'schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions and find ways to successfully educate all children, including those who have serious disadvantages and disabilities; and develop pedagogy capable of successfully educating all children (UNESCO, 1994). This is the ideology upon which Inclusive Education is based. However, as a movement, it has been wrought with much controversy as early references to the inclusion of a varied group of learners led to much uncertainty as to how inclusion should be defined, who should be included and how such a wide range of needs can be catered for within the ordinary school. Notes on defining inclusion can be found in Appendix C.

Ainscow (2006) suggests a typology of ways of thinking about inclusion which includes:

a. *Inclusion as concerned with disability and special educational needs:*

Among this school of thought, there is a common assumption that inclusion is primarily about educating disabled students or those categorised as having 'special educational needs' in mainstream schools.

b. *Inclusion as a response to disciplinary exclusions:*

This view has been proposed due to the fact that inclusion is most commonly seen or has been associated with children categorised as having special educational needs in many countries. This has led to ideas of inclusion being associated with ‘bad behaviour.’

c. *Inclusion about all groups vulnerable to exclusion:*

There has been an increasing trend for inclusion to be viewed more broadly in terms of overcoming discrimination and disadvantage in relation to groups vulnerable to exclusionary pressures (Mittler, 2000). Included among this group are looked after children, girls who become pregnant and students from itinerant families.

d. *Inclusion as a promotion of a school for all*:

Another idea has associated inclusion with the development of the common school for all and the construction of newer approaches to teaching and learning within it.

e. *Inclusion as education for all:*

The final view of inclusion promotes the idea of *education for all,* which has been created by Education for All Conference (UNESCO, 1990) and two subsequent international conferences held in Jomtien Thailand in 1990 and Dakar Senegal in 2000.

Perceptions of inclusion are also informed by varied definitions which further complicated its meaning (Zollers, Ramanathan and Yu, 1999). Ballard’s (1997) definition mirrors the concept proposed by The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994). He argues for education to be inclusive, it should embody a philosophy that is non-exclusive, non-discriminatory in terms of disability, culture and gender. It should involve all students within a community with no exceptions; allowing equal rights to access the culturally valued curriculum as full-time members of age appropriate regular classrooms; and there should be an emphasis on diversity rather than assimilation.

Booth, Ainscow, Black- Hawkins, et al (2000) present another definition of inclusion, suggesting it is an unending process that involves increasing learning and participation of all students, within the cultures and curricula of mainstream schools and decreasing exclusionary pressures.

Vitello and Mithaug (1998) suggest for education to be inclusive, it should work to eliminate social exclusion that is a consequence of attitudes and responses to diversity in race, social class, ethnicity, religion, gender and ability. This definition supports an ethos that is accepting and welcoming of difference.

Finally, Barton (1997) views inclusion as an approach that is non-discriminatory in terms of disability, culture and gender and involves students within a community with no exceptions; ensuring that they have equal rights to access the culturally valued curriculum as full time members.

Earliest attempts at inclusion brought little or no changes in areas of curriculum, teaching and learning strategies (Ainscow, 2006). However, today, in many parts of the world, inclusion has undergone a significant transformation and assumes a broader view. Since 1994, there has been a tremendous increase in the amount of change expected of schools (Hopkins, Ainscow and West, 1994) which has been accompanied by a restructuring of their organizations, curricula and modes of instruction, in order to respond to the individual needs of all students within their communities (Gerber, 1989).

Concurrent with the rise of the ‘Inclusive Educational Model’ has also been accompanied by mounting criticism, ranging from concerns that the needs of special education students cannot be met in regular education classes without specialists to teach them (Fuchs and Fuchs, 1994; Kauffan, 1994) as well as arguments that the education of ‘typical’ children will suffer in the distracting environment of inclusive classrooms.

One strand of the inclusion literature therefore highlights the importance of teacher cognition in bringing about change within the learning context (Ainscow, 2006). Such writers argue as teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion are closely linked with their acceptance of children with disabilities, (Ward, Center and Bochner, 1994; Forlin, Douglas and Hattie, 1996b; Scruggs and Mastropieri, 1996) change in teacher cognition is necessary in order that they respond to students with a perceived disability.

This literature proposes the need for professional development as a means to offering teachers practical ideas that can be used to enhance desired learning outcomes in students (Guskey, 1986). It suggests the need for change at the ‘individual’ level as attitudes towards inclusive placements among some educators can be negative (Giangreco, Dennis, Cloninger, et al, 1993; Forlin, Douglas and Hattie, 1996a) and this may affect the outcome of inclusion (Forlin and Cole, 1993; Bender, Vail, and Scott, 1995). Without attending to a change in cognition therefore, existing practices can simply be reinforced by teachers.

Reflected within the inclusion discourse is also a concern with delineating an inclusive pedagogy that underlies principles derived from theories of learning and instruction (Ware, 1995). These outline strategies teachers should follow in their attempts to create inclusive classrooms (Udvari Solner, 1995 and Thousand, 1995).

On this issue, Corbett (1999) argues for inclusive classrooms to be nurtured, teachers need to be responsive to learner needs, to provide means of recognising talents among underachieving students and establish an overall framework of equality. To achieve this, she identifies four models of inclusion.

The first she suggests is concerned with teachers listening with respect to views that may be outside their own experiences; as listening gives validity to what is being heard. As the teacher then learns, this reciprocal process of mutual learning makes for a classroom culture that can call itself empowering.

The second is teachers recognising that there are multiple intelligence and not just those accorded high social and academic status. This, she argues, is essential as if students are expressing themselves outside the authentic domains that constitute the socially constructed culture of schooling, this increases the possibility of failure within these domains.

The third issue concerns equal opportunities and the need for teachers to confront unequal social capital. This suggests the framework of equality is about a genuine commitment to inclusion that may involve changing the culture of an institution to make it more responsive to difference, receptive to change and sensitive to language. It is about creating an institutional culture which welcomes, supports and nurtures diverse needs. It is also about accepting people as they are, not expecting them to struggle to be ‘normal,’ a struggle, she argues, that can be debilitating and frustrating, creating additional disadvantages to those already marginalised within the system.

Another aspect of the inclusion discourse relates to how inclusive education can be achieved in practical terms (Daniels and Garner, 1999). The focus is on inclusive schools as organizations that are characterised by particular systems, structures, practices and an ethos, distinctively different from the characteristics of non-inclusive schools. Documented within the 'effective schools' literature (Ainscow, 1997; Rouse and Florian, 1996; Sebba and Sachdev, 1997), they demonstrate the way a school is organised underpins the type of service it delivers to its students (Carrington, 2002).

Dyson, Howes and Roberts (2002) describe such schools as having an inclusive culture reflected in an internal commitment to transform once old institutions, into a community of learners. There is a consensus amongst adults around values of respect for difference and a commitment to offering all students access to learning opportunities (Booth and Ainscow, 2002). High expectations for all students are also common features of inclusive cultures (Booth and Ainscow, 2002).

Within inclusive cultures there is also a distinctive focus on the individual needs of every student within its community as a way of ensuring all members feel included. This emphasis on a *student focused culture* not only recognises the differences among students but allocates adequate support to ensure equal opportunity is extended to every child, to maximise his fullest potential (Carrington, 1999).

There is also a notion of diversity, fuelled by a desire to explore differences and similarities (Turner and Loius, 1996). Staff and students not only expect, but embrace and value diversity (Kugelmass, 2001) as differences among students are viewed not as problems but challenges, a means to generating change and an encouragement of peoples, which can question unfounded generalizations, prejudices and discrimination (Barton, 1997).

Finally, as suggested by Corbett (1999), creating an inclusive school ethos is about diverse cultural value, which respects and celebrates differences in learning styles, experiences and priorities.

The ideology of inclusion therefore differs from that of integration as there is a shift of emphasis from an individual's efforts to integrate himself into the mainstream culture to the institutions' efforts to create a climate of receptivity, flexibility and sensitivity. Integration then is about individuals, while inclusion is about community values.

The literature on inclusive school cultures points to the need for organizational changes that support the inclusion of all students. It suggests, unless diversity is welcomed and relationships are continuously nurtured (Miles, 2000) within an environment of support, little change in the educational experiences of marginalised students will occur. A culture that provides adequate organizational support and embraces diversity and individuality will reduce some of the exclusionary pressures. Conversely, a culture that fails to provide adequate support for student differences may actually increase exclusionary pressures. This is ideology of inclusion that guides this research. It proposes a model of an inclusive culture as one that provides adequate support to increase the learning and participation of *all* students vulnerable to exclusionary pressures and not only those with impairments or categorised as having special educational needs (Booth, Ainscow, Black-Hawkins, et al, 2000).

Having discussed the ideological movement of inclusive education and the characteristics of an inclusive school culture, we move now to examine some of the literature on inclusion in England, referenced in official documents such as polices, regulations, circulars and guidance implemented in its commitment towards the Inclusion Agenda.

The Standards versus the Inclusion Agenda.

Introduction

The Labour period of government that lasted 13 years witnessed a continued emphasis on two policy drives aimed at improving standards in education. The first of these, commonly referred to as The Standards Agenda, is synonymous with a strong commitment to raising academic standards through a continuation of assessment and performance testing practices. The second, The Inclusion Agenda is also geared towards raising standards by improving the outcome of students considered vulnerable and includes those from disadvantaged backgrounds including those with SEN. Over the years, educational reforms in these two areas have assumed such a magnitude that these two distinct, yet contrasting paradigms have dominated the educational landscape.

The following section examines some of the policies in education since 1997, commencing with a discussion of The Green Paper (DfEE, 1997) introduced under the Labour Government and culminates with the most recent changes in policy introduced under the Coalition Government- The new SEND Code (DfE, DoH, 2015).

In examining these policies, I will argue that while past and present governments have rigorously pursued a commitment to inclusion, the Standards Agenda appears to dominate policy directives and to a large extent, the culture, curricula and pedagogical practices that exist within schools.

The new agenda for education spawned by the Education for All Conference in 1990, as well as The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) was the catalyst for a global shift in the way education systems would be revolutionised. National responses to inclusion vary and are context specific, however, it is my view that the approach taken by England to revolutionise its education system has been and continues to be one of the most comprehensive and adhered to in terms of adopting the principles espoused within The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994). For the first time, inclusion was written into government policy with the presumption that policy direction was towards more Inclusive Education (Norwich, 2014). To comprehend the magnitude of changes that have occurred is to firstly understand that SEN is not simply a matter of school education. It is a matter of social policy.

Within days of assuming office, the plan for the development of education based on inclusive principles was outlined in The Green Paper (DfEE, 1997). The latter outlines the pivotal role that inclusion would play in social policy, in the hope that, ‘the great majority of children with SEN will, as adults, contribute economically… as members of society.’ The role ordinary schools would play in preparing all children was further delineated.

The Green Paper (DfEE, 1997) sets out the comprehensive plan through which standards for all children will be raised including children with SEN. Among these include:

- Early identification and intervention of special educational needs.
- Revision of the existing Code of Practice, with a renewed emphasis on provision under school based stages; leading to an overall reduction of statements.
- Increased inclusion of children with special educational needs in mainstream schools.
- Professional development for teachers, head teachers, learning support assistants and other SEN specialists and;
- Co-operation between local agencies.

The introduction of discrimination legislation in 2001, previously excluded from education through the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001, also places new duties upon schools to take ‘reasonable steps’ to ensure that disabled students are not placed at a substantial disadvantage in relation to the education and other services they provide (HMSO, 2001). Added to this, The SEN Code (DfES, 2001) intensifies the agenda to reform and improve the educational outcomes of children with SEN. This renewed Labour’s commitment to provide equality of opportunity and high achievement for all children, placing the rights of children with SEN at the heart of the process. It also outlined the consistent approach to meeting children’s special educational needs (DfES, 2001).

To safe guard the welfare of children with SEN, greater focus is placed on early identification, assessment and provision for students, recommending that once a child has been identified as having a SEN, schools should adopt a ‘graduated response that includes a range of strategies;’ including full use of available classroom and school resources before increasing specialist expertise. This is referred to as ‘The School Action and School Action Plus’ model. The latter is an appropriate intervention that helps schools and parents match special educational provision to individual needs but consists of part of the continuous and systematic cycle of planning, action, review and evaluation within schools (DfEE, 1997).

In successive years, national policies and guidance continue to outline the commitment to the inclusion of children with SEN. For example, Every Child Matters (DfE, 2003) and Removing Barriers to Achievement: The Government’s SEN Strategy, (DfES, 2004). The Equality Act 2010; and ‘Counselling in schools: a blueprint for the future’ published by the Department for Education in 2015.

The most recent legislation imposed by the conservative government, The Children’s and Family Act 2014 and The SEND Code (DfE, DoH, 2015) further proposes a number of changes to improve the outcomes of children with special educational needs.

Under the Children and Families Act 2014:

a. Statements of SEN are replaced with Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs) as an assessment of need for those with severe difficulties. Local Authorities and healthcare services are also required to join services and plan for the whole needs of the child. ECHPs will also cover a student with SEN from 0 to 25 years, whereas under the old system, statements only last until age 16.

The idea of joint services means the ECHPs now take into account, the holistic needs of the child, 'education, health and any additional care or services the child may require to access school fully.

The new SEND Code (DfE, DoH, 2015) further reflects the changes introduced by the Children and Families Act 2014. In addition to the regulations reflected in the former, the new SEND Code (DfE, DoH, 2015) introduces new changes with regards the role of schools in identifying, providing for and supporting children with SEN. It defines a child with SEN as a child or young person who has:

'A *significantly* greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age (italics added).

It also replaces the graduated response to identifying, assessing and providing for children with SEN with a four-part cycle which includes assess-plan-do-review; also referred to as 'the graduated approach.' Additionally, under the new SEND Code 2015, the replacement of 'statements of SEN' with Education, Health Care Plans, require that ECHPs be 'forward looking and help raise aspirations and outline the provision required to meet the student's needs and support them in achieving these.

While there is an underlying commitment towards inclusion, demonstrated in securing the needs of students with SEN, it is argued that the Standards Agenda appears to preponderate education policies. Evident in The Green Paper (DfEE, 1997) is the recognition that schools need to offer a setting where all children are valued and encouraged to behave well and where damaged self-esteems can be rebuilt. This is suggested within the inclusion literature as a requirement of an inclusive school culture. However, the emphasis on raising standards and achievement permeate the document.

In Chapter One, policies for excellence focus on age specific target setting for 11 year olds in core subjects such as English and Maths for all schools, including special schools with the expectation that many children with SEN would attain these.

Chapter Eight, which is devoted to children who present with SEBD, recognises the need to find ways of tackling their difficulties early. However, it proposes the full range of practices from Chapter One and Chapter Two as a means of improving *performance in 'basic skills'* to forestalling the emergence of SEBD in many children. Proposed strategies for tackling SEBD include:

- *Improving the achievement* of students with EBD through 'improving basic skills' and working with parents.
- An increased emphasis on early identification and intervention with priority given to schools and LEAs support services to aid in the *performance* of children with EBD.

The underlying emphasis is on testing and developing basic skills, teaching and learning in the hope of improving behaviour. Other policies, reports and guidance include The Moser Report (DfEE, 1999) aimed at improving Literacy and Numeracy; Labour's National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, (DfEE, 2000); The Excellence in Cities initiative, (Ofsted, 2005); The Schools White Paper: Higher Standards, Better Schools for all (HMSO, 2006); and its introduction of academies as schools independent of local authorities, to renew 'failing schools' in disadvantaged areas (Norwich, 2014). The most recent legislation in the changes in SEN, The Children and Families Act 2014 and the new SEND Code (DfE, DoH, 2015) provide greater choice and support for children with SEN. However, according to Norwich (2014), they do not represent a radically new system.

Firstly, the revised definition of children and young people having a SEN appears to focus on securing and protecting the needs of the *most* vulnerable- disabled students within the system. This new definition of SEN is contracted to include young people who have a learning difficulty and/or a disability- a physical or mental impairment that has a long term and substantial adverse effect on the child's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities; suggesting that SEN is now considered to be a condition that is long entrenched and must have a substantially adverse effect on students. This is further supported with references to information provided on the Equality Act 2010 and the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

Secondly, in the new SEND Code (DfE, DoH, 2015), the term SEBD is replaced by Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties (SEMH). The omission of the word 'behaviour' leads us to beg the question if persistent, disruptive or withdrawn behaviours do not necessarily mean that a child or young person has SEN; although where concerns exist, assessments should be made to determine if there are any causal factors such as undiagnosed learning difficulties, difficulties with communication or mental health.

This represents a change in the definition of SEBD from one which previously included, ‘children and young people who are withdrawn or isolated, disruptive and disturbing, hyperactive and lack concentration; those with immature social skills; and those presenting challenging behaviours arising from other complex special needs’ (DfES, 2001). Behavioural difficulties are therefore not viewed as SEN, which is the behavioural equivalent of the view that difficulties in learning do not necessarily mean ‘special educational needs.’ With only two short paragraphs about this new category, we are led to consider if it was introduced to reduce the identification of SEBD, which has had one of the highest incidences of SEN identification, along with moderate learning difficulties (Norwich, 2014).

Additionally, there is now an increased responsibility among schools to identify and address the SEN of students they support by replacing the School Action and School Action Plus model with a single category of ‘Additional SEN Support’ for all children requiring SEN support who do not qualify for the ECHP. Schools are therefore required to ‘use their best endeavours to make sure that a child with SEN receives the support he needs, suggesting doing everything they can to meet children’s SEN. The removal of the graduated response that ensured schools make full use of available classroom and school resources The SEN Code (DfES, 2001) leaves room for varied understandings as to what now constitutes ‘best endeavours’ and additional support. There is even less clarity in its guidance about assessment and identification as it reduces the assessment and identification processes to two levels- special educational needs support and more significant, special educational needs that have an EHCP. With the removal of the graduated approach- School Action and School Action Plus, which may have previously provided support for the most and least vulnerable, there are concerns that this may cause difficulties in receiving escalated support within a school. The mention of an assess-plan-do-review model also gives little indication of how students will be identified as having SEN other than teachers’ suggestions and experience of the student, their previous progress and attainment as well as information from the school’s core approach to student progress, attainment and behaviour (DfE; DoH, 2015). Assessment may therefore be out of the remit of some classroom teachers.

Specific to students with SEBD, while the new SEND Code (DfE, DoH, 2015) recognises that providing a safe and supportive environment, as well as specialised behavioural and cognitive approaches, may be a requirement for such children to ensure their behavioural issues are addressed, there is again an emphasis on teaching and learning strategies as the best approaches to dealing with SEBD. Recommendations included in Chapter 7 reflect the idea that 'flexible teaching arrangements' can help in adjusting to school expectations and routines.

As early as 1994, suggested overlaps in definitions of EBD and mental health problems have been made (DfE, 1994b; DfE, 1994c) although often attached to words which tended to be avoided in the English government's educational guidance (Visser, 2003). This link was clearly made in Promoting Children's Mental Health within Early Years and School Settings (DfES, 2001). This delineates this link by stating SEBD includes a range of difficulties children might experience as a result of adverse experiences in early years; and that such a definition will include children who experience or are at risk of experiencing mental health problems.

It suggests ways that schools can work to promote mental health care among which includes:

- Create a culture within the school in which the importance of trust, integrity, democracy, equality of opportunity and value for individuals is fostered.
- Establish clear policies regarding behaviour and bullying.
- Have high professional standards (efficient planning, setting, marking and punctuality).
- Arouse and motivate students' interests through skilful teaching and;
- Establish a school culture which values teachers, lunchtime supervisors and those engaged in the care and supervision of children.

Reflected here is the need for approaches that provide a safe and supportive environment to facilitate the social and emotional adjustment of students. The role of adults as important figures for communication is also implied.

Despite this, previous and the current administrations seem determined to pursue two incongruous agendas simultaneously, one of which forces schools to place emphasis on the standards in learning. Persistent references to 'skilful teaching,' the 'quality of teaching for students with SEN,' 'the progress made by students should be a core part of the school's performance management arrangements;' and 'its approach to professional development for all teaching and support staff,' suggests a continuing emphasis on teaching and learning as the indicators through which the progress and attainment of all students including those who have SEN are judged.

Added to this is the minimal reference within the new Ofsted inspection framework to evaluating 'inclusive environments that meet the needs of all students,' under which SEN and disabled children are named. There is also an obvious silence in this framework about evaluating schools regarding their admissions and exclusions of students with SEN or disabilities (Norwich, 2014). Rather, the focus is on meeting needs and attainment progression since starting school (Ofsted, 2014b), the 'value added.' This proposes the 'one size fits all' approach to dealing with children who have SEN, ignores specificity of SEN, as well as the role of context and culture when considering support or treatment for children presenting with SEBD. An obvious yet crucial element that appears to be absent is the social dimension of inclusion, a focus on the school as a community that provides for diversity to promote social cohesion and greater opportunities. Finally, it ignores the significance of pastoral support that should be provided to students who appear the most vulnerable within schools.

Summary discussion

The previous discussion of national policies, circulars and guidance in SEN, especially targeting students who experience SEBD has provided a greater focus of areas for discussion in this research. Two such areas include a discussion of the ethos or culture within schools as a feature of school support and the role of supportive figures in early and later stages in a child's development.

The latter will be considered as we explore the importance of stable and reliable attachment figures during the period of adolescence. In this we will examine how this transitionary period impacts on a young person's psycho-social development and levels of emotional need.

John Bowlby and Attachment Theory.

The Green Paper (DfEE, 1997) emphasises the value of school culture in building or restoring healthy social and emotional states in young people. It states that ‘schools need to offer a setting where all children are valued and encouraged to behave well; where there are clear guidelines for behaviour, teaching is positive and where damaged self-esteems can be rebuilt.’

The importance of such a culture is also suggested in Promoting Children’s Mental Health within Early Years and School Settings (DfES, 2001). This guidance outlines ways in which schools can promote mental health care through the creation of a culture in which trust, integrity, democracy, equality of opportunity and value for individuals are nurtured. Both suggest the need for an ethos in which children feel welcomed and appreciated despite their prevailing individual circumstances, which may hinder full adjustment to school. One way this can be achieved is through the presence of adults who present as reliable and supportive figures to whom children can form an attachment.

John Bowlby (1969) is one of the first to present a discussion on the significance of positive attachment figures in a child’s early life. He proposes that adaptation to school is determined by the quality of interaction between caregivers and a child in early years, as it is through this interaction that young children develop internal working models, which consist of the internalised attitudes, thoughts and behaviour of significant others towards them. He argues that reliable responsive care tends to develop an internal working model of others as available and a model of self as worthy and loveable.

In contrast, the child who has experienced unsupportive attachment figures develops a model of others as unavailable and of self as unworthy, unlovable and incompetent. This then results in low-self- esteem, general mistrust and unresolved needs for nurturance (Sroufe, Cooper and De Hart, 1996). Ill time responses from attachment figures therefore results in a ‘defective’ internal working model, which could have detrimental effects on an individual’s mental health (Bowlby, 1973).

Attachment Theory corresponds with some of the principles of the Boxall NG approach, the theoretical orientation of the intervention evaluated in this research. Boxall’s NG principles argue that experiences in the early years affect the child’s social and emotional development, including self- esteem and so highlights the importance of the adult-child relationship in providing a secure base for the child to feel safe in learning new skills.

However, there are aspects of Boxall’s theoretical framework that cannot be explained by Bowlby’s Theory. For example, Attachment Theory ‘does not support the notion that replacing these early experiences at infant school age rectifies the difficulties associated with an insecure attachment. It also does not account for the aspects of NGs that involve the systematic teaching of social, emotional and learning skills (Garner and Thomas, 2011). Other theories associated with the NG approach include work by Vygotsky (1978) and Maslow (1970).

Vygotskian theory provides a rationale for the more educational elements associated with NGs. He argues that higher mental functioning has a socio-cultural origin and is developed through interaction with significant people in the child’s life. He proposes the term; ‘Zone of Proximal Development,’ which he describes as the distance between the child’s actual developmental level and what they could achieve in the presence of and mediation from, a more competent peer who should have a detailed knowledge of a child’s individual needs and where his next stage of development is. Vygotsky (1978) also emphasises the role that language plays in the development of internal thought and the provision of play opportunities, both key elements of the Boxall model (adapted from Garner and Thomas, 2011). This idea mirrors the emphasis that Boxall places on NG practitioners’ relationships with children, resulting in knowledge from individual needs and the subsequent provision of strategies and activities designed to advance the child to the developmental level demanded of him by school.

Maslow’s (1970) theory of motivation has also been cited (Cooper and Whitebread, 2007; Kearney, 2005; Cooper, Arnold and Boyd, 2001) as a useful way of understanding the role and influence of NGs. Maslow theorises that basic needs have to be satisfied in order for higher order needs to be present and motivate the individual. An obvious example is suggested in the physiological needs, such as hunger, to be satisfied by the provision of ‘breakfast,’ as well as security needs, through the provision of a safe haven for children, core elements of NG practice; before one can be motivated to aspire to higher order needs such as learning. These theories then emphasise the importance of safety and comfort as well as reliable adult figures in a child’s life for him to develop healthy mental states. Notes on Maslow’s hierarchy of needs can be seen in Appendix R.

While the focus in NGs is usually on younger children, as fieldwork for this research is a mainstream secondary school, we now turn to a discussion of adolescence to advance our understanding of this stage in human development and the importance of significant others in a child’s life. A case is also made for interventions such as NGs or variant forms to be used in secondary schools that help support young people’s transition into adulthood, as adolescence is commonly referred to as the second stage of individuation.

Adolescence: the second stage of individuation.

The term ‘Adolescence’ is derived from the Latin word ‘adolescere’ meaning “to grow up” or “to grow into maturity” (Muss, 1982) and corresponds with the teenage years, 13 to 19. Reflected within this are many strands of development that are marked by changes in the physical, cognitive, ego and psycho- sexual domains, thus leaving room for multiple perspectives when one attempts to analyse its dimensions.

Two schools that offer an explanation of this transitional process are the psychoanalytical and the socio-psychological. Former theories focus on the psycho-sexual development of individuals and examine the role psychological factors play in a young person’s movement from childhood and emotional development. The latter, the socio-psychological school, argues the adolescent’s transition results primarily in the social setting and focuses on the nature of roles and role conflict, the pressures of social expectations and the influence of different agents of socialisation. Of relevance to this research, the socio-psychological school of thought will be used as the approach to understand this distinct stage in human development.

The sociological/psychological approach views adolescence as a social construction, synonymous of a young person’s search to form his social identity. At the core of this is identity formation, which seeks an answer to fundamental questions of, ‘Who am I?’ and ‘what is my place in this world?’ To the social psychologist, personality is also viewed as a product of the social setting, conceived as an on-going process, constantly being patterned and re-patterned by social and cultural stimuli

(Sebald, 1984). This approach therefore examines a number of sociocultural conditions and considers how these impact on personality development. As personality and personal identity are influenced by one’s reference groups, significant others and cultural heritage, the nature of roles and role conflict, the pressures of social expectations and the relative influence of key agents of socialization, assume significance. The point at which these culminate therefore becomes the guiding principle of personality development.

Erikson (1976) refers to this stage in identity formation as ‘identity versus role confusion,’ as there is an unending struggle that the individual must go through due to an increasing social need to find his role in life as a sexual, productive, responsible adult with a reasonably consistent set of attitudes and values about himself. During this stage, the young person’s self-concept or overall perception of self not only assumes significance but undergoes a transformation and consolidation brought on by a number of factors. One of these is intellectual growth, which facilitates a more complex and sophisticated self-concept (Coleman, 2011), the overall view of oneself. This is then not only a barometer of coping and adaptation but also closely related to social adjustment, the extent to which an individual is able to adapt to the many changes at this stage and to aid the stability of the self-concept.

Though one of the areas of maturation least apparent to observers during adolescence, changes in intellectual functioning have implications for a wide range of behaviours and attitudes that render the move towards independence in both thought and action. They enable the young person to develop a time perspective of the future; facilitate the process of maturation in relationships and underlie an individual’s ability to participate in society (Coleman, 1980). Thinking is no longer grounded in a single idea that dominates early years but becomes centred on abstract concepts rather than limited to concrete reality. Such change in thinking, in reasoning and information-processing affect not only school performance but moral thought, interpersonal problem-solving, political decisions and risk taking (Coleman, 2011). It is what Piaget (1958) refers to as ‘concrete’ and ‘formal operations.’

As changes in intellectual functioning also affect the ways in which young people perceive themselves (self-image), their developed sense of identity and the ability to comprehend personal relationships (Kimmel and Weiner, 1995); the young person is able to consider things fully and organise his particular situation within the environmental context in which he lives. Developing abilities also allow him to understand the social worlds as areas of development include moral and political judgements, perspective taking, impression formation and ego-centrism (Coleman, 2011).

Elkind (1967) who expanded on the work of Piaget (1936) refers to egocentrism as the capacity to take account of other people’s thinking as the individual finds it difficult to differentiate between what others are thinking and his own preoccupations. Simply explained, the adolescent assumes that if he is obsessed by a thought or problem, others are equally obsessed by the same idea. A common example is the adolescent’s appearance, which Elkind (1967) links to the idea of the imaginary audience as the adolescent is either in actual or fantasied social situations, anticipating the reactions of others.

This concept is crucial to an understanding of his self-concept as well as the perceptions of others who exist within his world. This touches on an emerging perspective- ‘contextualism’ (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Lerner, 1991), a concept that underlies the importance of the environment or setting in which the adolescent is situated, including the family, the geographical, political, social and historical context.

The role of the school as a contributing factor in students’ behaviour has already been discussed in Chapter One. It should also be added that schools serve a social function as they are relentlessly engaging in the process of sorting students on the basis of behaviour, academic ability; into categories of good and bad, success and failure (Mc Clelland, 1982). Among schools, this form of structuring through groupings not only fosters inequality (Oakes, 1985) but impacts on the nature of interaction between students as well as the nature of relationships students share with others as during adolescence, multiple environments can exacerbate higher levels of alienation. While all adolescents are at risk, low achievers, those with low levels of involvement, those who have difficulty conforming to bureaucratic norms and those with a negative self-image or a sense of inferiority are at greater risk. This results in the adolescent becoming further alienated as he has not developed the coping skills essential for survival in a highly mobile technocracy. Alienation then becomes a way of life for many operating under the pressured system of today’s world. The alienated is then seen as disruptive and one who rebukes authority. He drops out of school or becomes a passive participant, is prone to suicide, abuses drugs and alcohol and rejects the norms established by family, school and society in general.

As change is an important feature of adolescent development, we need to consider the significance of agents of support within schools, the role of teachers, peer groups and role models as to the adolescent, available role models assume great significance as they begin to make role choices (Calbrese, 1987). The extent to which they incorporate as their own, the attitudes and characteristics of another, termed *identification,* is dependent on the degree of warmth and affection experienced by the child in his relationships with parents, the structure of the family and the child's involvement in decision making processes. In schools, peer groups are equally important as they help in determining interests and influence the behaviour and personality formation of an individual as the importance of the family diminishes.

As adolescence is synonymous with the emergence of a new social identity, part of assuming this requires a separation from early attachment figures, a turning away from the family towards the peer group (Cooke, Yeomans and Parkes, 2008). However, the act of separating from the parent and becoming an individual, 'separation-individuation,' (Blos, 1962), can usually be accompanied by feelings of isolation, loneliness and confusion. For some, the existence of stable and supportive home environments and welcoming peer groups can make this transition seamless. For others, it is a period filled with turmoil, chaos and confusion, thus reinforcing the need for adequate social and emotional support.

Summary discussion

The sociological perspective advances our understanding of adolescence in relation to the challenges apparent during this stage, the nature of the transition and the need for stable secure attachments either through reliable adult figures or peer groups. This suggests if healthy personalities are to emerge, environments that offer support and work to develop or repair damaged or emerging self-esteems are essential.

The importance of inclusive cultures within schools that are supportive of young people's developmental needs is therefore crucial. As part of the Inclusive Agenda, schools and more so, secondary schools are placed in a prominent position to ensure that all students but more so, those vulnerable to exclusion are fully supported.

The presence of NGs, though in variant forms based on therapeutic approaches is used to provide support to many vulnerable students in some contexts. The organizational structure and principles underlying this approach will be discussed in the following section of this chapter.

A Psychotherapeutic approach to SEBD.

Psychotherapy consists of an interactive process between a person or group and a therapist and is a common approach used to treat mental or emotional problems. It encourages individuals to communicate freely with each other, a strategy usually referred to as (talking therapies), it is performed using various methods, the most common being communication, while others include the written word, artwork, drama and a narrative story or music. Other forms involve play, dramatization or role play and drawing with co-constricted narrative.

Psychotherapy also uses techniques to increase an individual's sense of wellbeing, his awareness and capacity for observation, to bring about change behaviour and cognition and develop insight and empathy.

A client who experiences positive change is able to resolve or mitigate troublesome behaviours, beliefs, compulsions, thoughts or emotions. It is also understood that the key to the success of such approaches is the nature of the relationship between the client and therapist, commonly referred to as, the *therapeutic relationship*.

While some psychotherapeutic interventions are designed using a medical model, many do not adhere to this and result in different approaches to dealing with mental illnesses. These are classed as 'psychodynamic' or involving the psyche's conscious or unconscious influences on external relationships and the self.

One form of the therapeutic approach that is now widely used in educational settings is the NG. What follows is a discussion of the conceptual ideas of this intervention, its structure and underlying principles; as well as some of the research on NGs that attest to its success in supporting the social, academic and emotional needs of children with SEBD in primary and now secondary schools.

The origins of Nurture Groups.

NGs were first established in the 1970s by Marjorie Boxall; a then educational psychologist employed with the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA). The intervention was introduced in direct response to a plethora of referrals on deviant behaviour prevalent among children entering mainstream primary school. Boxall construed that their ‘perceived deviance’ was a result of early years spent in homes that could not provide the nurture and care needed and so considered the need to change schools to meet their learning needs, thus recreating the earliest years of a child’s life within a school setting.

Principles and structure of NGs.

NGs are then a school-based learning environment specifically designed for students whose difficulties in accessing school learning are underpinned by an apparent need for social and individual experiences, construed in terms of unmet early learning needs (Bennathan and Boxall, 2000; Boxall, 2002). They are designed to bridge the gap between the needs of mainstream classrooms and students who are devoid of basic, yet essential learning experiences that allow them to function socially and emotionally, at an age appropriate level (Doyle, 2006). Thus, they provide an environment that facilitates students’ emotional, social and cognitive development by removing any barriers in order to prepare them for functioning constructively in mainstream classrooms (Boxall, 2002).

In the Classic Boxall NG, staff ensure a slow moving and routinized environment within which students’ experiences are structured and controlled as they are encouraged to experience feelings of self-worth and a sense of mastery and control of events (Boxall, 2002). This is mainly achieved by enabling students to value themselves through their experience of being valued and cared for by others (Cooper and Lovey, 1999).

At the core of the NG experience are six NG principles. These advocate that children’s learning is understood developmentally and NG staff respond to them in terms of their developmental progress, rather than arbitrary expectations, based on ‘attainment levels.' The response to the individual child is therefore, ‘as they are', an ethos that is underpinned by a non-judgmental and accepting attitude. In NGs, the classroom also offers a safe base as both the management of the group and the environment are designed to contain anxiety. The room offers a balance of educational and domestic experiences, aimed at supporting the development of children's relationships with each other and staff, as adults are reliable and consistent in their approach to children.

Nurture is also viewed as essential in developing self-esteem as it involves noticing and praising small achievements, as well as listening and responding. ‘Everything is verbalized' with an emphasis on adults engaging with children in reciprocal shared activities e.g. play / meals / reading /talking about events and feelings. This allows children to respond positively as they are being valued and thought about as individuals.

Additionally, language is viewed as more than a skill to be learnt and understood more as a vital means of communication. Words are therefore used instead of actions to express feelings and opportunities are created for extended conversations or encouraging imaginative play, to understand the feelings of others. Informal opportunities for talking and sharing, for example, welcoming children into the group or having breakfast together are as important as the more formal lessons as the teaching of language skills.

Within NGs, behaviour is also seen as communication. Understanding what a child is communicating through behavior helps staff to respond in a firm but non-punitive way by not being provoked or discouraged. This then allows adults to make links between the external and internal worlds of the child.

In nurture, the focus is also on skills acquisition among, which includes early language development and mathematical concepts. Children are encouraged to express their views and concerns with other staff or students, in relation to the formal curriculum in terms of their personal, social and emotional functioning. Development of initiative and confidence in introducing ideas as well as initiating conversation and activities are also encouraged.

Finally, NGs understand the importance of transition in children’s lives and they help the child make the difficult transition from home to school. Changes in routine that are difficult for vulnerable children are also carefully managed within NGs through support that is provided (Nurture Group Network). This is facilitated as the focus is on developing a secure and trusting relationship with the teacher as a substitute attachment figure, (O’Connor and Colwell, 2002).

NGs are a within school resource staffed by two adults, a teacher and Teaching Assistant (TA) and normally cater for between 10 and 12 children of infant age, usually 4 to 5 years, in a discrete class group. They offer short or medium term placements where children attend regularly, usually returning fully to their mainstream class between two and four terms (Binnie and Allen, 2008). Routines include what one would associate within a family context rather than an educational one and the classroom is organised as a warm and friendly place that allows children to feel comfortable. Thus, rooms often include a settee, soft furniture and an area in which food is prepared and shared together.

Rules of conduct are also developed in consultation with students and behavioural problems are dealt with therapeutically rather than through coercive means. Emphasis is always on enabling students to learn about the meaning of their own as well as the behaviour of others. This helps them to develop a sense of being a valued member of the class community and learn that personal reward, in the form of self-esteem and recognition, can result from active and constructive participation in community life. By gaining this awareness, the child becomes even more conscious of the behavioural choices he has and, is thus able to develop internal controls (Adapted from Cooper and Lovey, 1999).

The tool used by most schools for identifying students' needs, planning intervention and charting progress is the Boxall Diagnostic Developmental Profile (Bennathan, 1997). Notes on the Profile can be found in Appendix D.

Although NGs dwindled to less than 50 during the 1990s, an increasing need to tackle the rising tide of SEBD among young children in early years schooling has led to a resurgent interest in their use as an alternative way to combat behaviour problems. However, along with a reviving interest has been the emergence of variant forms of the intervention. Cooper, Arnold and Boyd (1998) list examples of the variations that exist today.

There is The Classic Boxall NG that accords in all respects with the model established by Marjorie Boxall, (Bennathan and Boxall, 2000). They represent an inclusive form of educational provision and provide a holistic curriculum, including one designed to address social, emotional and behavioural needs underpinning academic learning. There are also variants or different forms of the Classic Boxall model that differ in structure and/or organizational features but clearly adhere to the core principles of the Classic NG in terms of developmental emphasis and the holistic curriculum.

Others include groups that bear the name NG or are claimed to be ‘variants’ of the NG concept, but do not conform to Boxall’s principles. These tend to vary radically from the organizational principles of the classic and variant models.

Finally, other groups bear the name NG but contravene, undermine or distort the key defining principles of the classic model. In the current research, Th. Inc. is considered a variant of the Classic Boxall NG and will be referred to as such. Other terms used within the literature include ‘aberrant’ and ‘divergent’ groups and will be used only when cited from references within the literature.

Despite the existence of variant forms, specific characteristics remain common to all NGs. One is the idea of NGs as an integrated and agreed provision of a LEA or school consortium of special educational provision. Adults also work together modelling good adult relationships in a structured and predictable environment, where children can begin to trust and learn. Equally, there is an emphasis on supporting positive emotional and social growth and cognitive development at whatever level of need children show, by responding to them in a developmentally appropriate way. Also identified is an emphasis on language development through intensive interaction with an adult. Finally, social learning is promoted through co-operation and play with others (Cooper, Arnold and Boyd, 1999).

Having discussed the origins, structure and principles of the Classic Boxall NG, we move now to a review of some of the research base on the use of NGs in primary and secondary schools as well as consider the ways these have impacted on students who access them.

Research base on Primary Nurture Groups.

Within the published literature is proposed several arguments in support of the ways in which NGs can impact positively, as a practical approach to supporting students with SEBD. This success has also been illustrated by examples of good practice in national reports including The Warnock Report (DfES, 1978) and The Green Paper (DfEE, 1997). These arguments are grounded in the effectiveness of NGs in bringing about progress in students over time, using the Boxall Profile (Bennathan and Boxall, 1998) and the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) (Goodman, 1997, 1999) as a measure of students' progress (Cooper and Tiknaz, 2005). An example of this questionnaire can be found in Appendix E. An added claim is that NGs impact at the organizational level as they provide effective approaches to dealing with learning and behaviour. This results in aspects of NG philosophy and practice becoming integrated into mainstream teachers' classroom practices through a liaison between NG and mainstream staff (Bennathan and Boxall, 2000).

As an intervention initially designed for younger children, the research base into primary NGs extends to include published reports based on the perceptions of stakeholders as well as some empirical evidence. One aspect of this research devotes much attention to discussing the impact of NGs in successfully reintegrating students into mainstream classrooms.

One such study by Iszatt and Wasilewska (1997) found that of 308 students placed in NGs, 87% were able to return to their mainstream classes after a placement of less than one year. A follow up also found that 83% of the original cohort were still schooled in mainstream with only 4% requiring SEN support beyond their school's standard range of provision. Demonstrating that a matched comparison group of children with SEBD who had not received NG support were three times more likely to require statutory assessment than those placed in NGs; the current writers argue that NGs can be much more cost effective, between 10 and 30 times less than residential school placements and less than a quarter of the average costs attracted by statements for students with SEBD.

Other areas of research focus on the efficacy of NGs in facilitating changes *within the child*. These include a focus on developing social and emotional skills, improving self-images, levels of confidence and the ability to regulate behaviour. Cooper and Lovey (1999) for instance suggest that NGs are essential among children who require the level of nurturing normally associated with pre-school years and without this, students would be unable to cope with the increasing demands of the classroom. Their study demonstrates that NGs assist students in developing emotional resources that enable them to thrive in mainstream classrooms. Their analysis of practitioners' views suggest NG support specifically addresses the mismatch between the demands of school and the capabilities of students, as it is more focused and precise in catering for emotional needs. They thus conclude that NGs are not only promising as an approach to early intervention for students with SEBD but they should be seen within the context of mainstream whole school approaches to supporting students.

Equally, based on a qualitative evaluation of pupils', parents' and teachers' views, Bishop and Swain (2000) argue that NGs are an effective intervention for meeting the needs of young children with SEBD. Their study reports on positive gains resulting from the measure of support students receive, the activities they engaged in and the opportunities for respite received from mainstream classrooms. Evidence was also given on an improvement in students' behaviour seen in a direct response to the perception of being valued as individuals, as opposed to being 'one of many,' in mainstream classrooms.

Parents in this study also add that the provision of respite from disruptive students or unwanted behaviour led to their children's emotional development as well as feelings of self-worth may have lessened the possibility of the child being excluded from school or being placed in a special school.

Another interesting find of the current researchers, is what they refer to as the two emerging concepts within education. In one respect, they argue that education is viewed as imparting knowledge such as Mathematics and English and interventions like the NG are perceived as an effective medium for intervening with students who display disruptive behaviour. Suggested in this conception is the view of students as a problem. Equally inherent with this notion is a 'deficit view' of disability as not only the child but the family is perceived to be the problem. Thus, like Howes, Emmanuel and Farrell (2003) and Howes (2003) we are forced to consider that while NGs may be successful at inclusion, there is an opportunity cost for some students who are withdrawn from mainstream classrooms.

The second and broader concept of education they address is the needs of the child as a whole; the social, emotional and cognitive and it is in this regard that Bishop and Swain (2000) argue to the effectiveness of NGs as it cultivates the holistic needs of the child and ensures the successful reintegration of a number of children who would have otherwise been excluded from mainstream classrooms.

Doyle's (2003) study also add to the existing literature that attests to the impact of NGs in bringing about positive changes within children. In her study of an infant school, she argues the NG not only aided in reintegrating students into their mainstream classrooms but NG principles were found to have a positive impact on the most vulnerable students with SEBD; as well as their mainstream peers. This, she claims, was achieved through practices and approaches that focused on the establishment of a social development curriculum which include self-control and management of behaviour; self-awareness and confidence; social skills and skills for learning. Emphasis is also placed on the physical changes in classrooms such as creating 'nooks' to which children would retreat re-experiencing early play experiences with mainstream classrooms and having access to a range of sensory and tactile experiences.

In particular, Doyle (2003) found the presence of a nurturing approach to behaviour, the establishment of a sanctuary lunchtime club for overwhelmed students, playtime routines, lunchtime rituals that evolved from NG routines at breakfast, as well as celebration assemblies all provide a range of activities to support developmental growth; and peer observation in NGs for both teaching and non-teaching staff. Based on these findings, she proposes that what evolved from chaos and anarchy was a positive learning environment based on NG principles.

Cooper and Tiknaz (2005) also provide evidence of the success of NGs from three case studies in early years, contending that NG placement does impact positively on students' social, emotional and behavioural development. Findings in their study also show a range of other benefits resulting from student engagement in NGs in areas of academic attainment, though they report less dramatic improvements in students' academic performance. Consistent with previous research, their three case studies report that the main function of NGs is the removal of the social, emotional and behavioural barriers that prevent students from engaging in school learning.

As the most dramatic effects of NGs were found in facilitating improvements in students' social, emotional and behavioural development, they recommend the need for schools to consider the purpose of such interventions as the best can be gained from NGs when the school as a whole community is committed to maximising the social and educational engagement of all students.

Sanders (2007) also highlights the positive ways in which NGs impact on students by comparing the gains to those who accessed a NG with those of a comparison school that used effective behaviour management strategies. Their analysis of data report significant social and emotional gains in three areas far greater than those made by students with similar difficulties within a comparison school: social, emotional and behavioural, academic gains and whole school improvements. In addition to these Sanders (2007) maintains that in NGs and classrooms, children establish positive friendships and display the ability to regulate their behaviour, to manage anger problems when issues arise and use skills of negotiation and compromise where necessary. The acquisition of these skills she proposes are essential as they allow students to remain in mainstream classrooms.

Commenting on the part time model of a NG Binnie and Allen (2008) provide a comprehensive report on its impact showing improvements in the social and emotional functioning of 36 students across 6 schools. Their analysis of parents' views, teachers and head teachers suggest the part- time model in no way compromises the gains reported in previous studies but has significant effects on the group across the six schools in areas of behaviour in school and at home.

Parental views of children who accessed the NG also suggest the intervention impacts positively on their child's progress and development, especially in the area of emotional and behavioural development. School staff also add it facilitates a number of improvements in measures of social and emotional functioning, self-esteem within a classroom setting as well as demonstrates behaviours that reflect emotional and behavioural development.

These findings lead Binnie and Allen (2008) to conclude, despite being a part time model, there is no compromise to the gains in social and emotional functioning and whole school development, with respect to supporting the most vulnerable children. Rather, they argue the part- time model allows schools to support children more effectively in facilitating their return to mainstream classrooms. It also facilitates a more positive transition when students no longer need to access the more protected environment of a NG if they are allowed to remain within their mainstream classroom throughout the intervention period.

In addition to the research based on testimonies of professionals and parents, there is also evidence from small and large scale experiments that attest to the impact of NGs on students. Reynolds, Mc Kay and Kearney (2009) provide evidence of statistical importance as the first study to use quantitative measures to assess the impact of NGs. The progress of students in NGs is charted and compared with those in the controls using quantitative measures of emotional/behavioural factors and academic attainments. Using a sample of 221 students (142 boys, 79 girls), they report on significant gains in emotional and behavioural functioning as well as academic attainments, in a large scale study across 32 schools. They found that NGs provide a theoretical and practical foundation for addressing the emotional, behavioural and academic needs of vulnerable students and are effective in providing a context that enhances academic attainment.

Similarly, in a two-year longitudinal study, Cooper, Arnold and Boyd (2001) also investigate the effectiveness of NGs within 25 schools across 8 LEAs. Using quantitative measures of students' progress to measure behavioural functioning and comparing students' with two different control groups, their study provides positive accounts regarding the outcome of the NG.

In another study, O'Connor and Colwell (2002) report on the short term impact of NGs among 68 infant children. Measuring the size and statistical significance of improvement scores on exit from NGs, their results were significantly reduced upon exit. Improvements were greatest in areas of cognitive and emotional development, which more than any, enabled students to return to normal classrooms. A significant find is that earlier deprivations tend to be more severe and resistant to change and based on this, they argue that nurturing for some children, may be necessary within the normal classroom if they are to maintain these changes. This finding is not only consistent with previous research (Cooper, Arnold and Boyd, 2001; Doyle, 2001; Campion, 1992; Lyndon, 1992; Weiner, 1989); but also with a 'developmental catch-up' interpretation, viewed as a consequence of the secure attachments made with NG staff.

Finally, Cooper and Whitebread (2007) found that schools with NGs achieve significantly higher statistical gains for students in terms of SEBD functioning (both in the NG and in the mainstream); than schools which do not have NGs. Their arguments are supported by improvements within the child and benefits to the whole school. They report that students in NGs who have been established for two years or more, experience statistically significant levels compared to improvements experienced by other mainstream students with SEBD. There are also significant improvements in behaviours associated with engagement in educational tasks, which is continued into later terms.

Another aspect of NG research devotes some attention to the impact of this intervention at the organizational level (Lucas, 1999; Doyle, 2003; Cooper and Whitebread, 2007; Cooper and Tiknaz, 2005). These studies examine the ways in which schools benefit from NG principles through an improved ethos and improvement in teacher pedagogy. There is also a positive impact on students and staff, facilitated through greater liaison between the NG and mainstream classroom, in terms of staff expectations and students' adaptability and generalisation of behaviour (Binnie and Allen, 2008). Added to this is also evidence that NGs provide a calming atmosphere and develops a 'nurturing' environment in many aspects of school life (Cooper, Arnold and Boyd, 2001). What then emerges is the nurturing school (Lucas, 2006).

Lucas (1999) is perhaps, the pioneer in this area of the discourse. She describes common characteristics of the archetypal 'nurturing school,' to include a recognition of the need for relationships in a family, group or community; value, understanding and respect to all people as unique individuals and shared aims and objectives that harness amazing energy within the school community. Such schools also demonstrate consistency in all things as there is a common approach to the sharing of values and they provide a model of cooperation to students and their families.

Added to this, the Senior Management Team (SMT) perceives the school as an organic whole as it clearly defines its task and shows a concern for the personal and professional development of individuals and their responsibility within the group context. The induction of new staff is therefore viewed as crucial as this ensures an awareness of the school's policies and procedures.

Finally, parental involvement is viewed as essential as home-school contracts include support for the school's ethos and rules. The theory underpinning NGs aids an understanding of SEBD as this helps schools identify specific needs to be met and be able to distinguish between SEN and misbehaviour. Accordingly, when the principles inherent in the NG approach are applied to teaching and learning, teaching becomes more effective; a positive cycle of growth and development is set in motion; energy is released and motivation and morale improves (Lucas, 1999).

One study that supports the above theory is conducted by Cooper and Lovey (1999). They argue that schools with an integral NG serve a double purpose as they benefit the most vulnerable of students and are able to provide an ethos of care and nurturing. Their survey of practitioners' views report that NGs made a major difference to schools that were already committed to policy developments and innovations having contributed to the overall ethos of the school.

Sanders (2007) also adds knowledge to this aspect of the debate, suggesting that NGs have a positive impact on an entire school, as teachers in her study report on lower levels of staff absenteeism and staff turnover, the presence of a calmer atmosphere because of improved behavioural instances, a marked improvement in the quality of their teaching as well as extended opportunities to implement and support behaviour management strategies commonly used in NGs. Additionally, there was an improvement in the links between home and school as parents appear more willing to liaise with school about improvements in their children's behaviour. She also argues that a whole school approach is crucial to the success of a NG as in her research, not only was all staff informed about the principles and provisions of the NG but staff was also involved in it as students' behaviour difficulties assumed a shared concern. Such an involvement then led to the whole school benefitting from the presence of a NG. This argument is consistent with Doyle (2003) who also contends for the nurturing school to have sufficient impact, there must be an agreed whole school policy embraced by all staff; as the value that is placed in people becomes an essential part of this growth. When staff feel nurtured, she perceives there is an equally positive nurturing effect on students.

Cooper and Whitebread (2007) also add their contribution to knowledge on how NGs impact at the organisational level discussing how the presence of an effective NG adds value to the work that schools do with the wider student population with SEBD. They argue NGs are more effective with students who have SEBD and do not attend NGs; than in schools where there is no NG on site as what is facilitated is a cycle of development as mainstream staff are able to develop more ‘nurturing’ approaches to students on the basis of their interactions with NG staff. Based on these findings, they conclude that the operations of NGs improve over time, as both NG staff and the school become more expert in working with the NG approach. This, they view, can be a highly promising form of provision as, not only do they add insight into the differential effects in relation to the social, emotional and behavioural characteristics of students; but they also contribute towards the development of the ‘nurturing school’ (Lucas, 1999; Doyle, 2003).

Finally, using staff perceptions, Binnie and Allen (2008) report on a NG that produced a positive impact on students who attended, their families and other students within the school. They argue that the NG allowed the school to be more proactive in their support of children with SEBD as whole school development was greatly enhanced in direct response to the multi-agency approach that led to a more ‘nurturing school.’ This, they propose is a defining feature of the NG and one that signifies its advantage over other interventions, as it makes significant systemic contributions to the support on offer across the whole school.

In addition to the organizational benefits brought about by NGs, Cooper and Tiknaz (2005) also addresses the challenges faced by successful NGs in achieving a coherent and sustained form of intervention in the context of a whole school approach. Firstly, they emphasise the lack of effective communication between NG and mainstream staff and difficulties in relation to numbers in NGs caused by large groups, (in excess of 10 or 12 students in a NG). This, they suggest, limits the amount of time adults are able to spend with individual students and hinders their overall progress. The importance of balance in the composition of NGs, is therefore suggested as they argue more appropriately balanced groups enable staff to engage with students in more proactive ways.

Other concerns they raise include communication in the form of ‘feeding back,’ (reporting on what happened in their classrooms), rather than ‘feeding forward’ and (developing joint strategies to meet students’ needs more effectively). There are also concerns regarding the dangers of students becoming socially disengaged from mainstream classrooms a situation Cooper and Tiknaz (2005) believe stems from the absence of constructive discussion, which tends to be a demarcation of roles and responsibilities, rather than a shared approach to dealing with the student. Finally, they touch on the issue of the opportunity cost and gains suggesting significant opportunity gains for students through a NG process that involves periods of separation.

Having reviewed some of the literature on the perceived areas of impact of NGs in primary schools, we now progress to a review of some of the research base on NGs in secondary schools.

Research base on Secondary Nurture Groups.

Introduction.

Interest in secondary NGs has intensified due to recent government endorsement (DfES, 1998, 1999; 2002a; DCSF, 2008, 2009) as well as significant demands for interventions to assist in dealing with SEBD in secondary schools. Despite the resurgent interest, however, compared to the research base in primary NGs, there remains a dearth of published reports on NGs in secondary schools (Cooley, 2009). This results in part from the concerns regarding implementing an intervention initially designed for younger children in a secondary school setting. A more detailed discussion of these concerns will be provided in Chapter Three when I outline my justification for the methodological approach. Nonetheless, there are some published accounts limited to Ofsted reports, professional testimonies and small scale research (Colley, 2009) that testify to the impact that secondary NGs have at the individual and organizational levels.

One study which examines the impact on students is conducted by Cooke, Yeomans and Parkes (2008). They argue that NG provision at Key Stage 3 can have a positive impact on students presenting with SEBD and this they contend, is facilitated as the nurturing environment supports those who have experienced early attachment and separation difficulties. In their study, nurture was not defined as being appropriate for entrenched behavioural needs that were persistently challenging, disruptive or violent but mainly for those who are withdrawn or introverted and at risk of making poor progress with learning. Additionally, in one school NG support was most effective among school leavers and for students who experienced severe or sudden trauma.

Impact and outcome evidence provided from a group and a case show clear improvements within the child evident in all areas related to the developmental strands of The Boxall Profile). Gains are also shown for engagement with peers, elevated scores on disengagement and self-negating, avoiding and rejecting attachments and an under developed sense of self. This includes signs of imitating the positive behaviour of staff, a growth in self-esteem levels and a willingness to assume responsibilities and caring for others within the group. There was also an improvement in reading levels reflected in a low reading age.

Additional areas of impact were noted in supporting the transition of young people from primary into secondary school through an engagement in activities that helped to promote cooperation, language development and support in recovering from traumatic life events, for example, the experiences of refugees.

The findings of the above study are comparable with Cooley (2009) who also argue that secondary NGs impact on and even replicate the Classic Boxall NG, being a purveyor of functions additional to those in primary schools. Beyond addressing common behavioural issues, he argues that NGs offer a sanctuary for young people, they act as a provision or step into school for those who have been on long term absence and they ensure young people remain in mainstream education. They are also successful in helping students manage loss, trauma and the emotional impact of being diagnosed with a terminal illness; as well as function as a continuum of support especially to parents. In all cases, they are also fully embedded into the fabric of the school.

Garner and Thomas (2011) also found that despite the different emphasis of the primary NGs, secondary NGs can be a valued resource providing beneficial support for students with SEBD. One area of impact is in the relationships students share with NG staff, relationships based on equality and respect between adults and peers. This they perceive to be instrumental in the success of the NG.

Other areas of impact are improved levels in students' attendance and provision of a secure base and a safe haven, particularly for the more vulnerable and immature students. This, it is suggested allows them to navigate and cope with the transition from primary to a mainstream secondary school. Parents of pupils who access the NG also believe that a safe learning environment is provided by NG staff where children could take risks with their learning.

Consistent with previous research, (Cooke, Yeoman and Parkes, 2008), they highlight some of the core differences in their research between primary and secondary NGs. One is the relationship between the NG teacher and the child. They suggest that in Boxall's Classic NG, the relationship tends to be directed by the adult and the child is treated as a much younger toddler. However, in their research, the relationship between staff and children is less autocratic but based on respect and equality.

Another interesting find relates to the secure base, which in their study, appears to serve a wider and broader function than originally described by Boxall (1996) seen in the flexibility of being independently accessed by students as and when they needed it. This, Garner and Thomas (2011) suggest allows students to cope with the wider school environment as well as the difficulties they may experience outside school.

Finally, staff in this research observed that students needed extended support beyond the NG, an issue caused by the lack of support from the wider school and home. Thus, Garner and Thomas (2011) suggest that students may not be making the level of progress that allows them to be completely confident and comfortable as is presumed by staff.

Despite these concerns, the nature of relationships, the provision of a secure base and the level of independence achieved by students all indicate that the NG does meet the developmental attachment needs for an attachment figure during adolescence. In this regard, they argue the NG provides what a mainstream secondary school cannot: the ongoing need for an environment in school that reflects what children experience at home.

Finally, Kourmoulaki (2013) conducted an in-depth exploration of the structure, function and impact of one NG to shed light on three underexplored areas within the existing literature. These include providing young people’s views on their experiences in NGs, the skill-base found among NG staff and the whole school supports that facilitate the functioning of the NG and transferability of skills across other contexts.

Analysis of data shows that the two NGs in this study operated on basic NG principles and structures (Boxall, 2002) and used similar means to promote improvements within the child. Poor concentration, presenting learning difficulties, neglect and challenging behaviour (Colley, 2009; Cooper and Tiknaz, 2005; Lyndon, 1992; Sanders, 2007) were also found among members in the above study.

Areas of improvements within the child were extended to levels of social interaction and self-regulation, growth in confidence, especially in social situations and with new people, the ability to be more expressive of their needs and wishes, being calmer and more focused in class (Cooper and Tiknaz, 2005; Cooper and Whitebread, 2007) and more interested, attentive and considerate of peers (Seth-

Smith, Levi, Pratt, et al, 2010). Other perceived areas of impact are the alleviation of transition anxieties (West, Sweetig and Young, 2010) as the NG offers a shelter that promotes a healthy lifestyle (Colley, 2009); providing emotional readiness for learning in mainstream classrooms (Boxall, 2002) and the experience of positive socialisation (Scott and Lee, 2009). Participants also valued the safety, calmness and belonging they experienced as being part of the group (Bishop and Swain, 2000; Sanders, 2007).

Furthermore, consistent with Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969), NG staff were predictable and responsive to young people's needs as there was a celebration of success and an encouragement of young people to transfer the learning across contexts.

The current study also reports on impact at whole school. This was marked in increased levels of peer co-operation as a former NG member was used as a peer helper to promote responsibility, a key element of effective schools. Kourmoulaki (2013) therefore proposes that secondary NGs not only carry the benefits of primary NGs but are especially useful in helping young people develop feelings of safety, belonging, as well as coping with change and social challenges. In particular, she contends that NG staff are central in fostering these feelings and enabling members of the groups to apply their developing skills across contexts.

Consistent with previous research and despite the evidence of sound impact, the present study also highlights a number of challenges in secondary NGs. Firstly, Kourmoulaki (2013) cites the need to secure elements known to contribute to school-improvement and inclusion. These include protected time for staff and departments to work together (McMahon, 2001), clear strategies for monitoring and evaluation (HMIe, 2002) such as peer observations (Doyle, 2004) and sustained communication with parents/carers to ensure engagement and shared responsibility among all school staff for pastoral care (HMIe, 2002).

Summary discussion:

The main aim of this research is to determine the merit of a programme used in one mainstream secondary school, by evaluating its perceived impact on a group of students with impaired social and emotional skills. A secondary aim is to determine its perceived impact on staff and the whole school. The programme evaluated is referred to as Th. Inc., the theoretical orientation of which is the Classic Boxall NG. As a variant or different form of this intervention, Th. Inc. adheres closely to the principles of this NG model. Earlier sections of this chapter reviewed some of the literature relevant to the study to provide theoretical frameworks for this research. This included a review of the literature on inclusive education with a focus on the significance of an inclusive school culture. It is suggested an inclusive culture helps support the inclusion of vulnerable students by removing barriers to their learning and participation within school.

Another strand of the literature reviewed focused on the existing research in NGs and the perceived areas of impact this intervention has on students in primary and secondary schools. Much of the research carried out in primary NGs support claims that the intervention leads to changes within the child, seen in improvements in their social and emotional functioning, their behaviour as well as improved levels of cognition. Other areas of impact are noted at the organizational level suggesting that NG principles lead to an improved school ethos and the development of practises consistent with the nurturing school (Lucas, 1999).

Though scarce in comparison and used more in variant forms, the literature on secondary NGs shows that they fulfil a wider purpose, impacting in areas such as attendance, enhancing self-esteem, fostering self-regulation skills and improving social relationships. In others, secondary NGs function as a safe haven that provides students with support necessary for a successful transition and adjustment to secondary school. As this review presents only a partial discussion of the research literature, there are still noticeable gaps worthy of research.

Kourmoulaki (2013) for instance highlights the dearth of research in ‘student voice’ used to gain a better understanding of their experiences within NGs, as well as their perception of gains resulting from their participation.

Another area lacking in evidence is the focus on specific skills NG staff use to enable students with an understanding of how these make a difference for NG members. While these are worthwhile areas that demand consideration, it is not my intention to explore existing gaps within the current literature. Rather, this research will focus on evaluating the merit of this intervention, Th. Inc., by considering its perceived areas of impact on students, staff and the organisations which it serves. With this, I have decided upon specific areas that will become the focus of the research. My overall aims will therefore be achieved through the following Research Questions:

1. Using ‘student voice,’ in what ways does Th. Inc. impact on students in terms of their social and emotional adjustments; and equally, to what extent does this support their inclusion in school?
2. What strategies are used within Th. Inc. to enable students and what are the perceived areas of impact in terms of staff perceptions?
3. What is the perceived impact of Th. Inc. on staff, in terms of personal and professional development; as well as the organization based on staff perceptions?
4. What factors limit the systemic operations of Th. Inc. within the school?
5. What changes are suggested to facilitate effective operations of Th. Inc. within the school?

The following chapter will discuss the methodological approaches used in this research.

Chapter Three:

The methodological approach to the research.

Introduction:

The research seeks to determine the merit of a programme used in one mainstream secondary school, by evaluating its perceived impact on a group of students with impaired social and emotional skills. A secondary aim is to determine its perceived impact on staff and the whole school. The programme evaluated is referred to as Th. Inc., the theoretical orientation of which is the Classic Boxall NG. As a variant or different form of this intervention, Th. Inc. adheres closely to the principles of this NG model.

NGs are mostly used in primary schools to support the social and emotional adjustment of younger students. However, an increasing need to support older children with varied needs has led to a resurgent interest in NGs or variant forms at secondary school. An example of this is offered in the programme of Th. Inc. This chapter will discuss the methodological approach taken in the study to achieve the aim outlined above. Before this is achieved, however, there is need to discuss the programme that will be evaluated in greater detail.

A programme of Therapeutic Inclusion.

Th. Inc. is part of a whole school approach that meets the needs of children who require additional social and emotional support to access school fully. It is especially designed for those who are experiencing difficulties and need opportunities to explore their thoughts and feelings within a safe space, during a consistent and specified time to work through things symbolically. It aims to improve students' social skills, assists them in managing difficult situations and provides opportunities for relaxation and discussion through the medium of play therapy and emotional literacy. The programme has its theoretical orientation in the Classic Boxall NG, the main features of which have already been discussed.

Despite the existing research base that attest to the positive impact of NGs on students in both primary and secondary schools, detractors have presented arguments that counter the merit of the intervention, particularly within secondary schools. At this point, I will provide some attention to their arguments as these have been instrumental in guiding the choice of methodologies as well as the development of my research aims.

Critique of Nurture Groups

Howes, Emmanuel and Farrell (2003) present a review of three case studies in which they question the potential of NGs in facilitating inclusive practices in primary schools. They argue the size of the group, the age of children and the mixture of emotional and behavioural difficulties are all critical in relation to the effective running of NGs. Also highlighted is the issue of 'opportunity cost,' in terms of the loss to children attending NGs when separated from their peer groups in mainstream classrooms.

Bishop and Swain (2000) suggest that despite adding to policy and research, NGs highlight controversial issues that relate to home school links, in taking on the nurturing role of parents and the family and the nature of inclusion through the provision of 'separate groups.' Like Howes, Emmanuel and Farrell (2003), they view this as problematic and argue these may lessen the perceived areas of impact. Ferguson and Fraser (1998) also report on the individualistic nature of secondary schools as well as the impersonal interactions with teachers.

Furthermore, Cooper, Arnold and Boyd (2001) discuss the issue of transferability when questioning the extent to which an intervention designed for students of primary school age can be transferred successfully to secondary schools. In particular, they discuss whether the emphasis on pre-school experiences and activities aimed at reception and Year 1 are age-appropriate for older students, especially those in secondary schools.

In discussing an issue that relates to the theory and practice underpinning the Classic Boxall NG, that of Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969, 1973 and 1980); Cooley (2006) sees merit in the secondary NG arguing that while poor attachment may underpin many of the difficulties faced by young people requiring nurture in secondary schools, secondary nurture facilities also deal with a broader range of issues linked to adolescence. Among these include 'healthy lifestyles,' positive life choices during teenage years and issues around self- image and peer relationships. They argue therefore, when such crises arise, the secondary nurture provision is best able to respond immediately and flexibly in an organised, professional and empathetic manner to many of these problems. Despite these arguments, he presents a number of concerns regarding secondary NGs.

One is the issue of replicability in implementing NGs in secondary schools, suggesting that while secondary NGs can provide a number of common features associated with the Classic Boxall NG among which include (a dedicated classroom that promotes a welcoming and homely atmosphere, trained staff who model appropriate relationships, engage with young people in a respectful and positive way; employment of nurture principles and the nurture breakfast), the secondary model differs significantly in a number of important respects.

One such area is the sheer size of the primary school in relation to the secondary school, 300 versus 1500 students. This disparity suggests that the number of students identified for need may exceed the places available for support. This, he suggests may further force secondary schools to run a number of ‘support areas’ that differentiate between learning needs, behavioural needs and nurturing needs. The result is that secondary NGs can develop as a unique feature in the continuum of care, support and provision that some may require to make a success of their educational opportunities.

Another concern raised by Colley (2006) is the hours of contact with students, which differ in primary and secondary NGs. The primary NG engages with students for more timetabled hours per week and while this degree of support can be replicated in secondary NGs, more often the nurture facility might be available for only three sessions per week over three terms.

Issues regarding replicability are further compounded by the applicability of The Boxall Profile (Bennathan and Boxall, 1998), the tool used for assessing students for NG support. While the Boxall Profile has the potential to assist practitioners across the age ranges, the original profile has an early years focus and much of the language refers to children in their earliest years. Thus, what is required is a version of the Boxall Profile that would reflect the secondary age group more appropriately (Colley, 2006).

Finally, there are issues that relate to the dissemination of information, or what Colley (2006) refers to as the dynamics within primary schools in terms of size and staffing locations. These, he suggests, lend themselves towards a whole school drive in developing nurture practice throughout the school from the inception. However, the existing structure within secondary schools, makes it imperative to inform all staff of the new nurture facility and its purpose if this is to be a whole school resource.

I have devoted time to discussing some of the issues raised within the research literature as they have not only influenced the methods chosen to approach this research but have helped narrow areas for my research focus. While noticeable gaps are identified within existing research, it is not my intention to explore these lines of inquiry. As stated, the aim of this research is to evaluate a variant form of the NG in one mainstream secondary school, to determine its merit by determining its areas of impact on those who access it. It is therefore hoped that my findings will contribute to a greater understanding of approaches that can be used to help support the inclusion of students with varying needs within educational contexts. Additionally, I hope to advance knowledge by understanding how interventions such as Th. Inc. though a variant form of the Classic Boxall NG, can be age appropriate for older children in one secondary school. Findings will also be used to highlight 'student voice' as a methodological tool that empowers those students who often remain unheard in schools.

This aim will be achieved through the following Research Question:

1. Using 'student voice,' in what ways does Therapeutic Inclusion impact on students' and equally, to what extent does this support their inclusion in school?

The research approach

This research was conducted over a six-year period, September 2009 to July, 2015 and carried out in three phases.

Stage 1:

This research grew out of an interest to understand how a program of Th. Inc. impacts on a group of students who are vulnerable to exclusion due to their presenting social and emotional needs. The first phase of the research involved establishing contact with the relevant parties within the school to discuss the nature of the research. A meeting was arranged with a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) who at the time managed the Special Educational Needs Department, (SEND) at the school. During our initial meeting, information regarding the nature, aims and objectives of the Th. Inc. programme was disclosed and I was directed to some of the literature on the theoretical orientation of the intervention. Information was also provided on the nature of students targeted for access. This early introduction to Th.

Inc. was a learning experience; for while I was a teacher at the school, my knowledge of Th. Inc. as a whole school intervention was limited.

After gaining a few initial ideas, permission was sought from the Head teacher when we discussed the aims of the study, how I would proceed with the research and the proposed benefits to the school. Approval was immediately granted and following this, arrangements were made for a meeting with the Teaching Assistant (TA) responsible for the management of Th. Inc. to discuss suitable participants for the research.

It was decided that a sample of 8 students would provide a fair representation of students' experiences in Th. Inc., however, selecting a random sample at this stage was problematic as some who access Th. Inc. are the most vulnerable within the school. Many are on the school's Child Protection Register (CPR) (a list of all students at the school who may be at risk of physical harm, neglect and sexual abuse). This list is also kept by the Department of Health (DoH). Such students receive support at School Action Plus (a graduated approach to supporting students' needs under the SEN Code (DfES, 2001). They often also receive support from multi-agencies, for example, Health and Social Services as well as periodic assessments by an Educational Psychologist. Such personal details of individual students remain highly confidential and are known to a select group of staff within the school. Subject teachers like myself are therefore informed on a 'need to know basis.' This meant in my role as a researcher and teacher, I was excluded from working with a number of these students. Despite experiencing this early setback, 8 students agreed to participate in the research.

Stage 2:

Having formulated the general area of research and refined my initial Research Question, the next stage involved working on the methodological approach to achieve the desired outcomes. The first step was to select a research paradigm. My choice of research paradigm was guided by two things, my view about the social world and the methodology used in past research on NGs. Much has been written on the two paradigms within which social research is conducted, the qualitative versus quantitative paradigms and it is not my intention to delve into a lengthy discussion as to which should be afforded more merit. Needless to say, my choice of research paradigm is grounded in my belief that human actions cannot be explained using accurate or precise definitions or technical terms. I believe rather, they are explained through descriptions that tend to have social meanings. In this sense, reality is seen as a construct of the human mind that can be presented in varying ways.

My methodological choice is also guided by past research on NGs, some of which rely on quantitative measures to justify areas of impact. Much of the research on NGs that use qualitative methods have been done on primary NGs and rely mostly on observations and the perceptions of staff, including head teachers and practitioners (Colley, 2009) as well as teachers, parents and students (Bishop and Swain, 2000b). Others use questionnaires, which are evaluated using both qualitative and quantitative methods (Binnie and Allen, 2008); structured observations (Bani, 2011; Sanders, 2007); staff perceptions, the perceptions of parents via focus groups; and children who had attended the NG (Garner and Thomas, 2011). Others use interviews from past and current NG members, NG staff and other staff members (Kourmoulaki, 2013); as well as practitioner views (Cooper and Lovey, 1999).

Some research on secondary NGs use both qualitative and quantitative methods as there is an emphasis on determining effectiveness using a longitudinal design through quantitative data sources (Cooper and Whitebread, 2007). The approach taken in this study is to use qualitative methods, a decision guided by the desire to determine impact through the primary use of ‘student voice.’ Staff voice and in particular, the views of support staff will also be used. This will provide a platform for a group of students and staff whose voices have previously remained unheard on salient issues in educational contexts. Obtaining their views on how they perceive their experiences in the world of Th. Inc. therefore places this study within a qualitative paradigm.

The Design:

My choice of research design is also guided by the general aims of the research, this being to evaluate a program of Th. Inc. to determine its merit to individuals and will consist of a case study where the actual case being evaluated is a programme of Th. Inc. The study is also one of singularity, a study of a specific case or event rather than general events (Bassey, 1999).

There are many advantages to using the Case Study design, one of which is, it allows for data that is paradoxically ‘strong in reality,’ compared to other research data that can be ‘weak in reality.’ Attention is also paid to the subtlety and complexity of the case in its own right as well as the complexity and ‘embeddedness’ of social truths, as they represent something of the discrepancies or conflicts between viewpoints held by participants (Bassey, 1999).

Case studies also present research or evaluation data in a more publicly accessible form than other kinds of research reported (Adelman, Jenkins and Kemmis, 1980). Given the number of student participants, 8, the case study design will allow me to get close to their perspectives, to obtain data that reflects how they articulate their own experiences (Denzin and Lincoln 1994); to ‘probe deeply’ and gather data that is ‘rich and thick in description.’

Equally, I am aware of the limitations of my chosen design, as in educational research, criticisms have been levelled against the use of the Case Study and these must be addressed in order to provide further justification for my chosen approach. A major argument is that it ‘lacks of rigour’ and provides little basis for scientific generalization (Yin, 1994). The rejection of generalization means that studies will be doomed to remain isolated one off affairs with no sense of cumulative knowledge or developing theoretical insight.

Two proponents of this view include Atkinson and Delamont (1985) who argue that the unit of analysis, (the case), can in practise mean anything and case study writers seem often in danger of reinventing the wheel. Therefore, among case study researchers, a ‘concern for ethics too often supplants equally important issues of theory and method.

In defence of my chosen design, my aim is not to test theory but to evaluate the single case with the purpose of discovering the extent to which a programme may be judged as being of merit or worthwhile by students and some staff. In this regard, it is hoped the findings will add to the existing body of knowledge on Th. Inc. as a promising approach to supporting students with SEBD within a mainstream secondary school. A case for analytic generalization (Lin, 1994) is therefore made as the empirical results of the Case Study will be compared to previously developed theory; and, if two or more cases are shown to support the same theory, replication may be claimed (Yin, 1994). The evaluative case study defined by Stenhouse (1985) will be used in this study as the aim is to provide further information on the nature of a phenomenon that would later be used to assist in judging the merit and worth of policies.

The Case: A Therapeutic Inclusion Programme.

The theoretical underpinning of Th. Inc. is the Classic Boxall NG and as a variant of this model, it adheres closely to key NG principles. Th. Inc. is part of a whole school approach to inclusion and combines therapeutic nurturing and educational approaches. It is designed for students who are failing to access school fully for an array of reasons. These include students who have a statement of SEN and those who are supported at School Action and School Action Plus. Other areas of need include students who experience social and emotional difficulties, those who experience poor self-awareness/self-management, those who have difficulty controlling their emotions and or anger, underachievers and those who display withdrawn behaviours. Students who experience friendship difficulties and traumatic life events also access Th. Inc.

Th. Inc. is considered a safe place within the school and offers an individualised range of therapeutic activities that include arts and crafts, games and discussion or scenario based role-plays. Students can benefit from increased and improved social skills learning, strategies to deal with grief, anxiety, anger and an improved ability to cope in school. They are also taught how to develop better relationships with staff. The four principles that govern behaviour include accountability, responsibility, being a good sport and self-control or self-restraint. These rules are clearly explained and can be referenced in Appendix F.

The programme is the first of this kind to be trialled in a secondary school in the city and was introduced in 2007 to aid in strengthening the school’s capacity to support vulnerable students. Over time, its services have been extended to a wider student population with varying needs that includes social, emotional, behavioural and cognitive.

The Th. Inc. Room is located in the main school building and is managed as part of the learning Support Department (LSD) at the school. Unlike the Classic Boxall NG, the Th. Inc. Room is not equipped with a kitchen area for cooking and preparing breakfast or food and is not run by two members of staff. There is however, a sandpit to promote tactile activities and encourage creativity, two bean bags for comfortable seating, a heat board, used to determine students' emotions, a range of educational books, stuffed toys, board games and special lights. There is also a compact disc player and a range of music from which students are encouraged to choose.

Referral to Th. Inc. is made on the recommendation of either Heads of Years (HoYs), Learning Mentors (LMs), teachers or members of the SLT, if a child displays any or a combination of behaviours mentioned earlier, appears to be underachieving or simply failing to access school fully.

Parents are informed via a letter of the concerns regarding the child and a request is made to undergo an assessment. Parents are also encouraged to complete an at home questionnaire detailing the nature of the child's behaviour at home. An example of the home questionnaire can be seen in Appendix G. Results of the home questionnaire are used to determine the degree of need and duration of intervention required.

Once parental consent is granted, students are assessed using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, an example of which can be found in Appendix E. This has replaced the Boxall Profile (Bennathan and Boxall, 1998) as the standard tool for assessing students' needs, due to its impractical nature for assessing students of secondary age. For more on this discussion please refer to Colley (2006).

Time spent in Th. Inc. is dependent on the nature and severity of need and can include a period of six weeks or a half term to three months. In some cases, a student can be supported by Th. Inc. for all of Key Stage 3 or 4 or the five years spent in secondary school. This is common in cases where students have been supported within a nurture facility at primary school or are in receipt of support from multi-agencies.

Students are timetabled for a one-hour session with one TA every week though in some cases, group sessions are organised and can include between four to eight students. Group sessions are deigned to improve peer and social relations between groups of students and unlike individual sessions, are sometimes scheduled after school for one hour.

Although Th. Inc. is an educational resource, it does not provide a holistic curriculum to students. TAs work to improve students' social and emotional skills using a range of therapeutic activities. Trained Art Therapists from external agencies also use the programme to deliver Art Therapy to children who have experienced extreme trauma. The room is also used by HoYs, members of the school's Safe Guarding Team (SGT) and LMs for varying types and degrees of interventions. The positive impact of Th. Inc. has been acknowledged in recent Ofsted reports on the school.

The Participants:

A sample of eight 8 students (5 females and 3 males) participated in this research based on voluntary participation approaches, purposive sampling (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Students were included from four year groups within the school:

Year 7- one student;
Year 8: four students;
Year 9: two students and;
Year 10: one student.

While attempts were made to include students from each year group, some students were deemed unsuitable to participate due to being on the school's CPR. The decision was also taken to exclude students from Year 11 due to the demands placed on them in preparation for their General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE).

Names of suitable students were forwarded to me and following this, a request was made to parents to have their children participate in the research. Initial contact was made via the telephone to inform parents of the research and once a willingness was shown, a letter was sent home via students to assenting parents. As this research was carried out on a part time basis, a maximum of two students were studied at a time. This included observations in mainstream classrooms and the Th. Inc. Room as well as interviewing. This provided me with a measure of ease and fitted in well with my teaching schedule as these were completed during my non-contact teaching hours. A copy of the letter sent to parents, as well as the information sheet with an attached consent form can be seen in Appendix H. All signed letters were returned within two weeks of receipt.

Following written consent from parents, students were then contacted to request their participation in the research. As students were already informed about the research by their parents, I arranged a meeting with each student to discuss further, the nature of the project and whether they would be willing to participate.

This lasted between 8-10 minutes during which time I introduced myself, explained my dual role within the school, being a teacher as well as a researcher and my interest in conducting the research. The aims, procedures and possible outcomes were also explained to each student at this time. Issues relating to confidentiality and anonymity as well as the right to withdraw at any time without fear of hurt or harm were also clearly outlined. Students were also informed that parental consent was compulsory and should this be withdrawn; their participation would also be withdrawn. Each student was provided with a copy of the letter introducing the research, a pupil friendly information sheet and a consent form to be signed and returned. These can be referenced in Appendix I. A two-week window was granted for which signed letters should be returned. The information sheet outlined in greater detail the purpose of the research, the expectations of their participation, as well as the expected outcomes. To ensure students fully understood what would be expected during the research process, a list of questions was constructed, read to them and provided for their response. A copy of this can be found in Appendix J. Most letters were retuned within 3-5 days of receipt and signed by students.

As the research seeks to also determine the impact of the intervention on staff, the views of both teaching and non-teaching were considered valuable and so they were duly invited as participants. Seven members of staff were interviewed, four Th. Inc. staff and three teaching staff. Each member was invited to take part in the research and provided with a staff version of the invitation letter, an information sheet and a consent form. These also outlined the purpose, nature and expected outcomes of the research and staff were given two weeks in which to respond. All letters were returned within days of distribution. Copies of these can be viewed in Appendix K.

The School

Fieldwork for this study was conducted in a coeducational secondary school, which shares academy status, in the North West of England. The school is located in a sub-urban town, miles outside the main city centre and has a longstanding history within the local community that predates to the 1920s. In the last ten years, a new structure was built and the school was relocated to its current site. There are approximately 1500 students on roll who are sourced from neighbouring primary feeder schools. After experiencing a period of underperformance below national targets, from 2008, the school's examination results have steadily increased and is now achieving above national targets. In 2016, the school achieved its best examination results, with 66% of its students achieving 5A*-C grades in the GCSE, including Mathematics and English.

Supported Learning.

There are 154 students on the school's SEN register who are supported by 23 members of staff within the LSD. The department consists of the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO), an assistant SENCO, 22 TAs, 18 of whom, work in classrooms to support students with a range of learning, social, behavioral and emotional needs. Support for Learning is also provided through academic student support of Literacy and Numeracy sessions, assistance with homework through clubs, academic mentoring and a break time club for students who struggle adjusting to larger groups within the school.

Of the 154 students identified as having a SEN, 22 are support by an ECHP, previously a statement of SEN while 132 receive SEN support at school level support K. The main areas of need that are supported include:

Table 3 reflects the number of students on the school's SEN register for the academic year, 2011-2012 with areas of SEN.

SEN CATEGORY	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
SpLD	10	11	9	6	10
MLD	11	3	4	2	6
SLD	0	1	1	1	1
SLCN	3	5	0	7	4
ASD	4	4	3	1	1
Hearing Impaired	0	2	0	0	1
Physical Disability	0	0	3	0	0
Other Diff/Dis	2	1	0	0	0
(SEBD)/ (SEMH)	6	20	9	9	6
Visual Impairment	1	0	1	0	1

Figure 3: Number of students on the school's SEN register. (Source: School's Learning Support Department)

Specific areas of need are not exclusive to one SEN, thus, a student can be in receipt of support for one or more area of SEN.

Under the new SEND Code (DfE, DoH, 2015), students who have an ECHP receive targeted school level support, while those without an ECHP receive any form of school level support. The latter ranges from and can include support from learning mentors, academic coaching, an assigned academic mentor or withdrawal from mainstream classrooms and placed into targeted specialized groups for specific subject support. Other students are supported at school level through what is now termed, Universal Provision (UP), which includes any additional support provided by classroom teachers to ensure students make expected academic progress.

There is also a Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) practitioner resident at the school, who offers specialist services to students who experience mental health difficulties and a nurse who provides a range of health care services such as advice on healthy eating, smoking cessation, sexual health and contraceptive use. The school also has a three-member Child Protection (CP) and SGT, which ensures students' emotional well-being and general welfare needs are sufficiently met. The team works alongside Social Services and a range of external agencies such as CAMHS to support vulnerable students in and out of school.

For all students, pastoral support is provided through a tutor group led by a form tutor who acts as the key person of contact for parents and staff regarding all matters relating to students. LMs are also assigned to year groups and work closely with HoYs to offer one to one and group support.

Finally, there is the Th. Inc. program, which provides students with a comfortable, fun, safe place in which they can explore their difficulties and find solutions to the problems they face. Reports from students and staff continue to be extremely positive as to the impact of the intervention.

The following section will discuss the instruments used in collecting data for the research. These were collected from a range of sources and include interviews, observations and documents. Time and space does not permit an in-depth account of 'data collection episodes' which details the number of times each participant was interviewed, observed and the duration of each. This can however, be viewed in Appendices L, M and N.

Instruments of data Collection:

Interviews with students:

The main source of data for this research consisted of interviews with students. Allowing students to voice their views on matters that relate to their education is endorsed in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNESCO, 1989). This recognises the child as one who is capable of forming views in all matters affecting him and grants the right to voice this opinion. This idea is given further impetus in The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994). Encouraging students to be active agents and participate fully in matters concerning their learning is also referred to as the client oriented perspective (Wade and Moore, 1993) or the consumer's view (Guterman, 1995; Habel, Bloom, Ray, et al, 1999). In the field of Special Education, this perspective is extremely valuable for those who are traditionally considered as having a disability or a handicap as it can be empowering.

The decision to use 'student voice' as a methodological tool is also influenced by past research on NGs. While much have relied on questionnaires and closed response questions, a few have used 'student voice' to gain an understanding of students' worlds. Gaining the perceptions of students through this methodological tool is therefore a newer approach to understanding the impact of this intervention.

My dual role within the research context also influenced my choice in the style of interviews as individual interviews rather than the focus group style are used. Firstly, I am a teacher of English at the school, having taught here for the past three years. Prior to beginning this research, I worked as a cover teacher for two years and during my last year, I was a Recently Qualified Teacher (RQT).

My responsibilities also include form tutor duties to a group of 16 boys, all of whom had a SEN. Having worked in this context for the past 3 years, I am well known by members of staff and students. Due to my dual role as both a researcher and teacher, the decision was taken to limit students' participation to those I do not instruct. This could not always be guaranteed, however, especially during the latter years of the research when I became subject teacher to two research participants. In selecting a chosen methodological tool, I therefore believed this style of interviewing would allow students to feel comfortable in adjusting to my 'teacher as researcher' role that would allow them to disclose their personal stories.

Additionally, the fluid nature of SEBD means students present either the externalising or internalising forms of behaviours. The latter can include behaviours such as injurious, self-harming and suicidal, all of which are considered quite sensitive and may not be appropriate for focus group discussion (Cohen, Manion and

Morrison, 2007). Individual interviews therefore allowed students a measure of privacy and a degree of reassurance when discussing these sensitive topics.

Interview conversations were used as the suitable approach to interviewing. Initial conversations began with a general introduction for students, ‘tell me about yourself’ and this not only gave me the opportunity to become more familiar with them but was also quite liberating and empowering for students as this approach to interviewing treated talk not merely as conversation but as a medium for generating information about the realities of students’ experiences without being disturbed. The aim was to obtain data that reflected the perceptions of students while engaging them in ‘naturally occurring talk,’ independent as far as possible of myself as a researcher (Silverman, 1997). This interview style achieved the desired aim as students opened up freely and were happy to share their stories.

Interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder. Recordings were replayed and fully transcribed by me into a word program on a personal computer. During interviews, notes were taken on issues I wished students to clarify further. Interviews were also conducted during the school day, during a scheduled lesson, mostly option subjects and on some occasions, after school hours. All interviews were conducted on the school’s premises and lasted between 35-40 minutes. Students were given freedom of choice as to which lesson they preferred to be removed from and every opportunity was taken to ensure they were not removed from the same lesson every week. Prior to each recorded interview, students were reminded of issues relating to confidentiality and anonymity as well as their right to withdraw from the research should they chose to.

The conversational style interview was valuable in collecting data and gave greater insight into an area worthy exploring, the need to gain a deeper understanding of the strategies used by TAs and the perceived impact of these on students. As such, the decision was taken to interview TAs who deliver Th. Inc. sessions.

The ideas gained from this area led to me defining the second Research Question:

2. What strategies are used within Th. Inc. and how are they perceived to impact on students in terms of staff perceptions?

Semi- Structured interviews with staff.

As this research evaluates a programme of Th. Inc. to determine its perceived impact on students, the perceptions of TAs who deliver the intervention were deemed necessary. The Semi- Structured Interview was then used to obtain data from staff for Research Question 2.

All interviews were conducted within an open framework for focused, yet a conversational two-way form of communication. Interviews began with a general question or topic related to the intervention Th. Inc. and gave staff an opportunity to consider how they worked with individual students to support their development, what methods were used and their degree of impact. As with student interviews, staff interviews were conducted using a digital voice recorder. Recordings were later transcribed by me into a word program on a personal computer and later analysed. This approach to interviewing allowed me and my participants flexibility in probing for details, provided staff with opportunities to respond freely to questions as well as generated areas for further discussion. Staff also communicated about their own experiences, their successes and concerns while working within the therapeutic context. This method was also less intrusive as a two-way communication was encouraged that allowed staff to ask questions comfortably. This was especially useful when discussing sensitive issues with staff. It also progressed the research as it gave rise to other areas that were previously overlooked such as the need to consider the impact of Th. Inc. on staff as well as the school.

Staff interviews were arranged within a 2-3-day window, completed in a classroom within the school and conducted after working hours. The duration of each interview was 25-40 minutes. Responses from TAS were also used to formulate Research Questions 3 and 4.

3. What is the perceived impact of Th. Inc. on staff, as well as the organization, based on staff perceptions?

Structured interviews:

Teaching staff

The structured interview was also used but among teaching staff and included the following question:

1. What are your views on the Th. Inc. program and its overall value to the school?

As with previous interviews, those provided by teaching staff were conducted using a digital voice recorder and all data was transcribed by me into a word program on a personal computer. Interview data from teaching staff, however, yielded little information regarding the operations of Th. Inc. The absence of concrete knowledge served to direct future areas for the research that were later formulated into Research Question 4.

4. What factors limit the systemic operations of Th. Inc. within the school?

Recommendations from both pastoral and teaching staff are provided in Research Question 5.

5. What changes are suggested to facilitate effective operations of Th. Inc. within the school?

Participant Observations:

Participant observations were also used as the second instrument for data collected particularly for Research Question 2, as it was viewed necessary to observe the interactions of students and TAs within the therapeutic context and some classrooms. All observations were hand written by me in rough form and were later typed within days into a word programme on a personal computer. Observations allowed me to get close to data and discern ongoing behaviours as they occurred in both contexts as a participant observer.

However, despite the many advantages of this, a number of drawbacks also presented themselves, one being the issue of reactivity, the effect of researcher's presence on participants. This was common within the Th. Inc. Room as this space is extremely intimate and makes it difficult for one's presence to go unnoticed. The issue of reactivity will be discussed in a later section of this chapter.

Additionally, despite discussions regarding confidentiality and attempts taken to develop familiarity and trust, due to the nature of Th. Inc. sessions, disclosures are often made resulting in some discussions being referred to the SGT and CP. My presence therefore caused some reaction to students and TAs. At times, there was also an unwillingness on the part of students to open up about issues affecting them.

Furthermore, although arrangements were made with students and TAs a week prior to a scheduled observation, TAs often acted as ‘guard keepers’ who needed to protect confidential information. At times, access was also dependent on the willingness or mood of the student being observed. On occasion, familiarity meant that students accepted my presence and were compliant but during other times, they expressed the desire to be alone with their TAs. This meant that observations were not always as forthcoming as interviews and sometimes difficult to gain access to. When such issues arose, I would remind both TAs and students about the confidentiality and anonymity agreement and their right to withdraw if at any time they felt uncomfortable. Nonetheless, those observations that were obtained were used to provide some evidence of the quality of Th. Inc. sessions and the nature of relationships shared between students and TAs within the therapeutic context.

Classroom observations:

Students were also observed in specific lessons to gain a better understanding of the culture of some mainstream classrooms; as well as the nature of teacher and student relationships. As this research was conducted on a part time basis, it was difficult to observe every student in every lesson. Nonetheless, attempts were made to observe students in a number of lessons and they yielded valuable information on the nature of their experiences in mainstream classrooms.

Use of Documents

Official documents:

The search for documents relevant to this research was guided by the broader theoretical framework in which the study is located, Inclusive Education. Documents reviewed included Education for All (UNESCO, 1990) and The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994). The search for national literature included The Education Acts of 1944, 1988; and 1996 respectively, as well as official and semi-official documents such as circulars, guidance and policies on SEN with inclusion as an educational model.

Secondary documents:

Secondary documents were also used as evidence of data and included reports, books, case studies and empirical research findings reported in journal articles. The majority of these were used in the literature review and helped develop an understanding of the theoretical orientation of Th. Inc. as well as provided evidence of the impact of NGs in primary and secondary schools.

Visual documents:

Another form of document used is photographs and these consisted of two drawings produced by students in Art Therapy sessions.

Tertiary documents:

The final source of documents came from information leaflets created by the LSD within the school, on the Th. Inc. program. These provided information on the programme, its the objectives and principles that inform Th. Inc. as well as the approaches used to support students.

All five sources of documents were useful in providing a clearer focus for the study, as well as triangulating data from a range of different sources, a strategy of great value in the case of secondary and tertiary documents, as clear connections are made between the theory of NGs and how its principles are demonstrated in practice.

The following section will describe the choice of approach to analysis which led to producing the final report for this study.

Stage 3: Data Analysis

Data was analysed using a six stage approach to Thematic Analysis outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). Their approach offers an accessible and theoretically flexible approach to analysing qualitative data and provides a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data. Suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) are three positons that govern the use of Thematic Analysis. The first being the Essentialist or Realist method that report experiences, meanings and the reality of participants. The second is the Constructionist method, which examines events, realities, meanings and experiences and finally, the Contextualist method, which sits between the two poles of

Essentialism and Constructionism. This is characterised by theories such as critical realism, which acknowledges the ways individuals make meaning of their experiences and the ways the broader social context impinges on those meanings, while retaining focus on the material and other limits of reality.

My choice of approach to analysis is guided by the theoretical positon regarding the aims of analysis. This lies with the former, the Essentialist or Realist approach, as my aim is to report on the experiences, meaning and the reality of my participants. What follows is a summary of the stages involved in the analysis of data; a detailed account, including diagrams is provided in Appendix O to the study.

An inductive approach to coding was followed as themes were identified and linked to the data rather than approach data with prescribed ideas or pre-set codes. It must also be stated that analysis is not a linear process but recursive (Braun and Clarke, 2006) where there is movement back and forth when this is deemed necessary. The following section provides a summary of the six stages of analysis. Prior to this, however, a number of useful terms are defined:

- Data corpus- refers to all data collected for the particular research project.
- Data set- refers to all data from the corpus that are being used for a particular analysis. This can include a specific piece or selection of data, for example, interviews or observations. Data sets can also be identified by a particular analytic interest in some topic in the data and the data set then becomes all instances in the corpus where the topic is referred.
- Data item refers to each individual piece of data collected, which together make up the data set or corpus.
- Data extract refers to an individual coded chunk of data identified within and extracted from a data item (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

The first stage of analysis involved familiarising myself with the data. The data set used at this stage was taken from an early interview with one of my participants and analysis was done in an attempt to address Research Question 1. Transcribing data was an excellent starting point as well as a key stage in the analysis within an interpretive qualitative methodology (Bird, 2005). I was able to immerse myself in the data and this led to the emergence of some meaning and early patterns.

During the second stage of analysis, initial codes were produced from the data set. This took the form of coding interesting features of data in a systematic way across the entire data set, collating data perceived to be relevant to each code; and matching these with specific codes. Initial themes were identified at the semantic or explicit level, were data driven, meaning, they emerged from within the data and were inductive rather than deductive. Interesting aspects in the data items were also identified and notes were written onto texts analysing and colour coded to identify patterns.

Following this, there was a process of collating codes into potential themes and gathering all data to match each theme. Codes and themes were then searched across data sets in relation to Research Question 1 and later each Research Question. At this stage, an extensive list of multiple codes was produced, which were used to refocus the analysis to the level of themes by organising codes into themes. Existing relationships between codes and between themes were also examined to ensure they matched with the Research Question and supported the idea of Th. Inc. having some impact on students. Initial codes were then placed into themes and sub-themes, while those that did not belong to a particular theme were rejected. This resulted in a clear collection of themes, sub themes and extracts of data coded in relation to each theme.

Themes were then clarified and defined as an idea that captures something important about the data in relation to the Research Question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set. At stage 1, consideration was also given to how prevalence would be measured. This was counted at the level of the data item, or considering whether the theme appears anywhere in each individual interview, counting in terms of the number of different speakers who articulated the theme, across the entire data set, or each individual occurrence of the theme across the entire data set (Bruan and Clarke, 2006). Prevalence in this analysis is measured using the following terms, "many students, most students; and the majority of students." Themes were identified at the semantic level or identified within the explicit or surface meanings of the data.

Stage three and four included reviewing, defining and naming themes as well as checking if themes work in relation to the coded extracts level 1 and the entire data set, level 2. Insufficient data to support specific themes were discarded while others were collapsed into more relevant themes. Other themes were further broken down into separate themes. Data within themes were matched to ensure they cohered together meaningfully. There was also a need to review coded extracts. All collated extracts used to support each theme were carefully reviewed to ensure they matched and formed a coherent pattern. Consideration was also given to the validity of individual themes in relation to the data set or to determine whether themes and data extracts accurately reflect what is being said by the candidate within the data set. To determine this, I referred to the theoretical/analytical approach, this being an Essentialist or Realist approach aimed at reporting the experiences, meanings and the reality of participants. This process was also guided by two questions:

1. Do these themes reflect the data set?

2. Do these themes reflect the experiences and reality of participants within the context under research? At this stage additional themes were also identified, coded and matched to determine whether they fit into the data set.

Stage five involved ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, (adding and removing data items that did not match within a particular data set and/or theme) and refining the overall story the analysis tells. Clearer definitions were generated and names for each theme discovered. Refining and defining themes involved determining what each theme is about and more specifically, what it said about the impact of Th. Inc. as well as attempts to determine what aspect of the data each theme captures. For each theme, a detailed analysis was written as well as a story it tells. I also considered how it fits into the broader overall story the data tells in relation to each research question. Sub themes were also identified which demonstrated the hierarchy of meaning within the data as well as gave structure to a large and complex theme. At this stage, three overarching themes became apparent, themes which were not obvious during the earlier four stages of analysis.

Questions that guided my analysis included:

- What does this theme mean?
- What are the assumptions underpinning it?
- What are the implications of this theme?
- What conditions are likely to give rise to it?
- Why do students talk about Th. Inc. in this way?

- What overall story do different themes reveal about the programme Th. Inc.?

The final stage of analysis involved producing the report, with a concise, coherent logical, non repetitive and interesting account of the story the data tells across themes written.

The following section will discuss some of the threats to the trustworthiness of the research, based on the methodological approach taken and how I have addressed these issues.

Threats to trustworthiness

While I have taken the steps necessary to ensure that my methodological approach is sound, my choice of research paradigm, the chosen design and some instruments used in the data collection process give rise to a number of issues regarding the trustworthiness of the research. In naturalistic studies such as this, ‘trustworthiness’ addresses the issue of ‘truth value’ and considers the extent to which I have represented or reconstructed the multiple constructions adequately (Lincoln and Guba 1985); such that the final report does not reflect my own assumptions and beliefs. This issue arises for a number of reasons.

Firstly, because of the dual role I have assumed within the research context, this being a teacher and researcher, I am quite familiar to my participants, students and staff. Questions about ‘researcher bias may therefore surface- whether I may have shown favour to the research context or if my familiarity with participants may have influenced the process of data collection, analysis and my reporting of the findings.

Another issue to be addressed is ‘reactivity’ or the possible effects of my presence on the behaviour and responses of my participants, particularly while in the role of participant observer or researcher/interviewer. I have already explained that during some of my observations within the Th. Inc. Room, there was some reaction by students to my presence. The impact of this and the extent to which what is reported during such observations is accurate must therefore be considered.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) address in some detail alternative ways of phrasing the necessary characteristics of validity in research. The four terms, “credibility,” “transferability,” “dependability,” and confirmability,” are what they consider, the naturalists’ equivalents for the conventional terms “internal validity, “external validity," "reliability" and "objectivity." Credibility, they state, is to carry out the inquiry in such a way that the probability of the findings being credible is greatly enhanced and secondly to demonstrate the credibility of the findings by having them approved by the constructors of the multiple realities being studied.

Such threats to the validity or trustworthiness of the research have been addressed in the present study. As a substantial amount of data is gathered through individual interviews and some observations with students and staff, to guard against 'reactivity,' prolonged engagement in the field was used and this fulfilled a number of purposes. An advantage being a teacher/researcher meant I could spend extended time interviewing and observing participants and this guarded against 'rudimentary acquaintances.' I use the latter term to refer to an under developed or a basic relationship between myself and my participants within the research context. This therefore meant I had increased opportunities for the 'culture,' in this case, Th. Inc. Room and the school to be fully explored from the perspective of a researcher. While participants were informed that they would be observed in specific contexts, opportunities were also embraced to observe students on the playground and around the school and these were used to better understand how students perceived themselves and are perceived within the school.

Extended time within the research context also helped guard against misrepresentation through subjective accounts that can be introduced by myself and respondents through intentional or unintentional deceit. Trust was also developed between myself and my participants and this helped to reinforce pledges of confidentiality and anonymity, which are so necessary in this research.

Peer debriefing was also used to establish credibility, a process which Lincoln and Guba (1985) define as exposing oneself to a disinterested peer in a manner paralleling an analytical session for the purpose of exploring aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer's mind. Thus, during the analysis process, I had countless discussions with my Supervisor regarding my initial findings to gain his views as well as to explore possible areas of inquiry. This shed some light on areas that I failed to consider and simultaneously guaranteed that my inquiry was 'honest.' It also allowed me to be questioned by an experienced 'protagonist' on issues relating to the meaning of data (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

I also made use of TAs who assisted in de-briefing and helped validate some of the findings from analysis of observation data. TAs also served as 'member checks,' a strategy that enhances credibility as data, analytic categories, interpretations and conclusions are tested (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Opportunities for informal conversations with TAs as a means of checking also helped to develop ideas and tentative hypotheses (Mc Hardy, 1996). The strategy of member checking was also extremely useful as it allowed me to determine the true intentions of each respondent and to validate their accounts. It also created opportunities to determine ways in which any respondent would 'react to data.' Reaction to data when certain information is provided (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) then allowed me to pick up on any sense of unease and discern the true nature of respondents' intentions. Opportunities were also taken to converse with students both formally and informally during the course of the research to discuss some of the emerging themes and build their case studies. During what I consider to be 'informal' conversations, students were always made aware that matters discussed could be used as data for the research.

Finally, an alternative technique used to ensure the trustworthiness of the study is triangulation of research methods; a multi-method approach to data collection that guards against one view of events or biased accounts. Triangulation of methods also increases opportunities for the same data to be collected from three different approaches, interviews, documents and participant observations and increases the probability that data collected is credible. Thus, I was able to explore the experiences of students from different standpoints and check and cross check the findings for trustworthiness across the three methods. The usefulness of this approach is explained by Webb, Campbell, Schwarz, et al (1966) who state that once a proposition has been confirmed by two or more measurement processes, the uncertainty of its interpretation is greatly reduced.

Ethical Considerations

The need to demonstrate 'truth value' underpins a major ethical consideration that guides educational research, the 'respect for truth,' the need for researchers to be truthful in every aspect of the research process- gaining access, data collection, analysis and reporting its findings (Bassey, 1999) as well as rule out deception at any stage. As a researcher, I am also guided by the need to demonstrate 'respect for all persons' involved in the study and treat all participants with dignity and respect, recognising them as worthy of their privacy. In addition, there is an acknowledgement of participants as initial owners of data collected (Bassey, 1999). However, despite my efforts to ensure the study is ethically sound, certain dilemmas were evident.

One that arose resulted from being a teacher/researcher and the extent to which my dual role did affect my ability to function either as a teacher or researcher at specific times during the research process.

In addition to outlining the many advantages of being a teacher/researcher, Hammersley (1993) also draws our attention to the problems that can arise from working too closely and being too familiar with a situation, suggesting it can become difficult to stand outside of the role as practitioner and be able to identify wider issues of concern. In such contexts, the relationship between participants and researcher can become too familiar where those participating may either find it difficult to respond or may not be able to divorce the teacher from the researcher.

While I did not experience issues in reporting data accurately and fairly, challenges did arise in the attempts of others to distinguish between my role of researcher versus teacher, especially when I encountered some of my participants outside the actual research contexts. This was even more prevalent in lessons where I observed some of my student participants. Though informed of my role as a 'researcher' in specific lessons beforehand, teachers would engage me in the lesson and request that I perform duties synonymous of a teacher. On one occasion, I was asked to stand in and take a lesson while the teacher ran to the staff room.

Another ethical consideration involved the students who participated in this research. Some of my participants who have experienced distress or trauma in their personal lives have had to relive such experiences during our interviews. As they are extremely vulnerable, there was need to consider the extent to which participation in this research could cause additional distress, psychological or emotional harm, to their already fragile psyches.

In my attempts to guard against such ethical dilemmas, prior to each interview, I reassured participants that any information shared would be treated with the strictest confidence and their identities and personal information would always remain anonymous. Participants were also reminded of their right to withdraw from the process if at any time they experienced any discomfort. This was done prior to extending an invitation to each participant to engage in the research and prior to any observation and recorded interviews. Furthermore, to protect the identities of all participants, including the school, pseudonyms have been used throughout the study.

As a teacher/researcher, I also saw it necessary to engage in periods of ‘breaking the ice’ when I spent some informal time becoming familiar with student participants. This was necessary for all participants but especially younger students who were less comfortable with sharing personal accounts with an adult researcher they obviously perceived to be a teacher in their school who they were not as familiar with. This engendered some trust and a measure of comfort prior to the research process. Prior to initiating conversations, participants who experienced trauma were also given free will as to whether or not they wanted to discuss specific issues.

Finally, prior to observing students within the Th. Inc. Room, I was sent on a five-day NG training programme in which I was trained in the principles and practices of Th. Inc. When this information was shared with participants, there was an increased measure of trust as they believed I was now as competent as their TAs in using some of the strategies within Th. Inc. as well as being able to provide advice. Among some, there was also the perception that I was a Th. Inc. Room worker and could be trusted with their personal stories. This was made even more obvious as some participants sought me out on corridors and in classrooms to discuss issues that were disclosed in Th. Inc. sessions or interviews seeking my advice on these matters.

In this discussion of my approach to addressing the ethical considerations that arose in my research, it is hoped the steps I have taken will ensure this study is methodologically and ethically sound and be sufficient to ensure its trustworthiness within the discipline.

What follows are case studies of each student participant in this research. Specifics regarding their area of SEN as well as their school and family triggers that necessitated their accessing Th. Inc. is also provided.

The participants.

Students in this research are taken from Years 7- 10 inclusive of Key Stages 3 and 4. SEN codes and descriptors used to define specific areas are used from the SEN Code (DfES, 2001). When used for discussion points, descriptors from the new SEND Code 2015 (DfE, DoH, 2015) are also referenced. Students are therefore grouped as follows:

1. Six students have statements of SEN, now referred to as the ECHP and who experience difficulties that include: Asperger's Syndrome Disorder (ASD), a Physical Difficulty (PD), SEBD along with a Moderate Learning Difficulty (MLD) and mental health issues. Under the new SEND Code 2015 (DfE, DoH, 2015), these students are entitled to significant school level support and a highly personalised learning plan.
2. Two students receive support due to a presenting SEN but are not supported by a statement of SEN. Under the new SEND Code 2015 (DfE, DoH, 2015), these students are coded as K and are in receipt of support equivalent at what previously existed at either School Action or School Action Plus. Their specific area of difficulties includes a Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD) with traits similar to Dyslexia and a presenting social and/ or emotional need.

In terms of home related factors, all students report coming from homes in which there are adverse living conditions. These include having one parent at home due to divorce or parental separation, experiencing bereavement caused by the death of a parent, one parent having an illness or severe disability that has led the child to become a carer for the parent and one student who has experienced sexual abuse within the home.

With regards to school related factors, seven students report experiencing difficulties with their peers resulting from conflicts or bullying at school. Five report experiencing poor teacher/student relationships. Six report of having low academic confidence in mainstream classrooms, one student struggles with his regularity to school, while four experience issues relating to internal truancy and punctuality to lessons. Three students have contemplated seeking school transfers while three have considered refusing to attend. This list is not exhaustive but is used to provide an indication of students' predominant area of need, family/home circumstances and issues at school that hinder their ability to make a full adjustment.

Sara

Sara is a student of dual heritage and at the start of this research was in Year 8. Her SEN need includes having a statement for ASD and consequently, she experiences many of the behaviour difficulties associated with this SEN. While she is generally socially interested in others, she struggles to make friends, to maintain interactions with peers and has a preference to distance herself from others. She also experiences difficulty in reading others and often misunderstands their intentions as well as the meaning of their behaviours. This often leads to an interpretation of benign or neutral comments as others being cruel.

Sara has also been described as bossy and one who seeks to direct and control interactions. She is often accused of aggravating other children and struggles when working cooperatively. In social contexts, she fails to initiate conversations as she finds it difficult to maintain verbal interchange. She often tells fantastical stories, is easily envious and frequently falls out with friends. She also finds it hard to manage changes in routines, at times, she feels she is unfairly treated and she is quite easily worried about plans, routines or events. When she is challenged, this can result in defiance if a teacher instructs her differently. She is regularly teased, ridiculed by her peers and has experienced bullying. These negative school experiences have also contributed to a negative self-image and cause her to disengage with learning, as she can have a rather literal understanding of language.

Added to this, Sara also has an unsettling home life. There is ongoing sibling conflict with a younger sister and she is often distressed by an antagonistic relationship with both parents. She complains of feeling unloved and misunderstood and of receiving inadequate support from home. This has resulted in feelings of depression and instances of self-harming. A combination of these issues add to an overall negative school experience and place her on the margins of schooling as she remains at risk being excluded from aspects of school, or excluded fully.

Academically, Sara presents as an able student and is working at National Curriculum (NC) level 4C. Results from her Year 6 Scholarship Aptitude Tests (SATs), project targets of 6 or more A-C grades GCSE examinations, including Maths and English. However, due to her presenting SEN, she is unable to access her learning and is underperforming across the curriculum.

Sara receives SEN support through an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and targeted classroom support in core subjects. She has also been accessing Th. Inc. since the start of Year 7 and it hoped the intervention will help adjust her social and emotional skills, improve her levels of confidence and self-esteem, which will enable her to access school more.

Beth

Beth is a 13-year-old Year 8 student of Caucasian descent who presents as being confident and is quite articulate. She has a history of exhibiting a significant level of SpLD with some traits similar to Dyslexia and has been assessed as having SEBD and weak auditory memory.

Despite this, Beth is an able student as results from her Year 6 SATs predicted government targets of 6 or more A-C grades, including Maths and English at GCSE examinations. However, Beth has not been accessing school fully for a number of reasons.

In lessons, she struggles to maintain focus, she experiences difficulties in reading and comprehending others as well as the meaning of their behaviours. She also prefers to perform tasks in a set manner and finds it difficult adapting to the requests of others. This is often perceived as defiance and results in behaviour referrals from teachers, who describe her as un-cooperative, argumentative and lacking in motivation.

While Beth does have a few friendship groups, there are ongoing arguments that often result in conflicts. She is quite unpopular with some of her peers and she struggles building long term relationships. She is also regularly flagged for internal truancy, she refuses to conform to classroom expectations and she has been placed on simple punctuality and behaviour targets in lessons. Poor school experiences have left her isolated and led to a negative self-image. She also continues to underachieve across the curriculum and remains on the margins of schooling as she is often excluded from formal learning.

Beth receives support at School Action Plus and to encourage her participation in lessons, she is provided with TA support in Maths and English as well as academic mentoring from a year mentor. Her behaviour is also monitored daily by her HoY and classroom teachers. During the latter stages of this research, a disclosure was made that she was sexually abused. She has subsequently been placed on the school’s CP Register and receives additional support from multiple external agencies. She has also been withdrawn from classroom learning but is supported on an individual basis by teachers in a separate room within the school. She still accesses Th. Inc. and it is hoped that the intervention will impact positively on her, adjusting some of her delayed social and cognitive skills, as well as provide the emotional support needed to ensure she is able to cope with the demands of her personal life and schooling.

Lisa

Lisa is a 14 years old, Year 9 female student of Caucasian descent who has a SEN for a Physical Disability (PD), Cerebral Palsy. This confines her to a wheel chair, limits her physical strength and tires her quite easily. It also limits the extent to which she is able to fully participate across the curriculum, thus she is excluded from subjects such as Physical Education, Dance and Drama.

Despite this, Lisa continues to perform well academically across the curriculum. She is placed in high academic groups and based on her Year 6 SATs tests, government predictions target 6 or more A-C grades in her GCSE examinations, including English and Maths. Lisa has, however, not adjusted well to secondary school.

She finds it difficult to build relationships with her peers and prefers the company of a few staff within the school. She also lacks confidence and is reluctant to engage in activities that require assuming a leading role. She has a very low self-concept, she is quite sensitive about her physical limitations and she questions whether she will ever engage in activities girls her age engages in.

Within school, she has suffered verbal and physical abuse and has experienced bullying, as she is regularly teased about her physical disability. These negative experiences have left her extremely vulnerable, reluctant to risk failure and contributed to a lowered self-image. She also feels marginalised within the school, she has developed an avid distaste for attending school and in the past, has requested to be transferred to another school. She has also considered becoming a refuser.

Having a statement of SEN, Lisa receives targeted support through TAs in core subjects. This includes a scribe or assistance to complete physical tasks. As she has limited mobility around the school, she engages in a break time group that caters for small groups of students who do not wish to access break time club with the rest of the school. This is operated by members of the LSD.

Lisa has been accessing Th. Inc. since the start of Year 7, initially through small groups, with the hope that this would develop her relationships with her peer group. However, due to her physical disability, it was suggested that she should access individual Th. Inc. sessions as these would be more beneficial to her social and emotional development. It is hoped an intervention of Th. Inc. will improve her confidence levels, repair her fragile sense of self and aid in her becoming more proactive in forging and strengthening peer relationships. Another aim is that Th. Inc. will re-introduce the positive experiences of schooling.

Martha

Martha is a 14-year-old Year 9 student of Caucasian descent, who has been accessing Th. Inc. since the start of Year 9. While she has not been assessed as having a SEN, she has been targeted to receive school level support at School Action, due to a number of personal issues that affect her ability to access school fully and place her at risk of failing.

Academically, Martha presents as a competent student. She is placed in mid academic sets and based on her Year 6 SATs results, she has been predicted government targets of 6 or more A-C grades at GCSE examinations, including Maths and English. Despite her competence, Martha is not engaging with her learning. She resists efforts to work collaboratively with her peers and she is hesitant to attempt any classroom activity in which she is expected to assume a leading role. She also lacks focus in lessons, her work is often incomplete and is often produced at a substandard level.

In addition to this, Martha is troubled by a number of personal issues. She is gravely concerned about her appearance, she does not have a positive self-image and she lacks self and academic confidence. She does not have a group of friends and she is regularly bullied by her peers about her physical appearance. Concerns about her self-image have left her emotional, withdrawn and isolated and she continues to be disengaged with school and learning. She has also requested to be transferred and she is at risk of failing school as she is unable to focus adequately on her learning.

At home Martha is also trying to manage challenging circumstances as her father struggles with a PD and she has had to assume part care for his health. This has resulted in her feeling overwhelmed and extremely anxious.

Martha accesses Th. Inc. in the hope that the intervention will support her socially and emotionally by improving her levels of confidence, self- esteem and ensure she adjusts fully to school.

Charmaine

Charmaine is a 13-year-old female student of Asian heritage and was in Year 8 when this research commenced. She presents as being quite confident and has a friendly disposition. She interacts well with other students within and across year groups and maintains a healthy working relationship with all her subject teachers. By many, Charmaine is described as hard-working and determined to do well. She engages fully in lessons and will often take part in discussions and share her ideas. When completing tasks, she is also confident in assuming lead roles and enjoys working with other students. She appreciates Art, role play and debates and considers herself a team player.

Charmaine also has a statement of SEN for a MLD and presents as having a SpLD. She has low literacy levels, she struggles with short term memory of instructions and sometimes finds it difficult to show understanding in writing. Added to this, Charmaine's speech can be slurred and at times is unclear. This often results in frustration if peers cannot comprehend what she attempts to verbalise. She also has a low self-esteem and will often need reassurance as she is easily stressed during exams. She is in receipt of SEN support and is on the school's CP Register to receive multi-agency support.

At home, Charmaine also struggles with a number of family issues that affect her ability to concentrate at school. Her family has experienced an extended period of bereavement, having lost the patriarch of the family at a young age, they have experienced homelessness and there has been a history of sexual abuse against two female members. Added to this, Charmaine's mother suffers from chronic depression and is unable to engage in long-term employment. As she is the last of four children and the youngest of three girls, cultural expectations demand that she is groomed to assume responsibility for looking after the family and care for her mother.

Charmaine is also a victim of sexual abuse and this has left her confused, hurt and emotionally vulnerable. Despite her apparent confidence, she has a negative self-image and blames herself for these assaults. Such personal experiences make it extremely difficult for her to focus on learning for extended periods. She is often stressed and is at risk of underachieving, developing mental health issues and exclusion from school. Despite this, she is set in middle to lower academic groups and is currently working at National Curriculum levels 4B-4A. Based on her Year 6 SATs results, she is also predicted government targets of 5 or more A-G grades in her GCSE examinations, including Maths and English.

Charmaine first accessed Th. Inc. at primary school on a recommendation from her then Head teacher to assist her in coping with the bereavement in her family. Due to her adverse family and personal circumstances, she has continued to access Th. Inc. since the start of secondary school. It is hoped that a programme of Th. Inc. will provide the social and emotional support needed to adjust fully to school, repair her damaged self-concept and address the issues that continue to taunt her existence. This, it is hoped will allow her to manage her levels of stress and reduce the risk of exclusion from school.

John

John is a 14-year male student of Asian heritage who was in Year 9 at the start of this research. He has a statement of SEN for a MLD and SEBD and for this, he receives SEN support. They act as prompts, provide reading for tests, scribes his work and supports his general learning. He also has access arrangements that entitles him to 25% extra time in examinations. John also has low Literacy and Numeracy skills and he is working significantly below age related expectations. Though placed in lower academic groups, based on his Year 7 SATs results, government targets have predicted he will attain 5 or more A-G grades at GCSEs, including Maths and English.

In addition to his specific learning needs, John also has an apparent emotional need. He struggles to manage his emotions, which stem in part from losing his father at an early age and being blamed for his death. He has since been unable to cope with his loss. Impaired emotional skills therefore result in him becoming easily angered, often having emotional outbursts and displaying violent behaviour under pressured circumstances. He has also been in trouble with the police being charged with causing Grievous Bodily Harm (GBH).

These personal and negative experiences have also adversely affected his relationships with peers and classroom teachers. He has experienced bullying in the past, has been violent towards his peers and has had a history of antagonistic relationships with teachers. There have also been reports of him using offensive language, disrupting lessons and being verbally abusive. He is described by teachers as disagreeable, angry and confrontational.

At home, John also assumes part responsibility for his family. As the eldest male in his household and the third of four children, cultural expectations require that he assumes responsibility for his mother, who also suffers from severe depression and his three sisters.

John is a student considered to be on the margins of schooling as he is often withdrawn from lessons as an internal punishment for his behaviour. To assist in managing his emotions and develop his social and emotional skills, he was earmarked to access Th. Inc. from as early as Year 7, in the hope that these sessions will provide him with the support needed to balance the demands of home and school as well as assist him in making the required levels of adjustment he needs to be successful at school.

Tom

Tom is a 13-year-old male Caucasian student who has accessed Th. Inc. from the start of Year 8. He is a very articulate young man, he presents as being quite confident and he can be quite sociable with adults around the school.

Academically, he is a highly competent student and is placed in mid ability groups across the curriculum. He is a keen learner and is highly motivated as in lessons, he engages well with his learning. He works independently as well as in groups and he strives to complete all classwork to an excellent standard. Based on his Year 6 SATs results, government targets predict he will attain 8 or more A-C grades including Maths and English at GCSEs.

Despite this, Tom continues to experience a number of challenges at school. He has a history of bullying that predates to primary school and this has continued since the start of secondary school. He is often teased about his peculiar looks, quaint interests and intelligence which leaves him upset and withdrawn. He expresses his anger in private as he feels powerless to change his current situation. There have also been occasions when he has resorted to physical violence to quell his distress. He is easily stressed, he becomes anxious quite easily and can interpret everyday experiences as very demanding. When he becomes emotional, periods of respite are needed for him to repose. While Tom does have a select group of ‘acquaintances,’ he struggles forming and maintaining friendship groups. The absence of peer groups has also affected his ability to adjust fully to school. He has contemplated becoming a school refuser and has requested a change of school.

Additionally, while Tom enjoys a stable family life, he is also learning to manage the separation of his parents and dividing his time between two households.

Tom was diagnosed through private assessment, as having Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). However, as he prefers to focus on his positives, he has opted not inform his teachers about his specific SEN. He has since been elevated from School Action to School Action Plus support. He was referred to access a programme of Th. Inc. in the hope that he would receive social and emotional support to assist him in managing his concerns and better adjust to the demands of secondary school. It is also hoped that he will begin to experience the more pleasurable aspects of school and make a full adjustment.

Mark

Mark has attended his current school since Year 7 and started accessing Th. Inc. since this time. He is 14 years old, in Year 9, of Caucasian descent and presents as academically competent. He is set within the lower bands across the curriculum and works at NC Level 4C/4B. Based on Year 7 SATs, government targets he will attain 5 or more A-G grades, including Maths and English at GCSE examinations.

Mark is also on the school's SEN register and receives support for SEBD as well as mental health issues. To aid his learning, he receives TA support in lessons, additional literacy sessions and access arrangements in examinations. The latter entitles him to a reader and 25% extra time. He also benefits from rest breaks when lessons are too noisy or stressful.

Despite receiving additional support, Mark experiences periods in which he disengages with school. He is reluctant to take part in many class and school activities and prefers not to work in groups. He describes classwork as too challenging, extreme noise levels aggravate him and he finds lively and unpredictable students difficult to be around. He prefers to sit near and work with students who are quite responsible, quiet and motivated. The unfamiliar make him quite anxious and he is easily stressed by situations or challenges. Mark also presents as lacking in confidence and has developed a poor self-concept. He is at risk of exclusion as he does not access the curriculum or school fully.

Added to this, Mark is a victim of school bullying. He is often teased by some of his peers about his quiet disposition, they having described his behaviour as 'queer' and he has been physically assaulted by a group of boys at school. Such experiences have not only affected his ability to focus on his learning but has developed a nervousness associated with a phobia of school.

At home, Mark also experiences adverse family conditions. He is one of six children and lives with a mother struggles with substance abuse. There is also an absence of role models.

Despite experiencing at home and school difficulties, Mark wants to be successful. He is sometimes courageous and can be sociable when he feels secure. He also welcomes opportunities to talk through new situations ahead of time and ask questions as this helps lower his anxiety when trying something new. Mark was recommended to undergo a program of Th. Inc. in the hope that he will receive additional emotional support at school. Specific areas of intervention include addressing his underlying emotional needs, helping him gain confidence and provide him with the support that is needed to ensure he is better able to access school fully.

Summary of Chapter

The preceding chapter discussed the methodology used to conduct the research. It began with a discussion of the research paradigm within which the study is set and provided justification for the chosen methodologies. Following this, case studies of research participants and their specific areas of need have been provided to develop an appreciation for the individual circumstances of each student. The following chapter will present the main findings of the research in relation to each Research Question as well as a discussion of these findings.

Chapter Four:
A presentation of research data and a discussion of the research findings.

Introduction

The main aim of this research is to determine the merit of a programme used in one mainstream secondary school, by evaluating its perceived impact on a group of students with impaired social and emotional skills. A secondary aim is to determine its perceived impact on staff and the whole school. The programme evaluated is referred to as Th. Inc., the theoretical orientation of which is the Classic Boxall NG. As a variant or different form of this intervention, Th. Inc. adheres closely to the principles of this NG model. The main methodological tool used to achieve the overall aim is 'student voice.' Staff interviews, observations and documents are also used to determine other areas of impact. This chapter presents the main findings of the study in relation to each Research Question as well as a discussion of these findings.

Research Question 1:

1. Using 'student voice,' in what ways does Therapeutic Inclusion impact on students and equally, to what extent does this support their inclusion in school?

Conversations encouraged students to freely express their views about Th. Inc. and from these, some students did express their general concerns:

> Tom: I thought it sounded a bit weird and that the kids who actually went there got picked on and it just didn't sound like the type of place I wanted to go to.
>
> Mark: I didn't really know what it was about and at first I really didn't want to go.
>
> Martha: I didn't want to be labelled in anyway as I did hear that it's a room for naughty kids, so I really didn't want to be seen as one of those kids.

Despite these initial concerns, all students spoke positively about their experiences in the Th. Inc.:

> Charmaine: I thought it was a really nice room to go into. It is actually fun for me in some way.
>
> Lisa: I really like it because I get to mess around for a bit.
>
> Sara: I really enjoy going into Th. Inc. It's different from classrooms and I really enjoy it.
>
> Martha: It's just great how it makes you feel after you go in.
>
> John: It's just a really nice place where you can get your mind off everything.
>
> Mark: I like it a lot because it's just different from any other room I have ever been in and it just makes me feel great whenever I go in there.

> Tom: I really enjoy it, especially some of the activities that we do in there.

Added to this, students spoke about the pleasant nature of the environment and some of the physical attractions:

> Mark: I like the room and how it's set out. It's not like classrooms. It's just a really cool place.
>
> Tom: It's just an awesome room, it has everything. It's just comfortable.
>
> John: I thought it looked really nice because obviously there's light and it's like a dark room; and the bean bag and games and arts and crafts. So many things to catch your attention.
>
> Martha: It's good because obviously we play games or we'll do Arts and Craft and stuff like that.
>
> Lisa: I like the fun stuff because I like to play in the sand. There are different activities from just writing in books.

Above all, students spoke of the ways in which Th. Inc. impacted on their general well-being. In this section, I present these findings under the three overarching themes that emerged from within their accounts. Descriptions of encounters with teachers and peers in classrooms are also used to highlight the contrast between students' experiences in Th. Inc. and other contexts.

Respite

Rather than feel valued and appreciated, most students spoke of feeling undervalued and disrespected by some of their classroom teachers and peers.

> Lisa: Nobody takes me seriously if I do stuff. According to most people in my classes, I'm wrong about everything I say. When it's my own opinion because my own opinion is wrong...it's more they don't take into account what I think.
>
> Martha: They wouldn't listen to where I was coming from, I was just wrong, there was nothing about it, it was like I was wrong about this and I was wrong about that.
>
> Beth: I just feel like they don't listen to me and everything I say they just do not believe me. It's like they think because I'm naughty, I'm a liar or something.
>
> Tom: Everything I say is taken as a joke. Say I'm in a lessons and I make a comment, they always laugh at me and this makes me feel like, my opinion does not matter.

For some students, a sense of feeling undervalued is also compounded by instances of peer bullying:

> Lisa: A lot of my year group constantly take 'the mic' out of me... they like to make fun of me more than they would talk to me.
>
> Martha: I always get called fat.

> Tom: I was always being bullied, I don't know why? Maybe because of how I looked I don't know.
>
> Beth: They call me names because someone spread a rumor and it's not true. So now, everywhere I go, I get called names.

Frequent occurrences of peer bullying have also led some to feel inept, powerlessness and at times alienated:

> Mark: I didn't know what to do at that time because obviously in Year 7, I was only new to the school. I am not a violent person. Some people, if they were getting teased or getting bullied sometimes they would fight back. I'm not that violent person, so I didn't know what to do.
>
> Beth: I ran away from the problems because I just couldn't handle it.
>
> Martha: I just feel like there is nothing I can do to change things.
>
> Lisa: They would always make me feel like I'm not part of them and I would just keep away.

In lieu of such experiences, students spoke of the many ways in which Th. Inc. supports them. One area of impact is seen in the measure of respite it offers them from unfavourable aspects within the school. This includes difficult relations with teachers and peers, a challenging curricula and too many demands placed on them with regards to their learning.

> John: We're just alone and there's no one to say what I'm saying is stupid or wrong.
>
> Tom: It gives me time out because it's so hectic, people of higher intellect get picked on by people of lower intellectual standards and people who are different and aren't considered normal.
>
> Beth: It just chills you out, you just get to sit down so easily. It's not like the classroom, all they {teachers} do is just nag you, they are always at you and that winds me up. But when I'm in Th. Inc., you get to chill out and speak about whatever.
>
> Sara: I like it because there are no teachers telling you what to do, teachers saying you got to do this and do that, don't do this and don't do that.
>
> Mark: I can get away from people who I don't like being around and not be stressed. It feels like being less stressed. So I get time out to relax from lessons because in lessons I sometimes get nervous.

For others, Th. Inc. also provides rest breaks from challenging circumstances at home, through granting opportunities to relax, reflect and recombine:

> Beth: Sometimes I just like sitting down on my own, I just like sitting there as I'm away from everyone and everything.
> Martha: It's just a place I could go to have time out because it could be really stressful all the time. So in there I don't have to think about what's going on at home. It relaxes me because

> I'm always thinking about my dad and him being at home alone but being in there takes some of my worries away. You are sat in there for a bit so it's fine.
>
> Mark: I relax and talk about how my day was or how I'm doing in school, not think about all problems.
>
> Charmaine: I feel like it really helped me like when it's time to have that breather. Every time I come into Th. Inc. I get to settle all my stress off and just relax for a bit.

Students also spoke of the value of respite suggesting it created opportunities for them to communicate with Th. Inc. staff:

> John: It gives me a chance to say this is how I feel on a daily basis. I don't get that in lessons.
>
> Martha: If something major happened at home, I will go to my Th. Inc. teacher and I would tell her.
>
> Beth: It's where I have someone to talk to. If you need someone to talk to you, you can when you're feeling down and emotional.
>
> Charmaine: I just like to talk to people who like to listen so you just go in without planning to do anything and in the end, sometimes, you just spend the whole hour talking about this and that and nowhere else gives me that space or time to just talk to someone about how I'm feeling. I can't talk to anyone at home and I don't tell my friends at school.
>
> Lisa: I just get to talk and it can be about anything like what I'm doing at the weekend, what I'm doing for the holidays. It doesn't have to be about how I'm doing in school; but it can be about anything.
>
> Tom: It just gives me someone to talk to because we speak about a lot of things that I wouldn't share otherwise with anyone.
>
> Mark: You get to speak to someone not just keep it all in and when I think I can't deal with it myself I can actually turn to someone and speak to them.
>
> Sara: I could talk to her about a lot, just having one person you can talk to makes it a lot better I suppose.

For some students, opportunities to communicate are invaluable as these are noticeably absent at home and in school:

> Sara: I was trying to talk to my mom last night. I said I have something to tell you mom, it's serious. I want to talk to you, please, I have something to tell you. She went, 'get to bed, I don't want to talk to you. It's too late.' My mom doesn't listen.
>
> Lisa: There was no one I could talk to because I couldn't tell my dad and if I told my younger sister, she'd tell my dad. My older sister had enough issues and then I had no friends so there was no one I trusted enough to tell.
>
> Martha: I wouldn't tell my parents especially my dad about how I felt burdened, I don't know what he'd do. I just won't tell him.
>
> Tom: School is just so hectic there aren't really that many people you can trust or who are willing to listen so at least Th. Inc. gives me a chance to share my views with someone.

It is in this vein that opportunities to communicate are viewed as therapeutic as students suggest experiencing somewhat of a release:

> Charmaine: I can talk about my problems there and be who I actually am in there and just be happy. You can talk freely.
>
> John: Having Sir, it feels different but a good different because with Sir, I can speak to him as opposed to a girl because there are some things you can't say to a girl.
>
> Beth: It just makes me feel better because I've got everything out.
>
> Mark: It helps me because that's the only time I can drop the stress and have my time where I can say well this is how I feel. I want it to stop and a person is listening to it, so it makes a world of difference.
>
> Martha: It gives me a chance to just say this is how I feel on a daily basis and I feel better when I talk about these things.

Equally, some students suggest being able to communicate provides them with a greater sense self as they are able to connect with their inner selves:

> Tom: It took a few weeks but I started to realise that there really was a space that I could just be myself and I just feel like I don't really have to restrain myself and I can just do what I want to. I feel like I don't have to put on a mask and hide underneath anything.
>
> Martha: I like it because you can just do what you want… It's a place with freedom because you can just sit there and do whatever you want.
>
> Lisa: I can get out of my chair, I can sit on the floor. I don't like being in my chair.

Finally, indicative in their accounts is the belief that through communication, some are able to reflect on their experiences and this initiates a sense of change:

> Beth: When we talk through issues I have a chance to think about things and I sometimes see things differently.
>
> Tom: It clears your head and makes you think about the things that you want to think about more easily.
>
> Mark: It just makes thinking a lot easier. I can't think in classrooms because there is too much going on there.
>
> Martha: I think being able to talk and having a really quiet space helps me to see things a lot better and I am able to think things through.
>
> Charmaine: It's really good because I am able to think about things I want to do and how I can manage my problems.
>
> John: It's really given me time to think about my behaviour and how I want to be seen say five, ten years from now.

Relationships

Another overarching theme to emerge from the data is that of relationships. In this research, students speak of the many ways in which the relationship between themselves and the adult impacted on their general well-being. This seemed to be nurtured as a result of the measure of support students received from Th. Inc. staff:

> Martha: They'll help you with your problems and if there is anything that you need, they'll help you sort it and explain it to you properly.
>
> Tom: You can get help if you're in a situation. They are there to support you in many ways.
>
> Sara: Miss could answer all my questions if there were any questions. She's good.
>
> Lisa: She's been in classrooms with me but she's been brilliant help outside of classes.
>
> Beth: She just gives me great support. She's always there to encourage me.
>
> Charmaine: She's a great support to me whether I'm in the Th. Inc. Room or not.

Students also believe the invaluable advice provided by Th. Inc. staff helps them to better manage their personal crises when they arise:

> Tom: I get some good advice from her and it helps me because I always try to remember what she says to do when I get stressed. She normally tells me what to do and I do it.
>
> Martha: She's someone who gives me advice on how to deal with my problems instead of always worrying.
>
> Beth: She always gives me good advice on how I should deal with things, like how to react when a teacher gets me mad.
>
> Sara: Sometimes, when I'm on the corridor and I hear those girls saying things about me I remember the advice miss gives me and I ignore them.
>
> Charmaine: When I get depressed especially at home, I always remember what miss says I should do.
>
> John: We talk and write things down and say how I'd act in a situation and I do practise what she says and it does help.

The degree of support received from Th. Inc. staff is viewed as invaluable as some students lament the absence of this quality among some of their classroom teachers:

> Sara: Sometimes they are a bit angry and they seem like they're in the school to do the job and I don't like teachers who are just there to do the job and nothing else. I need help with my personal life as well.
>
> Lisa: Some teachers are like right you're out of the classroom now, nothing to do with the lesson. They only support you in their subject.

> Charmaine: Teachers don't seem willing to help you when you have problems, or if they are willing, they're too busy. It's always see me after school, I can't talk now. I've got a lesson.
>
> Tom: They only help you with things to do with the lessons or your learning, not your personal things, like home stuff and all.

Also suggested is the secure attachment students appear to cultivate towards Th. Inc. staff:

> Beth: Sometimes if I'm really upset and I need someone to talk to I go find her and she just knows what to say to make me feel better and I just stop all the worrying.
>
> Martha: There was one time, I had a really bad headache and I asked a teacher if I could go get some paracetamol and she said no and I just sat there thinking, if it was miss she would be able to do something to make me feel better.
>
> Sara: She makes me feel safe and because I know she's really looking after me because a lot of the time you sit and talk to a teacher, it's all serious and because it's a teacher, you have to be professional but I can be a bit mischievous with her.
>
> Tom: At first she was a complete stranger but now that I've got to know her and she's got to know me, I feel more comfortable speaking to her because I've known her throughout that whole year and obviously I can tell her how I feel and what happens. She's really a second mum to me. She's just there for me like, she'll offer me a drink or do you want a biscuit or if I want something, she'll do it.
>
> Charmaine: If you were ever in a bad mood, which happens quite a lot, it doesn't matter what, I'll go and she'll make me laugh in ten seconds it's just, she's almost not a teacher, she's hilarious.
>
> Lisa: She's like a friend because sometimes you can just have laughs, so I do see her as a friend because I think she treats me as a friend as well.

A corollary of this secure attachment is the sense of Th. Inc. being a safe haven having experienced feelings of safety and security:

> Martha: It's just knowing that there is a place where I can go to if I have any problems and that helps me feel better. If I'm in danger, if something happened, in school, I know I can go there.
>
> Sara: It's like my own little place where I just feel safe.
>
> Mark: When I'm in the classroom, I don't feel the same way. There's always a lot of noise and kids shouting and everything but Th. Inc. it makes me feel all that is outside and I am away from all the noise and stuff.
>
> Charmaine: It's warm and sometimes, I just feel really safe in there that I never want to leave.
>
> Tom: When you answer the question there's no one else, we're just alone and there's no one to say what I'm saying is stupid or wrong.

The sense of safety appears to have developed as a consequence of a number of nurturing qualities students found inherent within Th. Inc. staff. One of these being understanding:

> Sara: She understands me; she just knows the right words to give me. Like, I didn't talk to my mum about starting on my ladies and all my problems. It's something you would want to talk to your mum about, like, mum why did this happen and I always used to talk about it with Miss.
>
> Charmaine: She always says I can't imagine what you go through but I understand. She understands where I'm coming from. She doesn't ask me why haven't you done that, but she talks to me like she understands, no one else understands.
>
> Martha: She knows what happens at home and she understands me a lot and because she knows what's going on at home, that helps.
>
> Tom: She actually understands half the things I was talking about and a lot of people think that I am weird but I'm not so I guess she understands kids and how they work rather than somebody who doesn't try to understand what's going on in their minds.
>
> Mark: Sometimes when I say stuff people don't understand it, but Miss understands it, she understands what I am saying and she could say something back because she knows what to say and that is so good.
>
> Lisa: Miss just understands me and I understand her and I wouldn't really want to change her for anyone.

In addition to feeling understood, students also report experiencing feelings of genuine acceptance by Th. Inc. staff:

> Charmaine: She just talks to me like I'm a normal girl, not like a girl who's been touched up, who's got arguments, who's been fighting with her friends. She just talks to me, like 'how are you?' And I'm just there like, WOW! She talks to me like I'm an adult.
>
> Lisa: With miss it (disability) just didn't exist. It's like I could have done, I don't know, I could stand in front of her just normally and she wouldn't notice. She didn't completely ignore me when I had problems but instead of treating me like a kid because of the chair, she wasn't bothered in the slightest but you can tell when certain teachers are bothered.
>
> Tom: I just feel like she just accepted me regardless of how weird I behaved. No matter how silly I was, she just accepted this is me and that made me feel really great.
>
> John: I never feel like she is judging me based on my past. I always feel that she never looked at that and just looks at me like any ordinary boy. Not someone who's been in trouble with the police or is always in trouble with teachers.
>
> Mark: I feel really comfortable with her, like with some teachers, I feel really nervous. I'm always thinking they know about my mental health issues and maybe they are looking at me in a certain way but I never get that feeling with miss.

It is against these experiences that some students believe they are valued as individuals by Th. Inc. staff:

> Lisa: I feel when she sees me, she sees the real me and that makes me want to show exactly who I am, not what other kids in this school or some teachers think I am.
>
> Charmaine: When she talks to me, she makes me forget about my past. I don't see myself as a girl who has been touched up. I feel really special and confident that I am someone who is loved and appreciated by her. I just feel better about myself.
>
> John: She always tries to show me the good in me, she tries to show me that I am not the person who has to fight or be aggressive or be mad with myself but that I'm just like every ordinary kid.
>
> Martha: She sees me as beautiful and not how the other kids call me. And this makes me see myself in this way. She has shown me how to love and value myself and I have really taken this on board because I never did really like myself; but now I do.

This sense of being valued and appreciated is reciprocated as within students' accounts is an earnest appreciation for Th. Inc. staff:

> Sara: I wouldn't care if we didn't have a room or anything. I wouldn't even care if we didn't have anything. Having Miss (Th. Inc. worker), she's like my angel shall we say.
>
> Tom: There was one time she offered to see if someone else would come in but I didn't want to because I just feel like it's taken a lot so I can open up with Miss and I don't think I can do that with someone else. It takes a long time to warm up to people.
>
> Mark: I think the person who works with me is very important and I appreciate her.
>
> Martha: I'd rather talk to her than other teachers because I don't think I was ever as open with anyone pretty much… It's probably weird to say but probably one of the best relationships I had with anyone here was probably with Miss.
>
> Charmaine: I see her as a big sister. But then again she is my hero.

Another nurturing quality identified by students among Th. Inc. staff is that of trust:

> Charmaine: I can't tell anyone all that's going on in my family but I can tell her and I know my secret is safe.
>
> Lisa: It didn't matter what I said because nothing we said in there we'd say outside, I could say anything, I could have sworn at her and I know for a fact she wouldn't have repeated a word of it to anyone.
>
> Tom: I trust her immensely. I trust what she says more than I would trust some of my own teachers.
>
> John: I trust her and what she says, if she tells me she's going to work something out for me, I know it's going to happen.
>
> Mark: I can tell her anything and I know she's not going to tell anyone. What we talk about, it's always been us and nobody else.

These nurturing qualities evident among Th. Inc. staff appear to be lacking as students spoke candidly about their absence from the professional repertoire of some classroom teachers:

> Lisa: Teachers in school don't get that I can't do stuff with my hands as fast and they'll get really annoyed, especially if I'm not in part of a lesson.
>
> Charmaine: With other teachers, they wouldn't understand me as well as Miss. Every time I try to get something across to miss, she won't understand until a couple of minutes but with Miss, (Th. Inc. worker), she understands immediately.
>
> John: some teachers just don't understand me. I like to have a laugh and they can't get that, it's always serious and get on with the work.
>
> Mark: I just feel that some teachers don't get that I get really stressed easily and they always go on and on at me to get my work done and that stresses me out even more. I don't understand why they just can't understand not everybody is the same.

Rather than feel appreciation, many students describe feelings of apathy for some classroom teachers:

> Beth: With some teachers I can't talk to them because they are just too strict and I get really annoyed with them.
>
> Lisa: Teachers here would treat me younger than I am, I would get treated like a Year 7 sometimes and that really annoys me with them.
>
> Charmaine: Teachers talk to me like I'm stupid and it's really annoying. Some teachers like, Miss (Child Protection Officer), she deals with me like a little kid and I feel like I am a little kid because she's there like, 'how are things doing?' and I'm there like, now you are taking the 'mic' and I'm just there like, yeah I want to go to Miss, (Th. Inc. Room worker). You are an idiot.
>
> Sara: It's the way the teachers talk to you. They don't even talk they shout. They don't even shout they scream. I just hate them.
>
> Martha: They stress me out sometimes that I don't even want to go to their lessons.

Within mainstream classrooms, some students describe feeling invisible or being singled out:

> Lisa: I wasn't known in the school; I never was even to the teachers.
>
> Charmaine: Like, the way they'd look at you or what they'd say or the way they'd say it was just uncomfortable.
>
> Sara: She looks at other students nice but she looks at me as if I've done something, she's like I've got it in for you. She looks at me all the time, every time I come to the lesson and she doesn't look at other students and what they've done but she looks at me. And that really angers me. She doesn't look at other students' behavior but she looks at me and my behavior.
>
> Beth: They are just 'dead' moody. They keep telling me off all the time for nothing.

> John: I just don’t like the way they always see me and what I’ve done. They never seem to see what other children do but they always see me and have a go at me.

Among some students, there is also the perception that some of their teachers simply do not care:

> Sara: Some of them just don’t care. I feel like they don’t care about me and it makes me really angry. It’s like, they are really nice to other kids and talk about ‘well done, well done’ and to me they just keep going on and on.
>
> Martha: Sometimes I feel like they just don’t care about how children feel. All they care about is teaching and getting you your grades.
>
> Beth: I know for a fact she does not like me. She does not care about me. She’s told me a lot of times ‘I get paid whether or not you learn,’ so she really doesn’t care about me and how I feel so why should I care about her?
>
> John: I don’t feel like my teacher really cares about me as a person. All she cares about is teaching her subject and that makes me really mad sometimes.

Within some accounts is also evidence that the negative teacher/student relationship has led to the cultivation of a negative attitude towards the school:

> Sara: I like learning but I don’t like learning in this school because of the teachers. That’s why I’m giving up because teachers they give up on you.
>
> Martha: I hate it (school), I just want to leave.
>
> Lisa: I kind of feel like I’m in this school to do my lessons and nothing else. To do what I’ve got to do to get through the school and that’s it. So after my exams, I’m gone.
>
> Tom: I hate coming to school. I’ve asked to be transferred to another school but, it doesn’t seem to be happening. But I really just want to get out of here.
>
> Mark: I hate it here. I hate the kids. I hate the teachers. I just want to go to another school.

This level of dissatisfaction has also led some students to develop a negative approach to their learning:

> Martha: I don’t know; I don’t have that sort of relationship with my teachers. I am scared to talk to them and I hate going to lessons because of this.
>
> Beth: I don’t like the lessons. I don’t like sitting in a class and writing stuff. I’ll do it because I have to do it but I don’t like work.
>
> Mark: In lessons, it’s always ‘dead’ noisy and stressed and I can’t learn in there. That’s why I think I don’t do well in certain lessons.
>
> Tom: It’s always horrible because it’s just, when you respond you feel like there’s no one else so I don’t enjoy most of my lessons.
>
> John: I really don’t enjoy some of my lessons and because of that, I don’t feel like I’m learning.

Resilience

One final theme to emerge from students' accounts as to the impact of Th. Inc. is reflected in the many changes it has brought about within the child. Suggested here is the idea that Th. Inc. has facilitated in the growth of a number of internal qualities associated with resilience.

A lack of confidence is common to many children who experience SEBD and some students in this research spoke candidly about the absence of this and how it affected their social, academic and interpersonal development:

> Beth: I'm like Jekyll and Hyde me, I have a different life in school. Outside school I am very confident, I have a lot of friends who I see all the time and we talk and everything but I am very different generally in school.
>
> Charmaine: When I was in Year 7, I was actually quite confident because I'd always been confident in primary school. I've always been, 'I'm going to do this,' I've done stuff in front of Head teachers and in Year 5 so I've been in front of people who were very important and I was very confident but when I came here people don't act the same so, it kind of doesn't make you as confident and I never built it back up.
>
> Lisa: A lot of teachers here, if you ask them, they would probably say oh no she's really confident but that's just because I am with teachers; if there's an adult I'm automatically drawn to them, I don't know why. I'm very... like how I am with you, I'll sit and talk to you but if it was another student, that's where the confidence stops if there was someone my own age, it just isn't the same.
>
> Martha: When I first came over here (secondary school) I was shy. I would not talk to anyone.

According to some students, a lack of confidence was also apparent in their inability to manage themselves in social contexts:

> Lisa: I used to just panic about every new thing I have to do with somebody I hadn't met. I've cried before when I didn't know what I'm meant to do so I'd just panic.
>
> Sara: At the beginning, when I was in Year 7, I couldn't really handle my stress and I would get depressed all the time.
>
> Charmaine: I struggled with my stress because I just didn't know how to control it and when Miss (key worker) was off last year, I was still struggling.
>
> Mark: I don't know I just get really stressed out with everything.
>
> John: I keep everything to myself, I'd get really annoyed and just go out and bang something in the corner, fight with someone.
>
> Beth: I used to have such a bad temper. Some days I can have a really bad temper day with everyone and anyone who said anything to me I just shouted at. I used to get really angry, really easy and I just didn't know how to control my feelings.

In experiencing these difficulties, students are able to attest to the impact of Th. Inc. as they report of developing a number of internal qualities, one of which is confidence:

> Lisa: I trust what I say. In the past, I would say things to people and not actually know if I said the right thing or not. I don't do that anymore. If I say it, I believe what I say.
>
> Charmaine: I built a confidence in there and I take it out. I made more and more friends and that's how I got the name in the school 'charming.'
>
> Tom: I feel a lot better about talking to students my age. I no longer let those boys get to me. Like before, I would let them get to me if I said something and they laughed but now, I confront them and I don't let them feel as though they've won. Because they haven't.
>
> Martha: I am a lot better at talking up, like before I wouldn't talk to teachers, not even you, I couldn't sit here and have a conversation about myself and my family with anyone but now, I'm a lot more open and I feel a lot better talking about certain things.

Some students also speak about a growth in academic confidence which is witnessed in renewed interests and approaches to their learning:

> John: I feel more confident in some lessons, I feel like I know what I'm doing and that it is the right thing.
>
> Sara: I wasn't that confident and then miss taught me how to be confident and how to just put my hand up… in front of teachers, especially in Maths she'd be, 'come on put your hand up and say it,' and that's when I started to get confident.
>
> Lisa: I feel in myself a lot more confidence than I ever had. If I'm going straight into a lesson afterwards, I'm good in that lesson. I don't really care afterwards what anyone thinks I can walk into any situation and know I can handle it.
>
> Charmaine: The first few weeks I didn't have Th. Inc. I wouldn't put my hand up and if I didn't, the teacher would pick on me just to see me give an answer and then I could not get the words out, I was too shy. Then I went to Th. Inc. and I saw Miss (key worker) and after that, I went out in the first lesson, I was putting my hand up more and more.
>
> Martha: My confidence has grown in a lot of my lessons. I have been more attracted to the lessons.
>
> Beth: I am a lot more confident about my work. I am doing a lot better in my lessons and I feel good about this.

For some who struggled with managing their emotions, they students now argue they are more competent in managing their emotions, especially when difficult situations arise:

> Beth: Now, instead of going up to the person straight away I would actually speak to the person instead of going at them to actually find out what's happened. Now I can think about it and go well, how bad was it and I can speak to that person. Now I step back and look at the situation and say how I could have gone about it differently instead of always confronting people. I'm sitting back and not arguing with people. If I don't understand I'll just go right whatever then but I'm not arguing back with them but in Year 8 I would, that's one reason I'm not getting in trouble. My friendships aren't based on arguments anymore it's all just friendships and none of us have fallen out.

> Tom: I’m managing it (stress) better; it doesn’t get to me as much anymore. It doesn’t bother me and I think it’s Th. Inc. What’s happened is a weird thing for me to help me at school, it was always miserable and I really didn’t like it.
>
> Charmaine: It kind of taught me every time they talk about me I would just go up to them and say, ‘you’ve got a problem? That’s the way, like sensible and sometimes if they are talking about me behind my back and I find out, it does affect me but eventually, I’ll just forget all about it and say, oh she did say that but I’ll just forget all about it. I’m like forgive and forget.
>
> Lisa: I think it’s probably helped me relax a lot more in interesting social situations so now I’m a lot better. I used to just panic about every new thing I have to do with somebody I hadn’t met but I think because it’s so relaxing, you just go with it and it takes the pressure off.

Another common characteristic of students who experience SEBD is a poor self- concept. In this research, all female students spoke about the negative perceptions they once held of themselves:

> Martha: I don’t really like the way I look. I just don’t like my weight and feel embarrassed about myself.
>
> Beth: We were playing with one of those cards and one of them said do you like what you see in the mirror and I said no because I don’t really like what I see in the mirror every day.
>
> Charmaine: I don’t think I’m beautiful, that’s why I always cover myself up.
>
> Sara: I hate myself. I hate the way I look. I hate who I am.

In later conversations, however, these students speak of a change in the way they perceive themselves and credit this to the work they did in Th. Inc.:

> Martha: She’s made me become more positive about myself knowing that this is who I am and this is who I was brought up to be.
>
> Beth: She said well you have to learn to love yourself and respect yourself and I just took that in and then everything from that day, I just started to feel more positive about myself.
>
> Sara: Th. Inc. has helped me. I’ve been more positive about myself and the way I look. I’ve learnt a lot about myself and I like me.
>
> Charmaine: I am a lot more positive about myself. I’m not worried about how I look or how people think I look because, this is me.

Within students’ accounts is also a greater awareness as to their purpose in life as they speak positively about their futures:

> Tom: I know a lot more about me and who I am and where I want to go and I think Miss has made me realise this.
>
> Mark: I feel that I’m able to understand a lot more about myself and where I want to be later in life.
>
> John: Th. Inc. has helped me to understand a lot about myself and how things work and who I am and I have learnt to accept me for me.
>
> Martha: I feel a lot better about myself. I know who I am and what I want to do later in life.

Another quality acquired is determination as some students are able to speak positively about overcoming obstacles that once were presented as insurmountable:

> Beth: I am a lot more determined to be successful in my lessons. I want to do well and I feel like I can. I have a new drive in me.
>
> Tom: I know where I want to be in the future and I know I have to work hard to get there and I'm willing to do what it takes. I'm going to be successful and those kids are going to wish they were a lot nicer to me.
>
> Lisa: I feel that I have a new outlook on life. Before I didn't feel I had the motivation to be something great but now, I've developed the will power to succeed, even in this school.

Within some accounts is also evidence of students developing skills in empathy:

> Beth: I do think about other people a lot more. Before, I would just do things without thinking about how they would feel but now, before I do or say things, I always stop and think about how they would feel.
>
> Sara: It's funny but now I think about my actions and how they might affect the people who really care about me. Like Miss, she always tells me I need to think about other people before I react and I've really started to do this. I've started to think a lot more about how the other person might feel in a situation, say when we're arguing or something.
>
> John: Th. Inc. has helped me so much. I have learnt to control my anger, to think about how what I do affect my peers and to be honest, I didn't always like the person I was.

Finally, all students credit their inclusion in school to their engagement in Th. Inc. and some of the skills they acquired:

> Sara: I think if it wasn't for Miss and all the help that she gave me, I probably would have been excluded ages ago.
>
> Lisa: Being in Th. Inc. has helped me because if I didn't have someone to talk to or learn all the things I did, I wouldn't have wanted to stay in this school. I thought about refusing to come to school. At one time, I wanted a transfer. That's how much I hated it. I'm still here.
>
> John: I think if I didn't have Th. Inc. I would have been excluded. I would have probably gotten in trouble with the law. So Th. Inc. saved me.
>
> Mark: I know for a fact that Th. Inc. has helped me so much. I think I am not as stressed as I used to be and if I didn't have this, like just going in there for an hour a week it makes me feel so much better. I don't know how I would cope in school if I didn't.
>
> Beth: I have learnt a lot from going to Th. Inc. I've learnt how to not argue back and not answer teachers and I think if I didn't have this support and miss showing me how I can change my behaviour, I probably would have been excluded because I had over 100 behaviour referrals and I have had a lot of meetings about my behaviour and truancy.
>
> Martha: Th. Inc. has helped me to manage myself a lot more because I wasn't really enjoying school. I used to hate coming here and I even wanted to move schools but I've learnt to enjoy it a lot more now.
>
> Tom: I do enjoy school a lot more and I think this is because of miss and some of the things we have done in Th. Inc. She has taught me how to ignore a lot of the negative things and these have helped me to cope a lot better with all that goes on at school.

Charmaine: Th. Inc. has saved me. Being in there, just the little things like talking to miss and drawing, it’s helped me to keep focused. I don’t know what I would have done if I didn’t have miss to talk to. She’s my hero shall we say.

Research Question 2:

2. What strategies are used within Th. Inc. and how are they perceived to impact on students in terms of staff perceptions?

The second area of this research focused on understanding the strategies used within Th. Inc. to engage students, as well as to understand their perceived areas of impact. Staff voice was used to determine this. Analysis of interviews and some observations from Th. Inc. sessions suggest three strategies are commonly used: art therapy, written and verbal communication and role play. Individual strategies are used with some students as well as a combination of two or more. Responses from staff highlight the focus and care of the therapeutic approach with an emphasis on the 'holistic' development of the child. This strengthens the argument, that Th. Inc. supports students' in a number of ways, thus enabling them adjust to school. General comments provided by staff on the overall impact of Th. Inc. include the following:

> Trisha: There have been changes, not necessarily academic changes because that's not something we're looking at. I do impact reports and I gather information from mentors, form tutors to see if they can give me any advice or feedback on how the students have been taking things and their feedback is usually positive.
>
> Vicky: I just think it is a valuable resource that we have. It boosts confidence, it improves self-esteem, there are a myriad of ways that it can support a child. For instance, Lisa, didn't have the best of times in school with her peer groups; there was very little interaction, or no interaction. But I do think it gave her the confidence to carry on and to be the young woman she is now, who I am so proud of. She's at college, thinking of getting her own flat, boyfriend, everything a normal girl should have and I think that is brilliant. I did have another girl Inga, who accessed it because of bereavement and she saw me for one year and at the time she came to use it, she was very confused because of the loss of her mother, which is major for a girl and we used to talk a lot about her mom. Her sister was quite resentful for having to look after her and Inga struggled with that and in the end she found the strength to ask to live with a different relative because it wasn't working with them so she went to live with an aunty who was better for her and then her life changed, it seemed to be a lot better after that. She ended up a very confident young lady, she started to look forward rather than looking back and started to concentrate on her future.
>
> Candice: I think with certain children it gives them a place where they can freely speak and be honest with themselves as well as with other people. I'm not saying that all children are honest but it gives them that quiet, safe environment to be themselves or voice any concerns that they have. I think especially for Year 7 and Year 8, secondary schools are very scary places and even finding your mentor on the corridor can be a very scary thing and with Th. Inc. being a room next to our office, they feel more able to come to us and so, for the very vulnerable children, I think Th. Inc. is a better space.
>
> Susan: For some children it is especially valuable and I think it works very well for children who are very anxious in school because it gives them a place where they feel safe and where they feel they're not having to deal with the school and lots of teachers and lots of other children and noise and pressure and put on an act or be somebody that they don't want to be. A mum of a boy who I had recently, a lot of her son's friends in the school they are quite middle class, they have quite a lot of money, they go on holidays a lot and although they might come across like that, they are not. She's a single mum, they don't have much money at all, they can't even afford to run a car and she thinks that Th. Inc. is a place where he doesn't

> have to pretend anything; he can just say this is really getting me down so it's really valuable from this point of view. There is a girl who was self-harming, mum had quite a big alcohol problem and I worked with her for about six to nine months and she had a lot of anxiety in school, she always had her head down, her hair over her face and if teachers looked at her, she'd go bright red, she wasn't handing in homework, she wasn't doing anything, she just couldn't engage and we worked a lot on that, on her self-confidence and really on her choices because she was an intelligent girl and she wanted to do well but this anxiety was really crippling her. It meant that she wasn't working, she wasn't doing the work she could do and she said at the end of the sessions it was very successful. They had stopped her from self-harming, which I felt was amazing. She also went to CAMHS for a couple of sessions because she said she preferred coming to Th. Inc. than going to CAMHS. It's also improved their levels of confidence and giving students resiliency skills to cope with life. We've worked with a number of students on the Autistic Spectrum and for them it's such a regular part of school that it's difficult to ever withdraw the service because it helps them cope with school and life in general.

The following section presents a thematic account of the strategies commonly used in Th. Inc. as well as the perceived areas of impact based on the perceptions of Th. Inc. staff.

Art Therapy

One of the strategies commonly used by Th. Inc. staff is art therapy. These include using 'collages,' such as 'what would you like your life to be like,' 'hand printing,' 'identity collages,' 'painting with fingers,' 'art journaling,' 'hand drawing,' 'life timelines,' 'colouring,' 'mandalas' and 'magic crystal ball.'

Th. Inc. staff perceive that art therapy is a less intrusive means of getting to the source of the problem:

> Susan: I think if you sit here and try to ask questions, kids see right through it and they are really guarded a lot of the times, so by using art, it almost disguises what you are trying to do and they are much more open to it because they are working through something rather than just discussing.
>
> Candice: It's not as intense because they have a distraction through what they are doing.
>
> Vicky: I think it's harder to have the conversation but if we discuss the art work, it's different from talking about them as an individual; we're just talking about a piece of art work.

It is argued in cases of trauma; some students find it difficult to articulate their feelings. However, there is the belief that art therapy is useful in allowing them to tap into the sub-conscious to unpick disturbing issues that may otherwise remain dormant.

> Susan: What happens is the child talks about how they are feeling through their drawing, so they use their sub-conscious mind to create the drawing from a really imaginative place and without knowing it, they are talking about their own emotions.
>
> Candice: I've got a student who's been through a lot of trauma so having that space has really impacted on him and when they are working through it, you don't want to direct what they are

> doing, they sort of lead themselves really and because they say a lot of worries and fears are in the subconscious mind and you can’t often talk about it but when they are doing the drawing and talking, they are not even aware of what they are showing because their minds are coming together sometimes with whatever has happened to them.
>
> Vicky: What’s in their head comes down and somebody else is there and again they have that access to the other thinking mind so that is sort of containment by somebody else.

Another perceived benefit of art therapy is that it aids in strengthening students’ sense of awareness and identity:

> Vicky: I think it gives them a way of understanding themselves which they would not have had previously that maybe we’d not have been able to connect to or got to if we hadn’t used art therapy.
>
> Candice: I’ve seen collages printed saying, ‘I am who I am,’ ‘I’m free’ and things like that so I think they can realise who they are sometimes and they can put it all down through collages or clay or whatever they choose to.
>
> Susan: There is understanding as it helps them to understand their feelings and what’s going on sub-consciously, what’s going on with them.

An individual sense of awareness has also created greater opportunities for self-expression:

> Vicky: I think it’s a really good way for kids who aren’t able to summarise or just verbalise how they are feeling to draw it.
>
> Trish: For students who aren’t able to put it into words, how they’re feeling it gives them the option to put it on paper and drawing, using different colour paints can be quite effective. I can think of a scenario, Charmaine, she struggled to just put it into words how she’s feeling so we would draw her emotions basically and then we would look at the picture and I would ask her why she used certain colours and what does that represent then talk about it, relate it to moods and experiences. She was seeing this figure in particular that was really bothering her, whether it was in a dream or however she was seeing it and she couldn’t describe to me what it looked like and she drew a picture of it and that was quite frightening to see the drawing but it gave me a better understanding of the seriousness and how she was feeling.
>
> Candice: The child gets to express that feeling that they might not have otherwise feel safe to express maybe anger or fear or sadness where they usually feel like they can’t they are not in a position where they are able or allowed or they feel like they can share. It’s quite a scary feeling they have but sketching it out on paper somehow is more of a relief, is more therapeutic than saying it out loud. I’ve had children using white boards to show diagrams of things because they can’t talk about it, so it’s another outlet allowing them to talk and I think sometimes when they are drawing, it doesn’t feel as real as saying it. It’s a bit easier sometimes, for some.
>
> Susan: Sometimes I think people have been told not to talk for so long, they almost can’t say the words. Like the girl I had yesterday, she was just getting the paint on her finger and just doing like this, (she demonstrates), in tiny small bits and they weren’t connected to each other so it’s as though she was finding it really hard to just let go and express herself and connect different ideas and she just had faces all over the place that were really sad faces and it just felt like she was saying she was feeling very disconnected, people are very isolated and it was very much about her own identity, so it’s looking into what’s going on as they do express themselves through their art work. Some kids find it really hard to talk about what’s going on.

> I’m working with someone in particular who is using art, in most sessions, we have a journal that he works through and he works through things that are going on for him through collages, through drawings, through paintings, through expression, through phrases so that’s working really well for him at the minute.

Another area of impact is that art therapy contributes to a growth in students’ confidence levels:

> Vicky: It improves confidence because a lot of the issues they are dealing with they find hard to talk about, it weighs in on them all the time. But I have seen their levels of confidence improve throughout the process because bringing it out somehow gets them that inner strength to deal with things.
>
> Susan: I think it’s giving them the confidence to know that they’ve got a place where they can get it all down because they might have something going on that they want to talk about but through their art work, they might be saying that for themselves.

One TA also believes there is evidence of students being able to resolve issues more independently:

> Susan: I think he’s more independent and he’s becoming more and more resilient. He’s very creative which is what adds a lot to what he’s doing. He’s able to express himself really well through the drawing and the things he’s doing.

Another way art therapy is believed to impact on students is in providing opportunities for them to reflect on their past as well as to contemplate on future:

> Susan: What we would do is discuss the work and talk through it- ‘well why did you pick that image, why is that important to you?’ And I think they are able to understand and reflect on it there. With one student, we worked on her strengths, how she thinks positively about herself, so anything negative she drew out we transformed that negative picture into something positive and I honestly saw a transformation in how she was drawing herself, how she was talking about herself.
>
> Candice: One male student who was very violent due to experiencing physical abuse in the home, we did quite a lot of work on his hands, we moulded his hands and pressed them into clay, then made a plaster case then painted it; and we put on words like trust, care, gentle and we started to talk about how to change; how he viewed himself and viewed maybe how a man should be just by using different vocabulary and got him to just say what do you think that is? We also did a lot of self- portraits where on one side of his face, he would draw things that make him feel calm and on the other side, things that make him feel angry and we spoke about anger management techniques through the drawings and just having that time out each week made him reflect on his behaviour because he wasn’t in the mind set where he was ready to sit down and listen and progress in his work. And I think there was a process in his mind when he started to think well actually I don’t have to be this way, my hands can resemble something a bit safer, a bit more delicate. So that kind of helped him to have time out and reflect on his behaviour and to understand that wasn’t normal actually, the way he was brought up isn’t actually the way he has to be.
>
> Trisha: I think to have it all down on a piece of paper, it’s easy for them to look at their goals as well, so with a collage, they might put realistic things down. They might cut stuff like that out, they might have a family scenario they might put on a piece of paper and I think it helps them reflect on what’s bothering them and what they want to get out of life. And it’s really positive for them to look to the future and be able to see that there is somewhere they can go, they might want to go to college and they might want to move away from home. So it’s quite

> positive I suppose to know that there is a future for them and they can be in control of what they do and where they go and it gives them aspirations.

Finally, there is the belief that art therapy also provides avenues for an emotional release:

> Trisha: Art was one of the things she was good at so that was one of the ways to begin helping her release all this negativity not just in what had happened to her but the way she felt let down by everybody.
>
> Candice: He said since doing this, he's finding that it's sort of releasing all the tension and stress and it's sort of giving him a place to put it all down because there aren't that many people he can talk to out of school.
>
> Vicky: There is an emotional release and I think that in some ways that means they process what they are doing.
>
> Susan: I think it gives something that doesn't feel as pressured and focused on them because the focus is more on what they're doing and the art work. I had a girl yesterday who I got some art work out to do and because I felt like she could talk about what was happening for her there was no emotion involved in the talking and it just felt like we could talk about it but I didn't think it was going to touch anything emotionally really. So we got the finger paints out because I thought it would be a good idea for her to really touch the paint and touch the paper and really sort of start to feel that and although she was very hesitant, she started talking about things in a slightly different way. So she was now able to put a lot more emotions into what she was doing.

Communication

Another strategy used to enable students within the therapeutic context is communication, written and verbal forms. The importance of both is explained below:

> Susan: Coming in here with a stranger is really difficult for any child unless he is one who is quite confident and willing to talk to any adult. We have students who won't open up for quite some time and we have those who like talking about themselves and communicate quite easily. Equally, I've had students in the past who have been quite hard to communicate with, so we have a number of strategies to use that would make them feel comfortable. Communication does work for some.

Written communication:

Th. Inc. staff spoke of using the written word through emotional literacy cards, to enable some students to become more expressive in a non-directive way:

> Candice: I think they are quite direct without being intrusive as they are really good talking points. So they'll say, 'true,' 'false, 'or 'not sure.' For example, it says, 'I always feel safe,' and I always go through them and say if you'd like to talk more about it but I'm not going to ask you any more questions. If the child says yes, then I'd say, 'you said that you don't always feel safe,' so I'd use this as a prompt. There is also, 'home is the one place I always feel safe,' so you might get a, 'no, I never feel safe at home.' There is also, 'some days are difficult for me,' and they might start talking about why and what's happened to make it difficult and things like that; but they are all about your family and yourself and what you do about anxiety

> and anger so it sorts of prompts other discussions as to why they don't feel safe at home and it's quite good for communication because they are not as direct.

Among Th. Inc. staff there is also the belief that written communication helps students develop rational and concrete thinking:

> Candice: If someone is upset or inconsolable, I sometimes say can you write it down or just give them a piece of paper and a pen and sometimes they do, they will gradually put down what's upsetting them because I think talking sometimes is really hard especially if students are from families where they don't really talk about things like that so it's difficult to come into schools and talk about things with a member of staff when they are often quite guarded and they've been told, be careful of what you are saying. So they are able to organise their thoughts in a more formal way.
>
> Trisha: When she's (Charmaine) not in the mood to communicate, which has been a few times and she doesn't want to do any art, we've just written it down, we've communicated through writing so I might go, 'are you alright?' and she'd reply; and it's back and forth and this can be forty minutes without us talking, just communicating through writing and that's good as well because although she struggles with her writing, I do feel because she's not saying it out loud, it's almost like a diary she's writing so there's a bit of a deeper meaning in some ways as you can read into that a lot more.
>
> Vicky: I think it gives them another thinking mind so they've got all this stuff in their own heads but they don't quite know how to organise it. It's all going round and round so they are able to talk to somebody else who is just there to listen to them; it gives them another mind to think about it and another mind to contain it.
>
> Susan: I think it brings back some of their unconscious thoughts to the fore so it really does separate that sort of intellectualising and talking about something in a way you know how to do it with what you are actually feeling. So I think it gets to the sub-conscious and hopefully helps them to process that and helps them to be able to move on.

In terms of verbal strategies, TAs perceive they impact on some students by providing an emotional release:

> Candice: I've had students who have come from broken homes or families where things have split up and things aren't getting talked about at home or they are getting talked about at home but they are feeling like they have to say things in a certain way because they don't want to upset their parents so they very much use these to come and talk about how they feel about it and very often in those situations, they don't need an awful lot of prompting, it depends on the child, they are really ready to get something off their chests. A release really.
>
> Susan: The girl I had before, she did not want to go to lessons and she was really upset and very tearful and didn't want to come into school and I just sat with her for five minutes and she told me why and I could see as we both went down that we were in a much better place just having said it really, so I think it may have helped balance out her feelings of frustration by giving her an outlet.

Other ways communication is perceived to enable students is in developing a greater sense of reality:

> Candice: I think it does help them realise that their behaviour is not acceptable and it's not okay because they are often, 'it's not my fault, it's his fault, he started it.' But I think when you get them on a one on one and you go through it with them, they often start to feel a bit embarrassed really because they've got no- where to hide when you start to strip back what's going on, anything behavioural I think they sort of shrink a bit and feel sort of embarrassed about the way they behave.

> Vicky: I've had a few cases who have been playing up because of other things that have been going on that they've really struggled with accepting, things like identity issues or who they are or where they fit in but I think working through things makes them realise a lot more.
>
> Susan: I've had some of them who have always felt a bit different, never really understood why, they've had trouble working out who they are but I think talking things through has helped them tremendously. I've worked with a lot of things like that but they've worked through and realised this is who they are.

Some staff also agree that having a sense of reality often leads to a willingness to accept responsibility for their actions:

> Candice: I think it definitely does allow them to take ownership of what's going on because sometimes when they go home telling one side of the story, getting defended from the parents makes them feel that they are in the right because the parents are only getting their side of the story whereas when you strip back to basics and sort of see why they acted in a certain way it gives them nowhere to hide and they realise they are at fault. They are able to just sort of get it off their chest, so once it's come out; we can go back to it and measure it so I'd sort of say, 'how are you? Last week this was the situation, 'How are you now?' Has it improved? How are you feeling?' So that creates independence to take their responsibility a little bit because we are discussing what's happened so they feel like I told miss what's gone on and she might ask me next session so maybe for them to do something about it or think it through a bit more.
>
> Susan: I think sometimes we do talk about goal setting in a general kind of way as in, 'okay, what do you want to get out of these sessions and where would you like to see yourself in three weeks' time, six months' time?' If you could wake up in the morning and something had changed, what would it be that would change? And so I think it helps them to look at what the problem is and what needs to change for them to overcome that problem and in that sense they are taking some ownership of it.

Finally, Th. Inc. staff believe the language commonly used in these sessions enables students to become more responsive and this in turn leads to an internal growth or personal development:

> Vicky: I think it's more about what I say to them rather than how I say it. For a lot of these children, they come from homes where they are constantly abused verbally and they've grown so used to that so, if you as much as shout it puts them off. So I found using a softer tone tends to be more effective. I've had one boy who would go 'absolutely mental' if I just spoke over a certain level and you realise that they need this calm and reassuring tone. It just sets them right for the session; because they then go on to use such terms.
>
> Trisha: I think a lot of the students I work with respond pretty well to being praised, so just little words like, 'well done' for simple things like getting into school on time, getting all 2's on the report card. Simple things put them in that frame of mind that yeah, I'm doing something right and someone is noticing it and this makes them want to do better.
>
> Susan: I try to use a lot of praise. I can think of one student in particular, who had a lot going on at home. He was caring for his mum who was so ill and getting into school alone was a massive accomplishment for him on a daily basis and some teachers because they aren't all aware of these issues, when he did get in late they would cause a massive argument and one day, that really upset him and he questioned whether he should be even coming into school; but I had to reassure him you are doing really well getting into school. You've got a lot going on here and you're doing really well. And just those words brought a huge smile to his face. And I saw the difference that one instance made to his attitude, so I think just praising their

> efforts when they've done something well can go a long way because no one at home recognises what he's doing and he sought of got the feeling that no one at school was recognising either.
>
> Candice: I think it's the manner in which you speak to them can get to them as well and make them respond to you in a positive way. A lot of these children come from homes where physical and verbal abuse is all they experience. Mum shouting at them, dad beating on mum. I remember working with one child who would see his mum being battered every day and I remember the first time I even touched him on the shoulder he flinched as though to say, 'don't touch me.' And this showed me that he associated contact with aggression because this was all he was used to seeing, so I had to re-condition his mind that not all forms of touch can be violent. So at times I would ask, 'is it okay if I give you a 'hi-five?' and from something as simple as that, I think he eventually realised some forms of communication can be positive and not all have to be confrontational.

Based on these outcomes, Th. Inc. staff believe that using positive teacher re-enforcement does lead to a more positive attitude among students:

> Susan: I have seen some slight changes for instance, the young man who I work with, trying to help him manage his aggression. I've found that over time, he's not as physical as he used to be, like before he would be very physical, always punching some child up and trying to strangle one of his friends but I think that over time, yes, he did seem to be a lot gentler in his actions towards others.
>
> Trisha: I think being praised does have a positive effect on them because, if they feel good about themselves, they learn how to pass this on to other people. Even in the way some of them speak about themselves, like before, I would only hear negative words coming from Charmaine, 'oh, I'm rubbish at this or if we were doing a task and she thought she hadn't done it right, she'd ask me, 'I'm a moron aren't I?' Just really negative words used to describe herself but over time, I think she learnt a new language because I started to hear really positive words like, if she's done a great piece of art work, she'd say, 'I'm brilliant aren't I? And I would say, 'yes you are.'
>
> Susan: I think it's a connection with another person that brings about a change. I think over time, they are able to internalise the feelings that they have and they are less likely to stick in them and result in other behaviours if they can get some of their feelings out and express them, then I think it hopefully makes it easier for them to move on from what they are feeling.

The use of role play

The final strategy discussed by Th. Inc. staff as being quite valuable in enabling students is role play. One perceived area of impact is that it develops in students a greater sense of control:

> Candice: It's done after an event so emotions have gone and he's not angry and it's hard for him to understand how he felt at the time; but once he's out of it, it's quite interesting to see.
>
> Trisha: I think most importantly; they are just building skills on how to deal with situations in the appropriate way. We'd explore, if you are feeling angry what's the safest way to deal with that anger? And we'd go from there.
>
> Susan: I think in some ways it's helped her (Sara) to be in charge and in control and I think she needed that feeling of being in control and taking charge of the situation as being in that powerful situation made her feel more powerful and hence it was a defence for her in terms of feeling a bit more secure ultimately in school. Maybe as time goes by it might make her realise the different roles within the school and what a teacher's job is.

There is also the belief that engagement in role play builds students' confidence levels across a range of contexts:

> Candice: It gives them a confidence in themselves as well because they aren't confident in many ways. These are not the type of children who would go and stand in front of the class and perform, they tend to shy away from these situations and so, giving them a chance to get in role, to re-enact something that has happened in their own lives, builds their confidence because it pre-empts them for the next time it may happen and they are mentally prepared to deal with the situation when it happens again.
>
> Vicky: It helps in confidence building. I've worked with one young man who was constantly bullied and we did a number of scenarios which were very painful for him. There were tears and he really got worked up by this. But, it was also helpful for him because he was able to rehearse in his mind, the next time he faced those boys, what he would do. I remember having a talk about this in one session and he said, he didn't feel as nervous as he used to when he saw them coming down the corridor. So it's as though being in role and practicing these life scripts strengthened him emotionally for later times because I told him you're in school and you are going to face them whether on the playground or on the corridor, in the dining hall; facing them is something you're going to have to prepare yourself for. And in the end, I think he got the courage to do just that. Seeing them didn't make him 'wet' his pants anymore,' so to speak.
>
> Trisha: Definitely this strategy does help them build confidence. I think it's a really useful tool that allows children to confront many of the things they are fearful of and once this is done on a regular basis, they are just able to overcome these fears they have inside.
>
> Susan: I think it gives them a tool, something of a resource to fall back on and pull from within themselves and once this is achieved, they realise by revisiting their fears or anything that has troubled them in the past they can overcome it and this is where the confidence building comes in.

Finally, TAs believe that role play enables some students to develop qualities such as empathy and understanding:

> Trisha: It's really helpful because just to put yourself in a situation, like the ones in there for behaviour, we discussed a recent situation that happened in school that's fresh in the mind and then looked at it from a different perspective. And that's quite interesting because they are able to understand how their behaviour has a negative impact on the other person. And that is beneficial really for them and I think they do take that on and they are developing a skill without realising because we're not talking about words, they're using a scenario that they have been in themselves.
>
> Candice: It gives them a chance to see things from someone else's point of view. If they are in there because of anger, they might be taking their anger out on other people but just to be able to see it from another's point of view, just to be able to develop emotional intelligence and understand what's going wrong is quite beneficial.
>
> Susan: I think that she (Sara) didn't really know how to relate to people well. Social communication was quite hard so for her to put herself into a role made it quite easier to have that communication because she always had to win everything and so I think she would quite naturally want to be the powerful person in that role play. So it helps her to understand when she goes back into the classroom, the role of the teacher as opposed to the role of the student, she's the student but she's had an experience of what it's like to be the teacher as well. So through having a relationship with somebody who she could work through confusing situations, it did help her understand things from different people's points of view and

hopefully she could have remembered some of that when she went into difficult situations and it would have made her manage those situations differently.

Vicky: I think it is essential for them because, they say you never really know how a man feels until you take a walk in his shoes. Well I think, for her to put herself in the position of say her teacher or her sister or her mother, just for a tiny second, that gave her the realisation that, there are two sides to this and maybe I need to start seeing things from the other side, how the other person might be feeling; and that in itself is powerful, that can really work on changing the mind-set of an individual and I think it did something of that for her.

Research Question 3:

3. What is the perceived impact of Th. Inc. on staff, as well as the organization, based on staff perceptions?

As the secondary aim of this research was to evaluate perceived impact of Th. Inc. on staff, as well as the school, staff views were considered crucial to an understanding of how Th. Inc. impacts on their own development as well as the school. Seven members of staff were interviewed; four support staff with direct responsibility in Th. Inc. and three academic staff. The following accounts reflect the views of the four Th. Inc. staff.

TAs believe their involvement in Th. Inc. contributed to their own personal development, which enhanced their capacity to provide support to their students. Their personal development they credit to the growth of a number of internal qualities. Among these include:

A calm and reassuring presence:

> Vicky: I've learnt to stay calm. I've had students in that room who have got that angry that I've had to call for the SLT and just having a calm and reassuring presence has made a difference.

The ability to adapt:

> Candice: I think I am better able to adapt to what each student wants. Some students will come in and talk non- stop for an hour and some will come in and not say a word. So I think it's kind of adapting to ensure that everyone is comfortable within that space and taking on what each child wants and needs and understanding that they're all different.

Understanding and empathy:

> Vicky: I do have a better understanding of their needs because I've read, I've worked with children up there who are going through some awful circumstances. I don't know how they're coping. So I do have a better understanding and in the classroom I will give them a bit more support, moral support.
>
> Susan: I think it's developed me massively. It's meant that I can understand what students are going through, I can understand how difficult it is for some students to even get into school, it's really impressive that they can even function.
>
> Trisha: It has broadened my knowledge of what a lot of students have to go through and that was a big eye opener for me.
>
> Candice: I think I'm a lot more empathetic because of realising what these students are going through.

Listening:

Trisha: I think it's help me be able to listen and not talk and I think that's really important to actually listen to what someone's saying.

Candice: I'm quite good at listening and showing them that I am listening by remembering and bringing things up, by keeping them in mind and being able to show that you are listening in the last session by asking about it, what they were talking about and just being able to give them your full attention within the hour and I think it's that kind of listening, trying to figure out even what the child is telling me when he's not speaking.

Vicky: My only experience with children before I started this role, is 'do as I say, not as I do, take a seat, I'm here to look after you, you do what I say, you'll be safe,' whereas, I will now listen to children a little bit more rather than just tell them what they should be doing.

Increased levels of confidence:

Candice: It has definitely helped me develop in confidence.

Trisha: I'd feel very confident in managing a Th. Inc. Room and having that role as a Th. Inc. programme Supervisor. So I'm just really taking on my experience.

Susan: It's developed my confidence massively in terms of supporting students in classrooms. This is an area I wasn't always confident in but I must admit, my confidence has grown significantly since I've supported students in an even greater capacity.

Spawning new interests:

Candice: It's really made me very interested in conscious processes, why children behave the way they do.

Susan: It's given me a really big interest in Mental Health and Autism things outside the school.

These qualities they believe, ultimately led to them becoming better able to support the students they work with.

Greater understanding of support services:

Trisha: It's helped me to understand what the school does on a greater scale from a support aspect rather than just going into lessons as a TA. I can see all the things that go on behind closed doors because I get a lot of involvement with the Safe Guarding Officers, the Attendance Officers (AOs), I've been in a lot of professional meetings where my input has been quite valuable.

Candice: It did open my eyes about the pastoral care we provide, the extra things that we do that aren't necessarily educational and I do feel for some of the children, the people in school are the only positive role models they've got in their lives.

Increased awareness of children's problems:

Trisha: It definitely has helped make me be a lot more aware that children coming into school have got an awful lot that they may be dealing with. I'm more mindful of their experiences and definitely bringing that into the classroom and into my work. I think I've become a lot more responsible, I suppose knowing, looking out for alarm bells or registering when something is not quite right and knowing what you got to do and things like that.

> Candice: I do think it’s made me better. I’m not as defensive as a parent. Before Th. Inc, I probably would have been jumping off my parental pedestal. I do watch my children to make sure because I think it’s a very hard time for all children. It’s also taught me that, if my children want to talk to somebody else, I haven’t got a problem with that. I would rather they talk to that person than not talk at all.
>
> Susan: I think I’ve developed a greater awareness. I had someone who was carer for his mother who was terminally ill and he was the only one at home for his mum and he used to pay for a taxi to get into school in the morning and he would come in half dressed and then he would get in trouble straight away because he was five minutes late, he didn’t have his right uniform because he was up late with his mum all night so I think it’s just having the ability to know what goes on outside the school gates, it is horrific in a lot of cases and I think knowing no matter what we can do to impact because they’ve still got to go home to that kind of lifestyle. I also think it’s had a big impact on the way I am interacting with my own child now and seeing what other people have dealt with at home, it’s impacted massively and I think I would speak for all Th. Inc. staff here, we’ve all discussed when you think about what goes on at home, it’s really difficult and I think a lot of teachers, if you’re not from that background or if you’ve never been in contact with that kind of home life you wouldn’t realise what some of these students are going home to. It’s shocking.”
>
> Vicky: I think I was quite naïve when I first took the role on board. I was not aware of the range of issues that children have to deal with, especially children who are carers because you sort of judge children on your own life and how your own family works and I’m not saying I have the perfect family but I have a husband, I have three children but a lot of children don’t have that and it really opened my eyes and I found it quite depressing that so many children are suffering in so many ways and having to care for their adults. I was quite shocked that some children are the adult at home. I have picked up a few of the kids because of my role in Th. Inc. I’ve thought, oh actually that little kid, he’s not quite right so I’ll be-friend that child and it’s like, hi, how are you, let’s talk about cats.

In addition to their own personal development, Th. Inc. staff also believe there were a number of benefits to the whole school. These are evident in the following ways:

Improved attendance and behaviour:

> Candice: We’ve had cases where attendance has improved massively or it’s had an effect on the overall behaviour in school.
>
> Susan: There is also a girl who came, she had attendance issues and after supporting her for six months, her attendance had improved drastically, which impacts on the school’s overall percentages. We recently got some information from attendance to confirm all that because I needed to write up a case study. Her attendance has improved.

Opportunities to collaborate with professionals:

> Susan: We’re on a trial at the moment but someone comes in once a month, she’s a trained psychologist and has been working with children for many years, both privately and with the National Health Services (NHS). She specialises in multi-agency work and for those working in Th. Inc. she comes in and we sit and talk about Th. Inc. how it’s affected us, the work we do there and specific things that are on our minds that we don’t know what to do about. At times, it is individual children, so it’s just someone to take the focus on what we’re doing well and also look at what else we can do and what areas we are finding difficult. The last one we had, I had a lot of questions on my mind about a particular student and I really used the time in the supervision to talk about this student, to try and find out from somebody who really worked with children on a much deeper level, what can I do here? What would best practice

be? Where shall I go with this? She was really helpful, so I found it very useful because obviously this is expert knowledge that benefits us and the entire school.

Enhancing the school's provision and care.

Susan: Sometimes you'll find students disclosing things that they'd not necessarily talk about so they're sort of showing what's going on with them.

Candice: I have worked with students in the past and it's only through talking that we recognise they have been harmed in some way and when this is investigated, disclosures are made.

Vicky: We've had a number of disclosures that have led to children being taken out of homes because of things like abuse and neglect that's going on at home, we've had a number of self-harm disclosures, which have then led to students going on to get properly treated and supported for what's gone on.

Deepening of relationships between staff and students.

Trisha: As a group we sit and talk about some of the ways we can work to make the service a better one and it really helps when we can share ideas and work towards a common goal.

Candice: I've had some teachers come to me knowing my role in Th. Inc. and they are at their wits end really, looking for advice on how they can help certain students. And we would sit and talk about some of the strategies I use and try to decide how these can be extended to the classroom.

Vicky: The students who I work with, I feel a connection with so even if I'm not in Th. Inc. I feel that connection is still there. Inga for example, like I said, I've only had her for one year but all through her school life it's been, 'hi, you alright' and she knows that she can come and talk to me.

Research Question 4.

4. What factors limit the systemic operations of Th. Inc. within the school?

As this research evaluated the Th. Inc. programme to determine its merit to the school, another area looked at factors that limit the systemic operations of the programme and considered how these can be improved to offer a better service. Staff voice was used to gather data for this area. Their accounts suggest the success of the programme derives in part from an intuitive way of supporting young people, the presence of some organisational systems and informal communication among some staff. A number of factors thus limit effective operations of the programme. These are highlighted in the section below. As teaching staff also shared their perceptions on a number of issues that limit the systemic operations of the Th. Inc. programme, their views are included at the end of accounts provided by Th. Inc. staff.

Th. Inc. staff highlighted the need to be better supported within their roles through frequent consultations with trained professionals:

> Vicky: I do think the staff needs somewhere to off load like regular meetings with trained professionals.
>
> Susan: Support would be the key point because in terms of this service, I don’t discuss it with anyone. So it’s developing staff to be able to deliver different things.
>
> Candice: I think supervision is very important because I do feel I am out of my depth in particular circumstances. Sometimes children can come in with such a lot of difficult stuff going on in their lives and it feels like what can I do with this, I can’t fix this, surely they should be seeing somebody much more experienced. So it would be fantastic if we could ring somebody up and say I’ve got a child for you, you really need to see him.
>
> Trisha: We should have a qualified professional, maybe a psychologist because as much as we all do a grand job, I know in meetings we’ve all said, I’m not a psychiatrist and it’s a worry that we could be sending children down the wrong path or giving the wrong advice. I do think with the mental health issues that we have in this city; there should be a professional on board the team to help support us.

Along with this, staff recognised the need for greater opportunities for training to aid in their personal and professional development:

> Candice: I think it provides a great service and it’s a great resource to have but there are lots that can be added to it. Like train someone in counselling.
>
> Susan: I think we’re working with the most vulnerable kids and we’re not very trained to do that. There have been lots of cases when we feel, what are we doing? What do we do with this student? I had training four, five years ago so maybe more training would be of real use.

> Vicky: Training is an issue for me. I did the training initially when I started but I haven't had any refresher training and sometimes I doubt that I'm teaching them life skills for them to take on with them. I'm constantly asking for some type of retraining so I can do a better job in there.
>
> Trisha: I need ideas, suggestions, input, a bit of everything would really be helpful. I did my training in 2009 and I've not had a refresher course and I don't think that's right because none of us are psychologists or psychiatrists, I am just a TA and I do think refreshers should be available.

Worryingly, staff believe these problems exist due to the absence of support from management as well as a clear developmental plan that outlines the role of Th. Inc. in the school:

> Candice: I think just having that support or someone to champion it a bit, to get behind us and support what we do, that's the biggest thing that could change and it might be that people aren't entirely sure what it is we're doing but I think just having someone to go to and discuss things, that would be really helpful because it could be an amazing resource and I think it could be developed hugely. I don't feel that we have the backing from anyone to support what we do or to recognise and value what we do. It's quite difficult without status as such within the school to be able to promote something.
>
> Trisha: I think a leaflet just does not cut it sometimes to send out to expect people to read because we get so much information to read that we're expected to access on top of what we're doing for our job.
>
> Vicky: We don't have anything, we just plod along because no one takes any interest in it really, so we just do what we think we should be doing, which is fine and we do as good a job as we can but it would be nice for somebody to take a real interest in it and maybe be able to think with us, ok well we could do this or we could do that or let's really shout about this because this is where our success story lies.
>
> Susan: I think having someone responsible for the development or getting the word out, like SLT support, maybe a designated person would be great because we used to have a designated person which I think changed the feel and I sometimes wonder, what am I doing it for? What's the point? Management could really get behind it and maybe do some intensive CPD sessions on it to sensitise people to what we do and how much of a value it is because you feel like you're doing your own thing and no one's really registering or acknowledging or valuing what we're doing. So it's quite difficult to carry on being really enthusiastic when you feel like no one really understands or supports you.

The absence of a clear developmental plan from management has led Th. Inc. staff to conclude that pastoral programmes like Th. Inc. are not fully endorsed by the school and assume a low priority:

> Candice: With the sheer volume of teachers, it's quite difficult for everyone to know what's going on and what we do and for everyone to value what we do because the focus of the school really is on results instead of safeguarding students who we work with. So I think the overall school wouldn't necessarily see it as a valuable resource. I think teachers don't really know what it does and maybe it's perceived to be a little niche thing.
>
> Trisha: If we did a survey I believe the majority of staff wouldn't even understand it or what it's about.

> Susan: I don’t think the entire school values what happens in there. It’s simply not seen as having as much worth as exam results.
>
> Vicky: It’s not considered a whole school programme and it’s not valued by everyone. It’s supposed to be understood and used by the entire school but it’s seen more as a LSD thing.

These views are further supported due to the low budgetary consideration afforded to programmes such as Th. Inc.:

> Vicky: We should have a better budget to help us maximise the resource.
>
> Trisha: The resources in the room are exhausted. I feel because I’ve worked there for so long, I’ve used up every last bit of resource in there so it’s got a bit tired now. So I think we need a bit of a fresh new look on it all.
>
> Candice: We definitely need more money to purchase better resources. This would definitely help because I’ve even heard the kids say they are tired of using the same games, books over and over.

Low budgetary consideration has also been blamed for the unsuitability of the room in which Th. Inc. sessions are held:

> Trisha: We could take it to another level and improve it. Personally it should be in the Apple Room, maybe one of the bigger rooms there because we’ve not got a window in that room it’s really claustrophobic, it’s usually a mess, it’s cluttered so we could do with a couple of things.
>
> Vicky: I do not like that room, no windows. I understand it has to be private but the fact that it’s close to a classroom, sometimes children are a bit like, ‘is there someone in that room?’ So, a room in the Apple Room would be a better place because it’s completely separate.
>
> Susan: The room is too small and as it’s close to a classroom, it’s just not appropriate. You can hear lessons going on when you’re trying to run Th. Inc. sessions.

A concern related to the physical room is the limited number of places that can be offered to students due to the room size:

> Susan: The size of the room does limit the number of children who can access it and I think it’s unfair because there’s only so many places available.
>
> Vicky: If the waiting list is anything to go by, I reckon we need two Th. Inc. Rooms as there are probably some children who could do with it but don’t get the access because a higher priority child will come up.

Th. Inc. staff also expressed concerns about the current system for selecting students for referral to Th. Inc. suggesting it is unfair:

> Vicky: We do have a few children who are put in Th. Inc. because of behavioural issues and unless there is an underlying problem I don’t necessarily agree with that.
>
> Candice: The waiting list is massive and it’s not really fair that on paper we prioritise the children because what’s on paper might not necessarily be what’s going on. It’s only when you get that child in Th. Inc. that you start to open a can of worms.

Concerns were also expressed about the absence of recording machinery, which limits proper documentation and dissemination of findings:

> Trisha: We need better ways to record what we do so that can be addressed to determine the added value.
>
> Candice: I think we need to come up with ways that we can maximise what we do, ways that we can record statistics because I've been doing case studies but it's quite difficult to measure. In terms of data, it's very difficult to measure results, it's difficult to measure improvements in confidence, or resiliency, it's difficult to measure the improvements that's going on at home, so, I think given the backing and support and not feeling like I'm sort of treading water really because I sometimes make things up as I go along to try and do as much as I can.

Among one Th. Inc. staff an added concern is the lack of collaboration between programmes that can assist vulnerable students within the school:

> Susan: I think it would be fantastic to work with Th. Inc. on other programmes because while it's too much to roll out Th. Inc. to all of Year 7, what we could do is small targeted groups, we could run very small sessions and we could tie them in to whatever the rest of the school is doing then that would really push home the message a bit more. But we need to collaborate our ideas because at present, everyone seems to be pushing their own agenda.

Finally, the absence of support, limited resources and improper systems have left some Th. Inc. staff feeling undervalued and having a low morale regarding the work performed in Th. Inc.:

> Trisha: I think sometimes it's not appreciated just how hard we actually do work in there and how much we do keep that child in mind all the time.
>
> Candice: I've had other staff say what's the purpose of what we're doing anymore? Because they feel a bit lost within.
>
> Vicky: I do feel like what we do in there isn't really appreciated,
>
> Trisha: I for one do not feel appreciated and I have spoken to other TAs who work in the Th. Inc. Room and they have all said the same thing. I don't think the school values what we do in there.

While all teachers agreed that Th. Inc. is valuable and can impact in some way on students who access it, as well as the school; they admit to having a limited understanding of Th. Inc., its function as well as the nature of students who access it and their specific needs. The following responses were provided to the questions posed:

> Teacher 1: I don't fully understand what Th. Inc. is. I recognise it is a space that students can go to and we get emails and information that students are in there and I feel it's some kind of space for them to do some kind of reflection, some kind of thinking not kind of curriculum or subject based.
>
> Teacher 2: I think it's a chance for them to develop their interpersonal skills but beyond that, I'm not fully aware.

> Teacher 3: I’ve been aware that there is one but I’ve not looked into what goes on in there or how it’s impacting on students’ learning because if they’re accessing it and they’re developing, I assume it’s developing their interpersonal skills and their social skills, thinking maybe.

Despite a lack of general knowledge, teachers shared their concerns how this can militate against effective planning for students in their classes:

> Teacher 1: If these students are given an intervention for a specific need, then that’s a need that should be recorded in my planning, I need to be aware of who is in my class and how that impacts upon my own planning. So I think more knowledge and understanding of what it is and how it can impact upon my planning for students is needed.
>
> Teacher 2: If a child comes and is behaving in a certain way, if I know what the issues are, I would be empathetic with the child and I would know how to deal with it but if I don’t know, even one of the things, the biggest conclusions we draw are that a child is not doing what we ask him to do but we don’t know why he’s not doing it. We just think that he is being silly or naughty. So that can help us as teachers to differentiate or plan more for the needs of that child.
>
> Teacher 3: I do believe if I am given information I will be better able to cater for students in my lessons or even how I interact with them around the school. It is information that should be made explicit to teachers.

Summary of section.

In the previous section of this chapter, I presented the findings of this research, using the views of students and staff. I began the research by asking general questions to obtain practical answers, the data of which, have been collated and I reported the findings. In relation to each of my Research Questions, In the next section, I reflect on the key findings of the research and discuss these in greater detail with reference to some of the relevant literature.

Discussion of findings:

Introduction

This main aim of this research is to determine the merit of a programme in one mainstream secondary school, by evaluating its perceived impact on a group of students with impaired social and emotional skills. A secondary aim is to determine its perceived impact on staff and the whole school. The programme evaluated is referred to as Th. Inc., the theoretical orientation of which is the Classic Boxall NG. As a variant or different form of this intervention, Th. Inc. adheres closely to the principles of this NG model. The main methodological tool used to achieve the overall aim is 'student voice.' Staff interviews, observations and documents are also used to determine other areas of impact. Analysis of these as well as observations attest that a programme of Th. Inc. leads to improvements in many areas within the child, the most significant being the development of social and emotional learning. Areas of impact for staff include personal and professional gains and there are also a number of gains at the organisational level.

Significantly, analysis suggest that Th. Inc. provides respite for students from troubling situations, both within school and at home. It aids in relationship building among peers and adults who act as significant others and finally, it helps develop a number of internal qualities consistent with resilience. These skills enable students to better adjust to the demands of school and their personal lives. In this section of the chapter, I will reflect on the findings of the research and present a discussion of these with reference to some of the relevant literature.

Research Question 1:

1. Using ‘student voice,’ in what ways does Therapeutic Inclusion impact on students’ and equally, to what extent does this support their inclusion in school?

The first research area sought to determine the impact of Th. Inc. on students who access it. Accounts suggest, despite being a variant of the Classic Boxall NG and consistent with research in primary and secondary NGs, Th. Inc. does impacts on students in a myriad of ways. One way is seen in a number of changes that have evolved within the child, one being confidence building. This gain is significant as a lack of confidence had previously hindered some students from forming friendships with peers, performing well in lessons and adjusting in different social contexts. This is evident in the case of Lisa who, despite presenting as an academically able student, admitted to lacking in confidence in classrooms. She acknowledges there was a persistent fear of being seen as unintelligent and laughed at by her peers, ‘I didn’t like to answer questions in lessons because I always thought other children would think I was stupid.’ Opportunities to engage fully with peers in lessons are further limited due to the physical arrangement of her classes as Lisa is seated alone at a desk built to accommodate her wheelchair. Here it is argued that the physical organization of the classroom works to increase exclusionary practises rather than increase the engagement and participation of all students. Furthermore, a lack of confidence also contributed to her negative self-image, as she states, “I think part of it’s because of that, (self-image), it affects my confidence in a way.”

During some of our later conversations, however, Lisa admits to experiencing a growth in confidence, which is measured in a positive approach to learning as well as her ability to manage challenging situations. She admits she no longer has doubts about herself but feels reassured and is less concerned about her peers’ perceptions of her as one with a physical disability. At culmination of this research, Lisa had progressed to a local Sixth Form College and has managed to form relations with children her age.

Likewise, Sara acknowledges that she lacked academic confidence. Like Lisa, she admits to being shy and filled with self- doubt in lessons. Her SEN further hindered her from communicating, developing a number of social skills and thus making the expected degree of adjustment to secondary school.

At the culmination of this research, however, Sara concedes to being more confident and more of an independent learner. Her growth in academic confidence is also witnessed on occasions when she embraced her learning through actively participating in lessons, offering suggestions and questioning commonly held assumptions. This was most obvious during a Maths lesson when she assumed the role of the teacher in guiding students through a quiz. On this occasion, she embodied confidence, communicated positively with her peers and modelled age appropriate behaviour. Sara also believes she is more competent in managing social situations. She admits her friendships are no longer based on arguments and conflicts but models sensible and constructive adolescent behaviour. Added to this, she believes she is better at managing transition, as she has changed schools and has more social networks than before. Sara's ability to adjust to a new school is consistent with a key NG principle: the idea of managing transition. This can suggest she has been supported and carefully managed in making this adjustment during her transition years of Key Stage 3, Years 7-9 and from one school to another.

The growth in confidence experienced by some of these students in this research is consistent with those discussed in Kourmoulaki's (2013) study on secondary NGs. In discussing the positive impact of her NGs, young people in her research became more confident in social situations with new people; as well as were more expressive of their needs and wishes. Improved confidence levels and the acquisition of new social skills are also consistent with the aims of the Th. Inc.

Another suggested area of impact is the acquisition of self-regulation skills. Evident in students' accounts are reports of remaining calm during intense situations and their ability to better manage their emotions. In particular, students say they are better able to contain stress, anxiety and depress elevated anger levels.

Sara can be used to support to this finding explaining she no longer experiences panic attacks over what she perceives to be minor issues and is able to adjust her emotions during intense situations. She also states she is more comfortable when placed in social contexts with her peers.

Tom also attests to similar changes arguing that he is better able to cope with instances of conflict and manage the effects of peer bullying. He explains that anger and withdrawal are no longer his common reaction to such experiences but thought, reflection and self-control.

Beth also adds that she has developed a different approach to managing her behaviour, having learnt to regulate her emotions. Rather than become upset and entangled in arguments, she describes how she is now able to resolve conflicts with peers, by discussing alternative options for more positive approaches to solving such conflicts.

Finally, Mark explains since accessing Th. Inc. he has been provided with social and emotional support that have led to the acquisition of varied skills that support him in managing his high levels of stress. He identifies reflection, meditation and communication as a few.

The skills acquired by Mark and arguably other students appear to support one of the many functions of the family, reported in Rutter (1990). He argues the family serves to shape behaviour within the child, by means of selective encouragement and discouragement of particular behaviours. Here I argue that Th. Inc. serves a similar function, as through communication with staff, students are taught boundaries with regards to behaviours that are permissible or unacceptable, as well as the meanings of their behaviours that are either encouraged or discouraged through firm but non-punitive ways.

Though supported within a primary NG, these findings are also consistent with those found in Doyle (2003) who argues the NG was instrumental in bringing about a number of changes within her infant children such as self-control and management of their behaviour, social skills and skills for learning.

Additionally, though supported for a longer period in the NG, these findings are also consistent with Cooper and Whitebread (2007) who also found significant improvements in behaviours of their students; Cooper and Tiknaz (2005) who report their NG led to improved outcomes in students’ social competencies, emotional literacy and behaviour; and Cooper, Arnold and Boyd (2001) who also report positive outcomes in terms of students’ behavioural functioning. Similar findings on the role of NGs in developing students’ social and emotional functioning are reported by Binnie and Allen (2008), Cefai and Cooper (2001) and Scott and Lee (2009). Their findings are also consistent with Sanders (2007) who also reports on significant social and emotional gains as students are able to regulate their behaviour, manage anger problems and use skills of negotiation.

The importance of nurture for the development of self-esteem is emphasised in much of the literature on NGs, which suggests that a nurturing environment encourages children to experience feelings of self-worth. Such feelings are often achieved by enabling them to value themselves through their experience of being valued and cared for by others.

As nurture involves listening and responding, through the act of communication, children respond to being valued and thought about as individuals (Cooper and Lovey, 1999). Nurture also encompasses noticing and praising even small achievements (Boxall, 2002). The role of nurture in repairing damaged or non-existent personalities is also emphasised in national policies that suggest suitable approaches that can be taken. With an emphasis on preventive work, The Green Paper (DfEE, 1997) emphasises the importance of nurturing a culture in which damaged self-esteems can be rebuilt.

In this research, Beth's negative self-concept was often highlighted in many of her Th. Inc. sessions:

> Researcher: The last time I was in the Th. Inc. you said while using the emotional literacy cards, the question was, 'when I look in the mirror, I like what I see.' And you said, 'clearly not;' and when miss said you're pretty, you shrugged your shoulder and said, 'NO!' Do you not think you're pretty?
>
> Beth: No!
>
> Researcher: Why not?
>
> Beth: Because I'm not.
>
> Researcher: What part of you do you think isn't pretty?
>
> Beth: Everything.

Attune to a poor self- concept is also a sense of powerlessness and this is also apparent in the remarks of Charmaine regarding her own personal circumstances:

> Charmaine: I am to blame because maybe if I had said something it could have changed things. If I recognised what he did, I could have stopped it and would not feel like this today and I could just walk around like any normal person. And it doesn't stop. A holy man did it to me. A kid in school did it to me. But it won't stop and I know it's going to lead up to something serious where I'm going to end up in a ditch and I just feel like there is nothing I can do about it.

However, among these students, their later accounts reflect improved self-esteems and more positive self-images.

> Beth: I have learnt to love myself for who I am.
> Charmaine: I've learnt a lot about myself and I now appreciate who I am and I am now starting to see myself as beautiful.

In addition, Tom, who had a damaged self-concept because of his experiences of being bullied informs me that he has learnt to accept who he is and no longer holds an imperfect view of himself, despite the negative perceptions of many of his peers. Martha who was bullied because of her unusual looks and being overweight had also developed a poor self-image. However, she later admits to holding a positive view of herself, one as beautiful, regardless of the perception of her peers. These accounts suggest that Th. Inc. provides opportunities through which students are encouraged to experience feelings of self-worth (Boxall, 2002). These findings are also consistent with Garner and Thomas (2011) as in their study, students who accessed a secondary NG are reported to have experienced a growth in levels of self-esteem. Though reflected in a primary NG, staff in the study by Binnie and Allen (2008) also found improved measures in self-esteem among their students.

Thus far, I have reported the study's key findings in relation to a number of themes that have merged within accounts. However, in reporting these findings, specific patterns that were coded and then grouped into themes that were later collapsed into three overarching themes. These only became obvious towards the end of my reporting phase. These findings I then presented into three overarching themes.

The first of these is respite as I found that Th. Inc. provided a refuge or safe haven for many students who access it.

Equally, I found relationships emerged as a significant theme as students developed secure attachments with reliable adults with whom they worked.

Finally, students who engaged in Th. Inc. developed a number of internal qualities characteristic of resilient individuals. These are explored in greater detail below.

Respite:

It was discovered that Th. Inc. impacted significantly on students by providing them with opportunities for respite from sources of distress in their lives. Evidence to this is stated by Mark who is easily stressed by his academic work in some lessons:

> Mark: When I'm in Th. Inc. it helps me think about my stress, I can clear my head and relax from lessons because in lessons, I sometimes get nervous… but when I'm in there, I can just relax a bit.
>
> Researcher: What are some of these things you do to relax?

> Mark: She would ask me what can you do the next time you get nervous? And we'd talk about things I can use and things I can do so the next time I feel that way, instead of just asking to leave the lesson I try things because I need to learn to deal with my stress and she gives me time to think about it and sometimes we even practise it and it does make sense.
>
> Researcher: How difficult is it for you to think about these things if you are in a lesson?
>
> Mark: Oh (shakes his head), I won't be able to think at all, it's too noisy and I get all nervous and everyone is just shouting out at the same time and miss, she can't control the class so, I just. I can't cope in there."

Another account is provided by Martha who describes the ways in which opportunities for respite impacted upon her well- being:

> Martha: It just gets all my thoughts away for that whole hour because we play games or we'll do arts and craft or sometimes we just talk about it.
>
> Researcher: talk about what?
>
> Martha: If I'm feeling down, if something happens with my dad at home, she'll just talk to me about things I can do even in school. She tries to get me to focus on the good things, like my lessons and we try to work out a plan to deal with it because when I think about him I get sad.
>
> Researcher: Does thinking about the good things, the positive things help you to deal with what's going on, like when you worry about dad?
>
> Martha: Yeah because sometimes I don't focus on it as much; at least when I'm in school and I need that… So miss talks to me and makes me realise that I am strong and I am confident and he needs me and I feel a lot better after this.

These students appear to welcome 'time away' from unsettling situations in school and at home. For one student, Th. Inc. provides the opportunity to 'relax' from the stresses of a demanding home life. Additionally, within the therapeutic context, students report being able to think, reflect on their behaviours and regroup, thus providing opportunities for them to make formative action.

Relationships:

There is also evidence that Th. Inc. has impacted on students by providing them with sound reliable adult figures in the form of significant others. The literature on Th. Inc. explains that children who are experiencing difficulties in their lives need opportunities to explore their thoughts and feelings and that such opportunities are facilitated through a safe place and a secure relationship with Th. Inc. workers. The significance of reliable adult figures is also underscored in educational guidance provided on supporting children with SEBD. Within these, the significance of the adult/child relationship is featured suggesting that through this, bonds of friendship, trust and respect are engendered and this above all enables the child to acquire healthy mental states.

The quality of interpersonal relationships within the therapeutic context is a recurrent theme in this research, as students describe relationships that centre on respect, acceptance, understanding and trust. Students view Th. Inc. staff as ‘significant others’ with whom they have formed an attachment. The idea of Th. Inc. staff as supportive figures is expressed in the accounts of many students:

> Charmaine: She looks after me, she understands me; she just knows the right words to give me.
>
> Martha: She understands me because she knows what happens at home and she just knows how to make me feel better.
>
> Tom: We get along and I can have a conversation with her about anything, laughing or something and this helps me when I’m stressed.
>
> Sara: I get to talk to someone because at home, I can’t talk to much people, so I guess talking to Miss gives me a chance to say this is how I feel on a daily basis and she gives me advice.
>
> Mark: It kind of helps because someone is listening, someone is giving me advice as to how to deal with it instead of being at home and not knowing.
>
> Beth: I take the advice that she gives to me. Sometimes if I’m really upset and I need someone to talk to I go find her.

Such relationships contrast with what exists in some mainstream classrooms as some students report some of their teachers as ‘uncaring,’ ‘unsupportive,’ ‘judgemental,’ ‘doubtful,’ ‘suspicious’ and ‘critical’ based on their SEN, their past or personal circumstances.

Charmaine, for example, believes she is accepted and respected as an individual. She appreciates being treated as a young adult rather than patronised as a child because of her past experiences. She values being treated as ‘a normal girl’ and not viewed as someone who has been ‘touched up.’ The relationship is based on dignity and respect as she believes she is regarded as an individual and not a statistic. Bishop and Swain (2000) report a similar finding in their study as students’ behaviour improved in direct response to their perception of being valued as individuals, as opposed to being perceived as one of many. In the current research, Charmaine believes that their relationship thus focuses on her strengths as an individual and not her shortcomings.

Lisa’s relationship with her Th. Inc. worker is not dissimilar but one based on mutual respect as she believes she is treated like a child who is ‘differently able’ rather than disabled. Accounts from other students also highlight the positive nature of the therapeutic relationship as John also explains that his relationship resembles that of one she would share with a close friend.

The foundation of the therapeutic relationship centres on a core NG principle, responding to child, ‘as they are,’ an idea that is underscored by a non-judgemental and accepting attitude. This NG principle emphasises that a secure and trusting relationship with the teacher as a substitute attachment figure is essential while meeting the needs of each child at the developmental level they have reached (O’Connor and Colwell, 2002). The fact that some students also successfully develop emotional bonds with staff supports the existence of secure attachment behaviour (Bowlby, 1969).

A consequence of secure attachments is that Th. Inc. has also provided students with a sense of security through a secure base or safe haven. Comments such as, ‘it’s a place where I can be comfortable,’ ‘it’s great because you can just relax and there is nobody to laugh at you or tell you that you’re stupid;’ ‘it’s a place where you can go to for support;’ suggest that Th. Inc. provides students with a sense of security. That students are also able to contain anxiety in new or stressful situations (Rutter 1990), suggests this sense of security is created as an extension of the secure relationships within the therapeutic context.

Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, et al (1978) who operationalised Bowlby’s theory on attachment behaviour, include three types of attachment. The first they argue is secure attachment- where attachment behaviour in normal surroundings is curious and responsive and anxious and proximity seeking at times of stress. Children, displaying this type of attachment tend to seek out their carers for comfort and are easily calmed.

Secondly, there is ambivalent attachment, where children show severe distress when separated from their carers. At times of stress such children become anxious, clingy and rejecting. Children displaying ambivalent attachment are also eager to please but sulk when limits are imposed.

Finally, they speak of avoidant attachment- where behaviour tends to indicate an omnipotent approach to the world and rejection of nurturing. During times of stress, such behaviour is self-contained and insular.

In the current research, many of these students state the relationship shared with staff was more valued than the physical room or activities they engaged in.

Evident in their accounts is the acknowledgement that they sought Th. Inc. staff for additional support. Such accounts illustrate a reliance on Th. Inc. staff.

This finding adds to the existing literature on the significance of the adult/child relationship and is also consistent with the literature on NG staff and their ability to respond to the needs of young people. In her study, Kourmoulaki (2013), for instance, argues that NG staff were predictable and responsive, a finding also consistent with Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969). An extension of this is reported in Garner and Thomas (2011) who also found that the relationships students shared with NG staff was instrumental in helping children develop their relationships with adults and peers. The foundation of such relationships, they believe are based on equality and respect. Lucas (1999) also reinforces the significance of relationships in her discussion of the nurturing school by suggesting relationships in a family, group or community are integral to the education process if development is to be authentic. The development of a secure relationship with Th. Inc. staff and the impact of this relationship will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

Resilience:

Finally, there is evidence that Th. Inc. has enabled some students with a number of internal qualities reflective of resilience. One such quality is the ability to attribute a positive stance regardless of a change in circumstances. This is apparent in the following conversation with Beth who previously blamed her antagonistic relationship with teachers on unfair targeting:

> Researcher: Why do you think everybody thinks you are naughty?
>
> Beth: Because I was naughty for ages with my Science teacher but she wasn't a good teacher and teachers just don't like me. I get blamed for everything. Like in Maths, someone locked the teacher out and I was the one who got in trouble for it. But I wasn't out my seat, I was sat at the back since I am naughty but it was someone else and I was like, 'it wasn't me.' She was, 'stop giving me back chat, of course it was you,' but it wasn't. But she never listens to me so I never listen to her.

In later conversations, however, Beth attributes more of a positive stance despite the fact that her relationship with her teacher can still be considered an antagonistic one:

> Researcher: So you are learning to handle yourself a lot better now?
>
> Beth: Yeah.
>
> Researcher: In what way?

> Beth: Depends what type of situation it is, if it's a situation I don't like then I just go out of it and I just say I don't like it but if it's a situation I know I can handle then I don't tell anyone, I can just handle it myself.
>
> Researcher: How did you handle situations yourself?
>
> Beth: I used to get really angry but I've been able to hold it back. Before I used to have such a bad temper, everyone who said anything to me I'd just shout. Now I step back and look at the situation and say how I could have gone about it differently instead of always confronting people. Anything that I did I'd blame it on someone else. I used to get in trouble in a lesson, I'd go, it wasn't my fault, it was her fault, she was just speaking to me, or I'd go well the teacher always puts me on a (C1) (behaviour consequence) I'll just say something to try and get myself out of the situation or blame other people whereas now I can say well, I'll hold my hands up to that bit like I am sorry but I don't think that bit is right, if I know I'm fully wrong, then I will say sorry.
>
> Researcher: This is a new you. What's brought about this change?
>
> Beth: Miss just gave me a lot of scenarios and asked how I would look at it and we looked at it and they are just totally different. What I used to do a lot was just go up to them straight away, I heard someone said something about me or my family or anything but now I can think about it and go well, how bad was it and I can speak to that person. But now all I'm doing is sitting back and not arguing with teachers. If I don't understand I'll just go, 'I don't understand and I need help,' because they would always say it's what I said, so I'm not saying anything wrong. So now it's just being able to handle more. It's easier now. I don't argue with people.
>
> Researcher: Has this approach helped your relationship with your friends and some teachers?
>
> Beth: It has, it's not perfect but it has gotten a lot better, we still have some arguments but I don't let it get to me as much. Like with some teachers, I just realise my attitude was causing some of the problems, so now I don't argue back, I am trying to be a lot more careful with what I say.

This positive attributional stance is also evident in the following discussion with John:

> John: When I went to college, some kid got his bag stolen and he blamed it on us and he went to our lessons. He came in and he said you and Nick need to shut your mouth if you have nothing to say to me in my face. I said I don't know what I've done to you I was trying to be your friend and he said, 'let's take it outside and I said, I'm not going to fight with you, there's no point in fighting, we can talk about it but I don't want to hurt you. Then he pushed me and I was dead angry. I wanted to punch him so hard but inside, I was saying there's no point but outside it looked like I was getting ready to fist him in the face. He pushed me on the floor and he pointed at me in the face, I could have gotten up and head butt him but I was, there's no point because at that time, I remembered what miss said, think about what he was in and what you were in and I thought what I would do if someone said that, so I thought I know what he's going through and I just walked off and handled my anger. My anger was out of control but now I have it in control and I don't like people getting to me. I don't want to be remembered as the guy who always had a lot of fights. We were walking to this van and he and his friends were looking at me, he was talking about me and I heard him, that 'd-i-c-k' over there straight to my face, he said he's a little boy and one of his friends said you're hurting my cousin and if you touch him, then you're going to get knocked out man and I was just laughing. I was laughing my head off. I'm like, I'm laughing at you, you're stupid, you're going to fight with me for that person, what about if that person stabbed me, then you're going to fight for him. Now I understand why teachers say fighting is stupid and it doesn't get you anywhere in life, the only thing it gets you is prison or in trouble. It's stupid. Like myself, I want to get somewhere in life, somewhere far in life to make my mom proud and say yeah I've done that and show my kids and just sit there and think I've done that for the person and my dad is looking down on me.

A final example is seen in Tom, the student who was bullied by his peers:

> Tom: Those kids used to really get to me. I would go home and cry and become really angry because I thought, why do they have to be so mean? I didn't even want to come back to this school but my mother insisted that I did. But, for some reason, they don't seem to get to me as much. Well, they don't make me want to cry, not over them at least.
>
> Researcher: What about becoming angry? Do you still become violent at home?
>
> Tom: No I don't.
>
> Researcher: Why not?
>
> Tom: Well it's a waste isn't it? It's a waste of emotions, my emotions. Why should I let them get me so upset that I would want to smash my X-Box? (laughs). It's stupid. No. I told myself that I am not going to let them get to me in that way. I need to be a lot more mature in how I handle things. I've just found better ways of dealing with them really. I still see them because they are in my year group, some are in my lessons, but I don't let them get to me. I guess some of the things miss taught me in Th. Inc. have worked. I am dealing with this situation a lot better anyway. I feel a lot better about myself and I've realised that I'm not the weird one and if they don't want to be nice to me now, they'll want to talk to me in the future because I'm going to be successful. They're going to wish they were nicer to me.

2. What strategies are used within Th. Inc. and how are they perceived to impact on students in terms of staff perceptions?

The second research area investigated the strategies used in Th. Inc. and their perceived impact on students. Three techniques were identified by Th. Inc. staff, art therapy, communication and role play. The following is a discussion of the ways in which staff perceive these strategies impacted on students. The approach taken in this discussion will be to present the most common themes in relation to each strategy and reference these in relation to some of the existing literature.

Art Therapy.

Art therapy refers to the marriage of two distinct disciplines- art and therapy. It provides therapeutic art experiences that allow children to explore personal problems and potentials through both non-verbal and verbal expression; and to develop physical, emotional and learning skills (Shostak, 1985). This process is based on the concept that the creative process of art making is healing and life enhancing. Visual arts such as drawings, paintings and sculptures are used as powerful and effective forms of communication to assist in understanding individuals and aids in enhancing life through self-expression, growth, emotional reparation, conflict resolution and transformation. The emphasis is thus on developing and expressing images that come from inside the person rather than those he sees in the external world; hence, the term commonly used to describe art therapy is 'drawing from within.'

Malchiodi (2007) describes a number of ways in which art therapy can benefit an individual. These include stimulating visual thinking as visual art offers a unique way to express traumatic images, bringing them to consciousness in a less threatening way. Thus, when appropriate social behaviour and healthy affective development are facilitated, children become more receptive to learning and are more likely to realize their potential in social as well as academic areas (Shostak, 1985); see also, Tibbets and Stone (1990).

This concept was first explored in the work of Freud (1915) who observed that dreams, feelings and thoughts are experienced predominantly in visual form. He recognised that art is closer to the unconscious because our visual perceptions predate our capacity for verbal expression. Freud (1915) thus concluded that patients' frustrations in describing their dreams might be alleviated if they could draw them and allowing a mood or problem to become personified in an image through dreams or art would allow one to comprehend it deeply and experience the emotions that are contained within it.

A second benefit arising from the use of art therapy is the enablement of self-expression- allowing one to express what words cannot, through drawings, paintings or other art forms. This is especially useful with young children who lack extensive vocabularies to describe their feelings and experiences.

Art therapy also promotes sensory experiences as it provides a way to tap into one's emotions and perceptions more easily than words can allow. In this vein, it offers a way to reintegrate complex emotions that are expressed through senses. Additionally, as the tactile aspects of art materials can be self-soothing and relaxing, art making assists the process of emotional reparation and healing.

It is also recognised to provide an emotional release or in psychological terms, a 'catharsis,' a cleansing or purging. In therapy, this is referred to as the expression and discharge of strong emotions for relief.

For some, there is also a sense of satisfaction gained when engaging in art therapy as the act of creating a product, can be viewed as an activity that generates self-esteem; encourages risk taking and experimentation, teaches new skills and enriches one's life. This process of creativity through making something new is viewed as a powerful experience with undeniable therapeutic benefits.

Art has also been known to enhance life as people are generally lively, playful and communicative with others during art making. It also allows one to become more flexible, assists in self-actualising and taps into creative problem solving and intuition. This then facilitates experimentation of new ideas, new ways of expression and new ways of visualising things. This view is concurred by Art Therapist Bruce Moon who believes that art making serves an existential purpose in helping us make sense of the world through overcoming feelings of existential emptiness and loss of soul.

Finally, it is suggested that art helps to create relationships as it capitalises on the relationship between the art maker and the therapist.

Based on the accounts of staff and some students, it is argued that art therapy has impacted on students in many of the ways described above. The most consistent themes relate to providing students with avenues for self-expression, confidence building, allowing avenues for a release of emotions and developing a greater sense of self. This is brought about as in Th. Inc., art therapy allows students to open up and explore ideas and issues that would have hitherto remained dormant. This then leads to a realisation of who they are and their place in the world.

These benefits are borne out in the following discussion with Charmaine as she describes her journey of self-expression through her artwork:

> Charmaine: My art piece is my diary. It would tell you everything, it's my life and it shows who I am. I like to show people through pictures.
>
> Researcher: What does it allow you to show?
>
> Charmaine: When I can't talk or I want to say something but I don't know how to put it into a sentence, or I don't know how to lay it out onto the table, when a person gives me a pen and paper, I can draw how I feel. My feelings start collecting in my mind and it just comes out on the table; so sometimes I just draw and I don't even know what's happening. I can go miles away, literally miles away.
>
> Researcher: Tell me about one drawing you did.
>
> Charmaine: I did this painting and I think it was of the beach and all I remember, my emotions were trying to say, I want to go somewhere, I want to get away and people would say if you want to go somewhere go to the beach, it's relaxing. So I drew the beach to say I want to get away and I have this fascination with the rocks where I can sit on them where the bit of the sea comes in, that's the side I like to be on because it's quiet, no one's there and you can just sit there and see the whole wide ocean. When I'm around the ocean, I'm not afraid of anything that's my place when no one else can say you're kind of weird or anything, it's like, I don't know a special word to put it.
>
> Researcher: It's like an escape?
>
> Charmaine: Yeah!
>
> Researcher: Were you finding it difficult to say these things?
>
> Charmaine: Yes, because I can't say them to anyone at home. So, I just decide to draw them and then I show Miss and we talk about it and how I was feeling when I drew it and how it makes me feel.
>
> Researcher: Tell me about this picture you drew (she is shown another photo).
>
> Charmaine: It was this flower but all the leaves were around it… I call it the blue moon flower, it's white and it goes blue, it's beautiful…. I did it and in the centre, I put leaves all around it…. So like, miss gave me that opportunity where I can lash out on the paper, where I can draw everything but for some reason this picture just came straight to my mind and I just drew it.
>
> Researcher: What did the flower represent?
>
> Charmaine: Peace, because that's all I want. I want peace in my life. I don't like when I get stressed out. I don't like being stressed out.

> Researcher: How were you feeling when you drew this?
>
> Charmaine: I felt really passionate about it, I felt like something was coming out of me and then when I looked at it, I knew I was trying to say I want peace. In a way, the flower represents me, not that I'm beautiful or anything but the flower is kind of like me and the leaves are everyone else around. So, I'm saying to them I want peace. I want them to understand I want peace. It's kind of hard for me to say I want peace in life now because my family keep on saying you don't know what we've been through when we were little, been on the streets, my sisters have looked after me and my brother but now, they expect me to become a bit like them but I don't want to, I want to be me so it's to say I'm very sensitive this way.
>
> Researcher: Why are the leaves all green though?
>
> Charmaine: I didn't want everyone to know it's them so they are all the same colour. How I did it in different sizes and different ways, it's kind of saying everything looks the same because every opinion everyone gives me is the same so it's kind of hard but then again they are all close to me so that's why they are all close around the flower, so it's kind of they're there but they don't understand, so when the flower blooms, it's like I'm growing in a way but I still have this bit that I have to carry around me that's what I circled the yellow bit to show.
>
> Researcher: You mentioned when you were drawing, a lot was coming out of you. What do you think that was?
>
> Charmaine: I felt happy, the anger. My anger came from when I was little. People say what happened in the past leave it in the past but like getting touched up and just getting seen all angry with everyone, I can't get it, I can't leave it in the past, because it was in the past but to me it's always with me, I can't leave it. I can't break away, I can't say, it's fine. It's always with me and it will always be with me so it's hard. So that is what my drawing does for me. They allow me to speak. I am shy, I have friends who can say something to me, yeah sometimes I can take it as a joke but they'll say something that really hurts and I will not be happy. I will literally be kicking off but through my piece. So when I'm lashing out on my drawing, it feels great.

Evident in Charmaine's account, is the usefulness of art therapy and the suggestion of the ways in which this strategy has enables her. One is providing an alternative way to express what cannot be verbalised, 'my art piece is my diary. It would tell you everything, it's my life. It shows who I am." Her past, being a victim of sexual abuse, is something she is unable to verbalise, either due to the trauma she has experienced or because she has been urged to remain silent on this issue. Art therefore becomes a channel through which she is able to voice her thoughts and suggested in some of the literature, a way for her to purge or cleanse her soul. There is in a sense, a catharsis.

Additionally, Charmaine states that art has aided in confidence building, "that's how I started to build a bit of my confidence up because of my picture. I can do it; it was like a sign. Charmaine, you can do it!" It also provides an emotional release, "I felt really passionate about drawing it, I felt like something was coming out of me; and for her, there is also a sense of empowerment. Her accounts therefore testify to some of the intrinsic value of art therapy, which are reported in much of the early work done in this field.

White and Richard (1971) for instance, report that an art counselling group for pre-adolescent boys was highly effective in building their self-image. Wolf (1973) reports on the effects of using art therapy on a short term basis in the treatment of a child exhibiting emotional problems and Virshup (1975) found that a ten-week art therapy group with pre-adolescent boys was highly successful in reducing hyperactivity and aggression.

Furthermore, Tibbetts and Stone (1990) report on the use of short term art therapy and its effectiveness in the emotional growth and development among seriously disturbed adolescents. They suggest the success of the intervention is marked by increasing a sense of identity in SEBD adolescents as it assisted them in becoming more aware of and realistic towards their views of themselves and their environment. In this study, art therapy was also effective with those who present with depression as a central feature of their emotional disturbance and was useful in reducing the severity of feelings of anxiety and rejection.

Some of the positive experiences shared by Charmaine in my research are also highlighted by Stanley and Miller (1993) who suggest that short term art therapy is an effective form of therapy for troubled adolescents. Such effectiveness, they argue, may be due in part to the relatively non-threatening nature of the procedure, as adolescents who would be reluctant to place themselves in a vulnerable position by openly discussing areas of concern and are likely to be willing to participate in any art activity that seems much less personal. Art enables their students have an avenue for expressing troubling feelings and they are able to maintain a sense of control over their situation. Some of these ideas have also been echoed by staff during interviews. This was discussed earlier in this chapter when I presented the impact of art therapy on students based on staff perceptions.

Verbal communication.

In NGs, language is perceived as more than a skill to be learnt but as a vital form of communication, as words are used instead of actions to express feelings. Opportunities are therefore created for extended conversations or encourage imaginative play to understand the feelings of others. Such experiences are essential as they provide students with chances to become more expressive, they help in developing more rational forms of thinking; they strengthen their sense of identity; and they allow students to better understand their own behaviours. Communication also helps to provide a measure of relief and assists in creating avenues that may generate change.

In discussing the role of the family, Rutter (1990) also reminds us of the importance of communication in a child's development. He emphasises that conversations with family members are very important for trying out children's ideas but equally, for working out relationships with others; as through conversations, feelings and attitudes are transmitted through gesture, facial expression and posture.

The importance of communication is also echoed by students in this research:

> Charmaine: I get to talk to someone because at home, I can't talk to much people because my mum's ill, my two sisters are always busy and my brother, he doesn't listen to nothing, so talking to Miss gives me a chance to just say this is how I feel on a daily basis because at home I have to lock it all in and it's really hard because I can't even tell my family how I feel… they still don't understand; so I go home and keep a smile on my face and say, yeah mum school was fine and then it's like, there's a situation at school. Like when I was in Year 2, I used to cry every lesson and I had no one to talk to and then I told someone because it was killing me inside, it was burning me up and I felt like I wanted to scream and I was just there like I can't hold it in anymore. But in Th. Inc. I have someone to talk to, halleluiah.

For Charmaine, communication is a therapeutic activity. Conversations allow her to transmit her feelings about issues that are deeply personal and affect her social and emotional development. Such words are not spoken either because she cannot verbalise them or she has been urged not to speak them. It also provides a sense of release as she is able to share her thoughts with someone and try out her ideas. She is also more expressive as without this, she is left feeling restricted. Comments such as they are 'burning,' suggest the burden she carries through her inability to communicate her pain with someone she can trust.

Equally, Lisa speaks on the benefits of being able to communicate:

> Lisa: I could tell her certain things I could not tell other people and I think it was the normality of it. It was just normal conversations that no one would have. No one ever had, or did have a normal conversation with me where they seemed completely comfortable to talk to me and I don't like making people uncomfortable, so I just chose not to talk to people if they looked like they didn't want to talk with me. So just being able to talk to someone about anything was great. And we probably barely spoke about anything that actually mattered or anything to do with any of my problems. We never mentioned it and it wasn't that I needed to talk about any of my problems. I needed to talk about anything, like random conversations about puberty and I noticed she'd slip little questions in like, 'oh do you do that at the caravan or how do you do that?' She was trying to figure stuff out but it wasn't openly asking me questions.

Cooley (1934) outlines the significance of the need to communicate with others stating that everyone necessarily strives to communicate to others that part of his life that he is trying to unfold himself and this is a matter of self-preservation. For many of these students, opportunities to communicate during this stage in their development (adolescence), contributes to their own development as they may be questioning so many aspects of their own existence. For Charmaine, questions may centre on, 'am I beautiful? Am I to blame?' Communication with another is therefore crucial for her own understanding of her past as she is given answers to questions about her life and possibly what her future may entail. For Lisa, she is able to speak about issues that relate to her own existence, her life as a child with a SEN and find answers to how she fits into the wider world.

Non-verbal communication

NG principles underscore the idea that words are used instead of actions to express feelings and can be deliberately used to foster positive self-regard and enhance students' self-esteem. Examples of such words often include the use of verbal praise and in particular, specific verbal praise directed at the child, informative and spontaneous praise of students' behaviour and work and non-specific praise.

Additionally, non-verbal forms of communication are often used and can include:

- Eye contact.
- Facial expressions- including smiling/laughing/winking.
- Use of a soft voice.
- Nodding.
- Clapping.
- Touching the child- e.g. patting/holding hand/hugging.
- Proximity to child.

- Thumbs up/other signs of approval.
- One to one attention.
- Written communication.

It will be recalled that during interviews some students spoke candidly about the nature of verbal communication they shared with some of their classroom teachers. For some, such interaction is dogmatic and at times, antagonistic, as evident in the following accounts:

> Sara: It's the way the teachers talk to you. They don't even talk they **shout.** They don't even **shout** they **scream.**"
>
> Mark: The teachers are **always at you**."
>
> Beth: They're just always like, if you forget to do something or if you don't understand something they are like **on and on** and I'm always the one who gets **blamed** for everything."
>
> Tom: It's always, **I want you** to do this and **you have to** do this and **you have to** do the lettering. I don't like stuff like that."
>
> John: It's like, they are really nice to other kids and talk about 'well done, well done' and to me they just keep going **on and on**."

The above accounts are indicative of communication that is authority laden, coercive and breads antagonism. The effect of which is summed up by students below:

> Sara: Every time a teacher tells me off it puts a bar on the chart you see, to see how much I've given up. Every time a teacher shouts at me, it's like a bar in my head and every time they shout at me, I run to the bar and just give up even more.
>
> Beth: Today the teacher shouted at me for what I didn't do, that's what really annoys me, that's what makes me give up. I give up on today. She is the one that's makes me give up.
>
> John: Teachers tell me what to do like you need to get on with your work and I'm getting really angry now; I feel like hitting them.

There is, however, a distinct contrast in the nature of communication that students experience within Th. Inc. An extract from an observation with one student demonstrates such interaction between the adult and child as well as the impact on the child's behavior. Examples of positive verbal and non-verbal forms of communication are highlighted for ease of reference.

> Lisa enters the room and moves towards the sand pit **(smiles).** Vicky opens conversation with a question, 'why would anyone invent such a thing?' A conversation ensues between Lisa and Vicky, who then looks for a spade and **asks** Lisa if it's okay to use her hands today. Lisa says yes and they **both** talk about building a sand castle. Later, Vicky talks to Lisa about a TV show she often watches. Lisa **laughs** and asks why would you call a kangaroo skipper? Vicky then asks Lisa, 'what would you call a kangaroo then?' They both continue to form objects in

> the sand pit. Vicky **sits next** to Lisa and plays in the sandpit. She says to Lisa, ‘you know how people don’t talk to you because you have no legs, so obviously you can’t talk? (Lisa **laughs**).
>
> [Later]
>
> Both engage in a family game which includes Lisa, her sister, one has no legs (Lisa **laughs**). Vicky becomes Lisa’s sister and encourages Lisa to use wet sand to form certain objects. Lisa replies, ‘no, I can’t, I don’t know how to make a tight fist.’ Vicky demonstrates how to use the sand firmly in her hand. Lisa repeats this action and is successful (**cheers** from Vicky) ‘**woo hoo, well done Lisa**.’ Thought I would have to wait forever then. Lisa (**smiles**).
>
> [Later the same session]
>
> Both play a game related to getting the farm organized. Lisa is given the responsibility of getting the farm organized but **both** she and Vicky work on it. Lisa asks Vicky, ‘who is that? (Refers to a character on the farm). Vicky responds, I don’t know, **you choose.** Lisa says, he’ll be Eddie then. **Both** work together on decorating the character, Eddie. Vicky asks, ‘where are **we** putting Sally?’ Lisa replies, she can have a den over there. Vicky **looks into Lisa’s eyes**- same level with her. Lisa continues to make shapes of people to include on her farm (OC- she appears to be struggling with forming the shapes properly). Vicky looks over at her work and comments, **‘hmm, that looks pretty good there**. I especially like the shape of Eddie’s head.’ Lisa **laughs** then says, ‘I tried you know this is the closest I can get to something made of wet sand to look like him.’ Vicky responds, ‘and **it’s a great effort**. I’m pleased and I’m sure Eddie would be too if he seen it.’
>
> [Later]
>
> Vicky explains to Lisa how to wash glue. **Looks into Lisa’s eyes** and explains how glue goes on and can be washed. She also asks Lisa to feel a bump on her head she got from taking care of her rabbit- **she bends down her head** and Lisa **feels** the bump.

Apparent in this extract is a conscious effort to engage in role modelling of positive behavior in relation to appropriate social communication, (Cooper and Tiknaz, 2005). Positive examples of communication are used 21 times. Feelings and attitudes are transmitted through gestures such as smiles, facial expressions and posture and Th. Inc. staff sitting on the same level with the child.

Additionally, in Th. Inc., students are given a choice of activity to lead, suggesting that sessions are autonomy supportive, encourage student choice; and learning is based on a sharing of activities, thus fostering co-operative learning skills.

Common forms of communication include verbal praise, which is used 4 times while positive or non-verbal behavior is used 5 times. This may be due to the measure of familiarity or comfort among Th. Inc. staff in using such strategies to comment on the student’s accomplishments. The most common form of verbal praise is specific praise for the student’s behavior and in this case, complimenting Lisa on using her hands to complete a task that is sometimes challenging due to her disability.

Examples of non-verbal praise also include making eye contact, smiling and one example of touch. Eye contact is seen as the most popular of non-verbal types of positive behavior and, as Lawrence (1988) argues, this can be of vital importance in fostering self-esteem.

Sutherland, Wehby and Copeland (2000) refer to Behaviour Specific Praise (BSP) as a verbal comment that approves or rewards a specific academic or social behaviour. As using praise statements allow teachers to provide feedback on the student’s specific behaviour they are trying to reinforce within the therapeutic context; clear links are made that enable the child to see why praise is administered for something he has done. Of equal importance is using the child’s name within the praise comment, which gives the child a sense of ownership and achievement as this becomes personal to him.

Hancock (2000) informs us too, for verbal praise to be effective, praise must be contingent upon the behaviour to be rein-forced, it must be offered soon after the occurrence of the behaviour and it must be believable to the recipient (Burden, 1995; Woolfolk, 1998).

Swinson and Cording (2003) further suggest that these techniques are effective for those students who are seen as being disaffected or very discouraged and that changes in student behaviour can mirror an increase in teachers’ use of positive feedback and praise.

Bani (2011) however reminds us that in examining the use of verbal and non-verbal praise, it is imperative to examine how children respond to the praise to ascertain its effects on children’s self-esteem and behavior. Such measurements are beyond the scope of this research as the aim is not to determine the extent to which positive praise has led to improvements in students’ behaviours but to gather staff perceptions on the impact of key strategies and consider how these enable students.

Interestingly, as seen in the above extract, Lisa responds to examples of positive communication and in particular, verbal praise with non-verbal responses, ‘smiles’ and ‘laughs,’ suggesting that this form of communication is acknowledged and appreciated by her. There is also evidence that engendered within her are feelings of warmth and acceptance. This suggests that praise is inducing or encouraging pleasant feelings within her and this may subsequently and subconsciously affect her self-esteem (Bani, 2011). Thus, within Lisa, there is a possibility that her self-esteem has been enhanced because, as suggested by Maslow (1970), such occurs when there is a sense of belonging to a social group and to develop that sense of belonging in the classroom, each child needs to feel he is important, valued and contributing to the class as a whole (Margerison, 1996). Lisa's involvement in tasks as simple as playing in the sand and creating a farm demonstrates that she is contributing to paired work or 'the group,' a degree of engagement, which is more than she experiences in some of her mainstream classrooms.

The examples of BSP used in the above extract fulfils all the criteria listed above. Additionally, the fact that some students report feeling empowered to change following Th. Inc. sessions suggests that this technique can be successful when used with students in this research. Conversely, their admission of the sometimes unfriendly forms of communication between themselves and some classroom teachers and their appreciation for the positive forms used in Th. Inc. suggests the latter may be a valuable and insightful way of communicating with the most vulnerable students in this school.

A problem among all children who experience SEBD is low self-esteem (Lund, 1987; Reynolds, 1980) and thus their coping strategies may be understood as a way of protecting their fragile sense of worth. One way a child, like Lisa could appear to cope is to admit that she is unable to perform tasks that she perceives are beyond her competence. The utterance of, 'no, I can't, I don't know how to make a tight fist,' is a response consistent with a child who has little confidence in her ability to accomplish things. Failure to even attempt then protects her fragile sense of self.

Lisa is encouraged to use her hands to promote greater levels of independence. It is also used to build her self-esteem because once a task is completed and rewarded; she feels a sense of accomplishment; as her disability hinders her from using her hands fully. In this case, positive verbal communication in the form of praise has also helped to provide encouragement, build self-esteem and promote a positive teacher-student relationship.

Self-esteem is further enhanced within the therapeutic context through Th. Inc. staff's use of encouraging statements. One obvious example is, 'what would you call a kangaroo then?' as such a statement tends to encourage the students' choice and develop a context that promotes autonomy and is supportive (Hoge, Smit and Hanson, 1990).

When examining the interactions between children and staff with regards to the frequency and effects of verbal and non-verbal praise; and how this contributes as a positive intervention for all children, Bani (2011) argues that positive praise fosters a positive self-concept. She found despite some individual differences between NGs, specific praise was used more consistently than non-verbal praise. Her results show the frequency that certain behaviours such as non-verbal praise can have on children's behaviour. Her finding is also consistent with previous research by Chalk and Bizo (2004) and Sutherland, Wehby and Copeland (2000) who maintain that delivering BSP to students who engage in appropriate behavior increases the likelihood that they will continue to engage in such behavior in the future.

Some of the findings in this case also find support with arguments proffered by Wheldall, Bevan and Shortall (1986) in their discussion of the use of contingent teacher touch behavior upon children's classroom behavior; with contingent teacher touch referring to making touch simultaneously with verbal reinforcements. They argue there was improved classroom behavior through the use of teacher touch as a reinforcer, when accompanying praise. Their intervention also shows that teachers decreased their use of disapproval, non-contingent touch and substantially increased their use of contingent touch linked to approval. This, they suggest may have influenced children's on task behavior levels, as mean class on-task behavior increased and rates of disruptive behavior decreased following their intervention. They suggest that non-verbal factors are important emotional overlays on verbal behavior that can serve to heighten the 'emotional climate;' as factors such as touch, eye contact and proximity all serve as an emotional bridge between verbal behavior and physical action.

The close proximity in which staff and students sit in the Th. Inc. Room (adult and child sitting at the same level) on bean bags, may serve to reduce any tensions within the room and create an atmosphere of calm and cooperation. This can also send clear messages to the child that the relationship is based on equality, rather than autonomy and control in which teachers 'look down' at students. While it may be difficult to arrange classrooms to replicate every aspect of The Th. Inc. Room, it seems likely that such an environment provides a sense of comfort and reassurance in which social and emotional skills can be nurtured. Evident from observations in Th. Inc. and some classrooms in which I have observed, Th. Inc. staff use a significantly higher proportion of positive non-verbal behavior, which conveys feelings of acceptance and warmth.

The use of role play

Drama is an art form through which learning is enhanced as the child is involved both kinaesthetically and intellectually. It offers a framework through which salient issues can be explored, it provides a brief respite from reality and offers a way to return to that reality with coping skills (Johnson, 2001). Additionally, it is through drama that children are able to make connections with their own lives, share anxieties, listen to others' experiences of aggression, violence and be heard. Other intrinsic benefits include facilitating language development as well as allowing individuals to articulate their thoughts and feelings.

Johnson (2001) suggests a myriad of other ways in which drama can impact on one aesthetically. In addition to being a vehicle through which issues that give rise to aggression or violence can be explored, it provides students with a space from which they can articulate and respond to their emotions. It also models and practices non-violent responses to aggression and allows one to consider the consequences of his actions. Empowering one to stand up to bullying is also an added benefit and finally, drama provides students with an avenue through which they can channel energy into performance.

Orobio de Castro, Veerman, Bosch, et al (2002) contend the presentation of social stimuli through role play results in large effects as this enables one to be more engaged in a social interaction that enhances their emotional involvement in the incident, rather than allowing it to be addressed vocally in a hypothetical event. Burton (1991), O'Toole (1992) and Young (2000) also add that role invokes both cognitive understanding and empathy, allowing students to imitate and refract life through constructed, hypothetical contexts and situations. Such possibilities become available as the content of drama is human relationships, conflict and power.

This idea is further explicated by Kaloyirou and Lindsay (2014) who propose that exploring a situation through semi-structured scripts allows students to employ the mechanisms of projection and identification that further enables them to increase their capacity and come to terms with how the persons involved in such an action may think and feel. Thus, being ‘in role’ allows them to face up to difficult or disturbing emotions like anger, fear and hate; as they are confronted with the task of finding different ways to assert their own solutions to the problem. Concurrent with this is a measure of safety that children feel when in role; a feeling that enables them to work through the consequences of different lines of action and enhance their capacity to understand another person’s perspective (Sharp and Smith, 1994).

Some of the findings in this research resonate with many of the findings discussed in previous research. In an earlier section of this chapter, I presented the views of staff and their perceptions as to the ways in which role enables students who use it. They suggest that role play is an effective medium through which students achieve a sense of control in situations; it promotes a sense of awareness and understanding of others’ feelings and it produces a change in behaviour. Specific to two participants in this research, it is also argued that role empowers them by developing greater levels of confidence.

In one participant, role has also enabled his social and emotional learning. For John, the student who struggles managing his anger due to the guilt he experiences after the death of his father, he speaks of being able to identify and empathise with the feelings of others he often bullied. During one of his role sessions, John assumed the role of a student he experienced conflict with and the Th. Inc. staff became John. In the following excerpt, he describes the process through which he developed skills of empathy after experiencing the fear and anxiety of another:

> John: When we did it, Miss was me and I was Tommy and she said you have to be on his side; and that’s what we did we changed it around and we acted out what happened and she said, now you have been him, how do you feel and how do you think he feels? She asked me to think about his feelings and what are some of the things he might be thinking. So I kind of started thinking what I really do to this guy and how it makes him feel. Especially when she said I’m now Tommy, pretend I’m Tommy what would you do? How would you feel? And I kind of felt the way I felt afraid and sad at one time like when that boy from primary school was telling me stuff about my dad. And miss said what would you do, hit him in his face, or talk it out? And that got me thinking I was like, straight away I was, let’s talk it out Tommy, let’s talk about it. And she said, yes, that’s what you got to do. And from then on, every time I get angry with someone, I think back to that time. I think about the other person and how he might feel if I sock him or say something bad.

In the above extract, John suggests that role play has been instrumental in enabling him to become more conscious of his actions, as well as allowing him to identify with the feelings of another. The drama was spontaneous and questioning and modelling both within and outside their fictional roles was used to further enhance the structure, performance and meaning of the drama (Burton, 2010). To John, meaning becomes clear. He is a victim, I am a bully and my actions are not acceptable. The decision to 'talk it out,' shows the extent to which role play has allowed him to fully explore the issues that gave rise to his aggression. He is then provided with a space through which he can think and adjust his emotions and in doing so, learn to practise non-violent responses to his aggressive behaviour. Role play has also enabled him to shape his behaviour by discouraging specific forms of negative/unwanted behaviour. Similar to the role of the family, this process facilitated through Th. Inc. has taught him behaviours that are permissible and those that are forbidden and it is this understanding that has furnished him with a knowledge of how to differentiate between acceptable and unacceptable behaviours.

When John is questioned by his Th. Inc. worker, he is given multiple opportunities to view his actions in a critical manner. Constant probing, 'right, what other ways could you have handled this situation?' makes him consider his actions and initiates the negotiating phase whereby he begins to think of other ways to respond, 'and that got me thinking, straight away I was like, let's talk it out.' Re-enacting life scenarios and assuming different roles, provide him opportunities to experience 'reality' from different perspectives, creating the 'distance' that is needed for him to view himself as 'others' and as such appreciate different points of view (Fleming, 1998). This ability to stand away and see yourself, through someone else can be very cathartic.

Bundy (2000) views role play as an effective medium for dealing with anger issues suggesting it offers participants opportunities to view the world (and their relationship to it) in different ways; as through engagement with others, children are able to explore and interrogate society and social behaviour.

O'Neill (1995) also discusses the potential of spontaneous drama in generating a better understanding of events. He states that the most important aspect of taking on a role is spontaneity as it is unplanned, unpremeditated and can constantly surprise the individual into new awareness. Through role play, John gains a new awareness as he is better able to 'identify' with his own feelings and more importantly, those of his peers when he becomes aggressive towards them. Role play also arouses his creative side and allows him to view the current situation from a dual perspective, resulting in engagement in his emotional as opposed to his rational side. Experiencing such a dilemma then allows him to not only explore his own feelings but to also reflect on the feelings of others. In so doing, he will consider ways in which his emotions can be controlled when future conflict arises.

The finding in this research is also consistent with Burton (2010) who discusses the role of drama in enhancing identification, empathy and self-esteem among adolescent girls. He found that applied theatre strategies addresses covert bullying in schools, as they are successful in enabling his students to develop both understanding and competence in dealing with problems. Through the level of identification generated by drama, students are able to sympathise with and understand their own behaviours, the behaviour of those who are bullied and bystanders.

Bolton and Heathcote (1998) contend that individuals behave in specific ways based on their personal and cultural belief systems. With regards to a second participant, Sara, her anger issues stem in part from a personal belief that she is disliked by many of her teachers because of her behaviour. This has often resulted in confrontations in which she has become extremely antagonistic. Role play has, however, enabled her to de-centre from her personal and explore the issues in relation to her behaviour. She is provided with a lens through which she can view her actions but also realise, ‘I didn’t really like what I saw then, the way I behaved kind of scares me.’ Through communication, she reflects on these and analyses her responses, thus gaining the deeper understanding and appreciation of herself and her victim (Burton, 2010). It is this process that enables her to comprehend that change in behaviour is necessary and through drama, she can be led to imagine and visualise new ways of living together rather than against each other; to find a shared understanding and to create new models of a pluralist community (Neelands, 2009). Following this, avenues for change are considered.

The significance of this process is discussed by Widows (1996) who argues that drama can promote a change in behaviours by focusing on developing the personal and social skills of students with an emphasis on strengthening their information base, enhancing students’ educational problem solving and encouraging them to adopt positive attitudes more consistent with positive behaviour. Through the experience of this case, this view is held in high agreement.

The acquisition of social skills in this research is also consistent with the findings of Chen and Bullock (2004) who utilise social skills intervention, using literature and telecommunication to help improve targeted behaviours such as aggressive/acting out, irresponsible inattentive; socially withdrawn and fearful/anxious in young children with SEBD. Their findings report a reduction in the levels of problem behaviours among children with SEBD through the use of social skills activities that include cooperative games, strategies based on cognitive behavioural therapy and role play.

As the study aimed to determine the merit of an intervention used within the school, the views of staff, pastoral and teaching, were essential to understand the areas in which it impacted. Staff voice was therefore required to determine the areas of impact on their personal and professional development as well as at the organizational level.

Research question 3:

3. What is the perceived impact of Th. Inc. on staff, as well as the organization, based on staff perceptions?

Pastoral staff believe their involvement in Th. Inc. impacted on their professional development as this led them to develop a number of nurturing qualities that enabled them to better support students within the school. Such qualities include ‘understanding’ of students’ individual needs, ‘listening with intent;’ and a greater awareness of students’ needs (Cooper, Arnold and Boyd, 2001). Along with this is ‘patience’ and ‘determination,’ especially demonstrated during challenging circumstances. Such skills, according to Th. Inc. staff, extended their professional repertoire and made them better skilled to assist students’ with a wider range of needs, in both a pastoral and academic capacity.

In terms of their personal development, staff also spoke of developing interests in new fields as a direct result of their work in Th. Inc. One staff spoke of gaining the confidence to pursue managing a Th. Inc. Room, while for others, knowledge of Th. Inc. has helped to spawn new ambitions and interests. These gains are found in the study by Bishop and Swain (2000) who report that their staff developed similar nurturing qualities.

In addition to their personal and professional gains, Th. Inc. staff propose the intervention had a positive impact on whole school policies and practices. These include developing a deeper understanding of school policies that help support the inclusion of children at risk. There is the view that their roles were also enhanced through liaison with external agencies in order to discuss children’s issues and whole school development is further enhanced in direct response to the multi-agency approach towards the intervention (Doyle, 2003) and (Lucas, 1999).

Another area of impact is seen in the measure of professional supervision received through opportunities to liaise with trained professionals on issues affecting staff. This gain is cited by Lucas (2006) who argues a main feature of the nurturing school is one which values people and seeks to understand and respect staff as unique individuals. Such schools, she states, places the personal development of all its children, parents and staff at the highest of its priorities.

Finally, staff believe that Th. Inc. leads to a deepening of relationships between staff and students, the foundation of which is respect and equality. This, they propose, leads to some students being calmer and more accepting of their personal circumstances and accepting responsibility for their actions. Though limited in accounts, there is also evidence of staff collaboration through a sharing of nurture principles between Th. Inc. staff and one mainstream classroom teacher, which led to the extension of NG principles. There is also the suggestion of improved levels of individual attendance at the school. Evidence of a calmer atmosphere within the school due to improved behaviour is consistent with the finding of Sanders (2007). This finding is noted by Lucas (2006) who reports on the relationship between nurturing principles and an improved ethos within the school. This also mirrors some of the findings reported by Cooper, Arnold and Boyd (2001) on the whole school impact of NGs in areas that include the development of more nurturing attitudes and practices throughout the school, changes in teachers' perceptions of children, an increased sense of empowerment among teachers; and increased awareness of developmental issues and the relationship between social-emotional factors and learning.

The final area of the research sought to understand the factors that hinder the systemic operations of Th. Inc. and consider some of the ways in which these can be addressed to improve delivery of service within the school.

Research Question 4

4. What factors limit the systemic operations of Th. Inc. within the school?

Findings suggest that while most Th. Inc. staff are confident that their work is valued by students and other support staff, there is a pervading sense of feeling undervalued which stems from the belief that programmes such as Th. Inc. assume a low priority within the school. This belief is further supported by the lack of available resources due to low budgetary allocations to manage programmes such as Th. Inc., the lack of guidance and supervision from senior management and the general lack of understanding among teaching staff towards Th. Inc.

Concerns are also raised regarding the absence of proper machinery to record data from case studies to create impact reports. This, Th. Inc. staff argue, limits opportunities to reference past successes as well as to document how successful the intervention is.

As argued in previous research (Doyle, 2003; Lucas, 1999; and Sanders, 2007), that report on the effectiveness of NGs, the success of interventions such as Th. Inc. is highly dependent on the extent to which it is perceived and accepted as a whole school strategy. The fact that three teaching staff had little understanding of Th. Inc. or its possible areas of impact supports the argument that while considered a whole school resource, Th. Inc. does not function as one. This may be partly due to the current academic climate that pervades the culture of the school.

Another factor reported to limit the operations of Th. Inc. is the lack of opportunities for training as all Th. Inc. staff believe they are inadequately trained to provide support to students with whom they work. Having completed their initial training in the distant past, staff argue that re-training is essential. Added to the lack of training is the need for greater professional involvement by having professionally trained staff to work alongside school staff.

Doyle (2003) outlines some of the features inherent within the nurturing school, suggesting the success of the latter lies in ensuring that all staff is supported towards one another. What is essential is the need for an agreed whole school policy embraced by all staff as the value that is placed in people becomes an essential part of this growth, having an equally positive, nurturing effect on the children. The fact that a school's standards is determined by its academic results and less on the quality of its pastoral care leaves one to question the extent to which pastoral care is viewed as a priority within the school.

In addition to this is the concern that there is no onsite professional to offer advice on how to support severe cases or to whom they could share ideas. During the latter phase of this research, the school did employ a psychologist who visits staff each fortnight to allow them to discuss their concerns. Th. Inc. staff view this as a positive step as they can now 'offload' their concerns to an expert. However, this is still perceived as inadequate support as the service lasts two hours a fortnight, 8 staff work in Th. Inc. and there are over 30 students who access the Th. Inc. programme.

Th. Inc. staff also indicate the physical space currently in use for sessions is too small and this contributes to an extensive waiting list for students to access Th. Inc. This has also led to a need to prioritise student access based on a needs basis, which has not always been the best approach. A problem associated with limited places is the length of time students are supported in Th. Inc., which spans from a minimum of one half term 6-7 weeks to 5 years. With this, staff report that some students have expressed a strong desire to continue accessing Th. Inc. However, while space and timetabling remain an issue, demand exceeds the ability to provide for this service.

This latter issue has been highlighted by Colley (2009) who suggests that while secondary NGs are able to replicate the Classic Boxall model, there are marked differences and issues such as the sheer size of primary schools versus secondary schools and the inability to cater for such large numbers.

In this research students access Th. Inc. for various needs that include social, emotional and behavioural. Concurrent with this however, is the need for more specialists to deal with the range of presenting needs. This includes having educational psychologists available to more students and not only the limited few depending on the severity of their need. It seems therefore that while variant forms of secondary NGs such as Th. Inc. do cater to a wider range of needs, there is an urgency to address the incongruity between the range of needs and the lack of qualified professionals to support students in need.

This issue has also been discussed by Colley (2009) who argues that secondary schools would lend to more young people with additional support needs and consequently, there may be a tendency to divide need based on its nature, namely social/emotional, behavioural or educational and allocate support accordingly.

Another concern expressed by both teaching and pastoral staff is the lack of communication between staff, as some information relating to Th. Inc. is provided on a ‘need to know basis.’ While Th. Inc. is described as a whole school resource, when interviewed, teaching staff provided little information on the intervention and how this feature works. Teaching staff did however, express an interest in knowing more about the programme and how it can be used to help support students within their classrooms. While respecting the need to ensure confidentiality, they argue communication between staff is essential. While there may be reasons for the ‘low-key’ approach to Th. Inc. evidence from primary NG suggest the need for all staff to be informed about the principles and provisions of the NG (Sanders, 2007) if it is to be successful. This is more so the case as there is evidence within secondary schools that the secondary nurture facility can permeate the whole school pastoral system (Colley, 2009).

Lucas (1999), who provides a blue print for the archetypal nurturing school suggests the need to share aims and objectives as this harnesses amazing energy within the school community. This, she emphasises is then directed positively for the benefit of children’s learning, as when the principles inherent in the NG approach are applied to teaching and learning, teaching becomes more effective; a positive cycle of growth and development is set in motion; energy is released and motivation and morale improves.

These concerns have again been raised by Colley (2009) in his discussion of the internal management structures in secondary schools that operate NGs. He argues that in primary establishments, while management teams are a lot smaller, multiple teams can add to the complexity of the organization in secondary schools and this can have an impact on areas such as familiarity with students and their needs, internal communication systems and continuous support of students across the school. Cooper and Tiknaz (2005) also add that communication problems limited effective operations of NGs in their school. The need for whole school communication to ensure the success of NGs has also been discussed by Sanders (2007).

Finally, staff highlighted the absence of a collaboration of programmes within the school and believe if there is a collaboration on programmes more can be done to improve pastoral care within the school. This finding is consistent with Kourmoulaki (2013) who addresses the need for departments to work together, the need for strategies for monitoring and evaluating and sustained communication between parents to ensure engagement and shared responsibility is maintained.

Summary

This chapter presented the key findings of the research as well as a discussion of the findings in relation to some of the existing literature. The following chapter will reflect on these findings as well as present a critical discussion of the issues raised in the research.

Chapter Five:

A review and critical discussion of the findings.

Introduction

This main aim of this research is to determine the merit of a programme used in one mainstream secondary school, by evaluating its perceived impact on a group of students with impaired social and emotional skills. A secondary aim is to determine its perceived impact on staff and the whole school. The programme evaluated is referred to as Th. Inc., the theoretical orientation of which is the Classic Boxall NG. As a variant or different form of this intervention, Th. Inc. adheres closely to the principles of this NG model. The main methodological tool used to achieve the overall aim is ‘student voice.’ Staff interviews, observations and documents are also used to determine other areas of impact. Analysis of data suggests that Th. Inc. does impact on students, staff as well as the whole school in a number of positive ways.

The final report provides a clear sense of the scope and diversity of each theme using a combination of analyst narrative and illustrative data extracts. Where relevant, I attempted to broaden analysis out moving from descriptive to an interpretive level, relating themes to existing literature. The report also attempts to make sense of students' accounts in relation to norms within classrooms, Th. Inc. and expectations, linking the accounts students provide to the expectations of those with SEBD. It also relates patterns of meaning in students' responses to an academic analysis of what should operate in mainstream classrooms. In doing this, I am able to demonstrate the dual position that analysts need to take, as both cultural members and cultural commentators (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Within the discussion chapter, broader statements about the overall story that themes tell about students' reliance on Th. Inc. are made, showing this provides them with support and nurture necessary for their adjustment in mainstream secondary school. This is, in a way, more traditionally associated with what should be provided within the home, suggesting that Th. Inc. does provide a level of emotional support synonymous to what is provided within the family.

In this chapter, I will present a critical discussion of the issues raised within the research around the three overarching themes borne out in this research under the following sub-headings:

1. Therapeutic Inclusion and the impact of respite.
2. Therapeutic Inclusion and the significance of relationships.

3. Therapeutic Inclusion and the development of resilience.

Therapeutic Inclusion and the impact of respite.

An overarching theme to arise within the accounts of all students, is the need for time out or a break from disagreeable situations at home and school. Within the home, major areas of discord include repeated disharmony between siblings; stress exerted by the need to become a carer for parents, the absence of a parent due to separation and/or death; and stress caused by ongoing conflicts between the parent and child.

The second area from which students require rest breaks is within their school. In this case, students report of a challenging curricula resulting from lessons being too academic and too much stress exerted by the social and emotional demands of school. At the interpersonal level, there is also troubling relationships with peers and some teachers.

Of the eight students who participated in this study, all access Th. Inc. because of their inability to make the expected adjustment to school due to an apparent social, emotional, cognitive or behavioural need. Three state that lessons are too challenging, four report of discordant relationships with classroom teachers, with an emphasis on approaches to academic work, discipline or how they are perceived by staff. Four report experiencing difficult peer relationships and being victims of physical and psychological bullying.

However, on speaking of their experiences in Th. Inc., all students indicate that a separation from these sources of conflict, allow them to better manage the challenges they experience. Furthermore, Th. Inc. is described as a space that provides them refuge as they value the security provided. Many describe the calm and peaceful nature that contrasts with the chaos that exist in some mainstream classrooms. The suggestion is that Th. Inc. serves as an oasis, a haven or sanctuary for those who access it.

The importance of such a space in facilitating adjustment in children who experience SEBD was envisaged by the pioneers of the Classic NG, Boxall and Bennathan. They suggest time away from distress is essential for the emotional well-being of the child, as such opportunities work to ensure that students gain some form of relief from their troubling environments. This idea is further reflected in one of the

NG principles which states, the classroom functions as a safe base to students who use it, as it helps to contain anxiety and offers a balance between educational and domestic experiences, aimed at supporting the development of children's relationship with each other and with staff (Nurture Group Network). It is argued that in this research, Th. Inc. also offers students opportunities for respite as it allows them to be removed from sources of conflict which eventually facilitates some measure of adjustment. But how exactly is their balanced restored?

To illuminate this idea, we draw on Cooper's (1989) work in his seminal study on the significance of respite to a group of boys with EBD who attended a residential school. Cooper (1989) states the simple act of removing children from disturbing family situations, serves to arrests the negative consequences on the child of continued exposure to the situation. Consequently, the destructive cycle is broken for at least a temporary period as the child's removal from the home situation serves to relieve some of the emotional tensions in the family. However, the impact of respite is only manifested when students are given opportunities to reflect, as being physically removed from the source of conflict can be seen as merely the prelude to the actual transformation that can occur.

Based on students' accounts, the diet they received within the therapeutic context enhances the experience of respite as changes within the child result from a combination of the therapeutic relationship that is built on support, encouragement and counselling, along with strategies that provide opportunities for reflection and self- examination. The significance of the therapeutic context is also discussed by Cooper (1989) in his discourse on Bettelheim, who saw the environment as the central component of therapy.

According to Bettelheim (1955), the 'milieu,' is the starting point, designed as a form of treatment: a particular social organization, which would be the matrix within which children might begin to develop a new life. From the inception, the latter stressed the therapeutic value of the community as opposed to individual psychotherapy. He argued that 'only measures arising from benign interpersonal relationships among adult and children can combat the emotional disturbance which derives most often from the 'absence of meaningful, continuous interpersonal relationships (Bettelheim and Sylvester, 1948). For him, the continuously maintained one- to-one relationship within the therapeutic milieu is the vital component of therapy that demands respect and care of the student and his needs and wishes. There is also a recognition of the child's needs for personal space, privacy and some degree of control over his environment.

Respite then assumes significance as, according to Cooper (1989), it is during this period of 'rest' that an internal transformation takes place and, once such a period of rest is instigated, opportunities for contemplation of the situation and clear headed planning for the future arises. In form of the residential setting, this is valuable as though only temporary, it removes the child from the scene of disharmony, thus allowing a period of calm and reflection as well as exposure to positive relationships with both peers and adults.

In the current research, the period of 'rest' afforded to students provides periods of calm. It enables them with personal space and privacy that is needed, which then facilitates opportunities to reflect on their problems. It is during this period of rest coupled with the quality of communication they receive from available adults, as well as time to reflect, that channels of thought open up and these allow them to employ a number of skills that further enable their adjustment to school and ensure their survival. Within this time, students are also given some degree of control over their environment and affairs and this produces a degree of change. Synonymous with Cooper's (1989) work, the change that then results from being removed from the sources of conflict occurs as opportunities for relaxation, reflection and deliberation are granted, thus giving rise to contemplation of future courses of action; tantamount with change or more positive approaches to dealing with conflict situations as well as changes in behaviour.

Therapeutic Inclusion and the significance of relationships.

We progress now to discuss the second overarching theme that evolved from students' accounts, that of relationships and its significance to students who access Th. Inc.

In his seminal study, Cooper (1989) devotes an entire chapter named 'Pioneers, Evangelists and Others,' in which he presents a lengthy discourse on the use of the residential school as a source of treatment for children with EBD, as well as its effects on them. In this, he identifies the middle 1930s to late 1960s as the period of greatest development in the field of residential schooling for maladjusted children. He highlights the work of pioneers and their individual contributions to our understanding of maladjusted children, through their day to day experience of living and working with such children.

For these pioneers, maladjusted children were those in need of special treatment in order to repair the damage inflicted upon them often as a result of inadequate parenting and/or other unsatisfactory environmental features. The treatment offered therefore involved the removal of the child from harmful influences to an environment designed to offer experiences calculated to repair the damage done (Cooper, 1989). Thus, the approach taken by all twentieth century pioneers reflected the ideology that the deprived, delinquent and disturbed child was in need of care and opportunities for personal development, through the provision of good quality interpersonal relationships, rather than punishment and further deprivation.

Central to this theory is the role of interpersonal relationships, as each pioneer places emphasis on the need for non-authoritative child-adult relationships. This echoes the child's fundamental need for warm, caring and supportive relationships in a stable and predictable environment and the recognition of children's rights to have and explore their own aims and purposes within such environments. They believed the way in which teachers and students relate to one another can have a profound effect on the social, emotional and educational development of students and the manner in which these two groups relate, is influenced by the values and assumptions that are embodied in the organizational design of the school.

Of all the pioneers discussed in Cooper's (1989) work, George Lyward is of significance to this research because of his work with disturbed public school children, as well as his contribution in spear heading the therapeutic movement.

Lyward's work was rooted in psychodynamic theory and his school provided a consciously designed setting in which students could pass from a state of 'dependence' to one of 'independence' (Burn, 1956). He believed that many of the children he worked with were victims of their parents and other adults, who had usurped their lives by forcing them to live according to standards and aspirations that were not their own. He therefore sought to provide a setting in which his students could be weaned towards rebirth as autonomous, independent persons.

His school, Finchden Manor, attempted to create a community in which all his students could find absolute acceptance. The first step along this journey was achieved by the recognition of the child's need for respite from imprisoning formalities. Thus, Leeward created a setting in which the organizational aspects of the school centred on the type of people he employed. His criterion for staff selection rested solely on the personal qualities of candidates, seeking people who would have profound respect for others and confidence within themselves. This, he believed, would enable then to withstand rejection without the need to be defensive, whilst at the same time being prepared to offer themselves as fully as was necessary to the positive development of their students (Cooper, 1989).

The significance of sound, reliable adult figures to a healthy social development is discussed in much of the literature reviewed in Chapter Two of my study. Bowlby's Attachment Theory (1958) purports that through positive interactions, young children develop internal working models of others as not only available but a model of self as worthy and loveable. This concept is also reflected in national guidance on approaches to supporting children with SEBD in educational contexts. The pioneer of the Classic NG, Boxall, emphasised the need for 'adults engaging with children in reciprocal shared activities through play, meals, reading and talking.' This concept is also mirrored in the Th. Inc. document which emphasises that safety is provided not only through a safe space but significant relationships. The therapeutic relationship is then central to the changes students undergo, the impact of which is also valued and understood by the latter.

Their testimonies suggest that Th. Inc. staff provide both social and emotional support. Given the relative absence of friendship groups, peers and supportive adults in their lives, it is argued that Th. Inc. staff act as their 'significant other' (Stryker, 1967) as they possess qualities such as understanding and openness, generosity, honesty and communication (Tome, 1965). Learning and a willingness to change, is then facilitated as through interactions with caring adults, the child acquires age-appropriate behaviour, an increasing awareness of other's expectations, decreases ego-centrism and develops a sense of self, conducive to healthy social and emotional development (Colwell and O'Connor, 2003).

The therapeutic relationship is then central in helping students develop their sense of 'self,' as through positive social interactions, they not only develop internal working models of others as available but are able to perceive of themselves as worthy. Based on the significance of a healthy personality to school adjustment, we move to a discussion of the 'self' and consider how this is developed or repaired through interaction with significant others.

The emergence of 'the self.'

Examined under a variety of labels, including self-concept, self-esteem, self-image and self-evaluation (Whylie, 1961); 'the self,' is central to theories of personality (Mead, 1934; Lewin, 1936; Allport, 1937); therapy approaches in counselling activities (Freud, 1943; Horney, 1959; Rogers, 1951 and Maslow, 1954); and conceptualizations of interpersonal behaviour (James, 1890; Combs and Syngg, 1959; Goffman, 1961). The Symbolic Interactionist Theory formulated by Cooley (1902) and Mead (1934), however, is one of the dominant approaches to dealing with the emergence and structure of the self.

Concerned with the 'social person,' symbolic interactionists view 'the self' as a cognitive structure of qualities (traits and attitudes) that develop out of interaction between the organism and stimulus events, mostly other persons. They argue it is through social experience that the full development of 'the self,' occurs and the extent to which 'the self' is able to emerge, is determined by the degree of engagement with others. Social interaction therefore becomes key to a healthy development as it is through interactions that people are able to perceive of themselves in a positive way.

In his celebrated work on this concept, Cooley (1902) coined the phrase, 'The Looking Glass Self,' which explains that individuals derive their feelings about 'self' from their interactions with others. This points to the tendency of the self to derive its source from the social "reflections" or feedbacks of various audiences in one's lives. Within the sociological tradition, Cooley (1902) utilized the concept of group and emphasised the role that social entities play in shaping the motivational bases of the behaviour of individuals in society. Interaction, he argues, plays a crucial role in creating a mediating bond between social environments and individuals. Through the interaction created by primary groups, groups characterised by intimate face to face association and co-operation; the social nature and ideals of individuals are formed, as in the course of such interaction, the individual experiences himself not directly but indirectly from the particular standpoint of other individuals, members of the same social group (Mead, 1934). The latter also refers to the interactionist image of human beings, the most basic element of which is the idea that the individual and society are inseparable, a relationship that is defined as mutually interdependent. Explanations on Cooley's Looking Glass Metaphor can be found in Appendix P.

Reeder, Donohue and Biblarz (1960) also attempt to show the close relationship between self-conception and "perceived generalized other" (Looking Glass Self), implying the importance of reference groups as an intervening variable. The organised community or social group which gives to the individual his unity of self may be called, 'the generalised other.' The specific attitudes of others that affect one's self-image then partly constitute the "Me," 'this is who I am' and it is these social experiences that allow the child to be shaped into a moral entity and further provides a sense of direction for the development of the self-concept.

The principle of reflected appraisals, implicit in Cooley's (1902) Looking-Glass metaphor and Mead's (1934) conception of taking the role of the other, then holds that people's feelings about themselves are strongly influenced by their judgments of what others think of them. As the 'self,' exists in the minds of members of society and constitutes an imaginative fact, we become what others think we are (Gecas, 1971). A natural occurrence is that the self, therefore, becomes lodged in one's life experiences through the development of an individual identity. Such an identity is obtained when the child becomes aware of the fact that the picture of who he is, reflects the imagination of others concerning him.

As self-esteem varies as a function of perceived social acceptance versus rejection (Leary, Tambor, Terdal, et al, 1995), perceived social acceptance is related to a greater state of self-esteem (Heatherton and Polivy, 1991); and social rejection is related to less self-esteem (Hinde, Finkenauer and Auhagen, 2001).

Both Cooley (1902) and Mead (1934) spoke extensively about the individual's actual membership groups as supplying the particular stand- point from which the individual experiences himself. Cooley (1902) emphasizes the importance of face-to-face groups as constituting the social basis on which ‘the self’ emerges, while Mead (1934) recognises "the community" and "social groups" as contributing to the individual's self- image. Notes on George Herbert Mead’s theory of the social self can be found in Appendix Q. Later studies such as Sherwood (1965) have also demonstrated the importance of groups to the development of a person’s self-image, discussing the significance an individual's peers can have in terms of a differential effect upon the self-image held by him.

Adolescence has been likened to the second stage of separation-individuation in which the young person becomes increasingly differentiated from a past or present relational context (Karpel, 1976). At this stage, there is a separation from early support figures and a movement towards significant others within one’s peer groups. However, for many students in this research, reliable relationships and supportive peer groups are absent at home and school, thus making the transition into adolescence a difficult one. Their life experiences at this stage of identity formation is not a positive one and impacts on their overall self-concepts. Among female participants in particular, reliable relationships with peers are absent and this has led to alienation, a perception of self as unworthy, worthless and feeling unloved.

In defining the characteristics of individuals who have a low self-image, Baumeister (1997) argues it begins with an awareness of one’s own body and is augmented by the sense of being able to make choices and initiate action. He suggests that someone who has a low self-esteem typically lacks clear and definite stock of self-knowledge and such individuals suffer from a lack of helpful, positive views about themselves. They desire and want success but their actions are influenced by their doubts that they will be able to achieve success on a regular basis. Such individuals also focus on protecting themselves against failures and rejections, by presenting themselves in a cautious or modest fashion and they strive to be adequate by focusing on their weaknesses and overcoming them. The ideas on self-perception proposed by Baumeister (1977) appear to resonate with many students in this study.

It will be recalled that Beth’s negative self-concept is spoken of in many of her Th. Inc. sessions in her less than flattering remarks about herself. Lisa also embodies this theory as she appears doubtful of her capabilities. The perception others hold of her thus determines her involvement in extra-curricular activities within the school as she believes she may not add sufficient value to such groups and prefers to avoid participation. This, as Baumeister (1997) suggests, this can be a way to protect the already fragile sense, the result of which is a desperate flight from the situation.

Attuned to a poor self-concept is also a sense of powerlessness in one's ability to change one's current circumstances. This idea is reflected in Charmaine's situation as she expresses the desire to be happy and embrace her future but she constantly reminds herself of a past for which she blames herself. This is not only debilitating but she seems powerless to change her present circumstances. Her language is one of resignation. Her history of sexual abuse, suggests her identity is that of a spoilt individual and within her culture, she is viewed as a disgrace. She has a tarnished reputation. She is a shame.

Additionally, Lisa believes her peers view her as disabled and foolish and in her response to questions, she sometimes behaves with a measure of ignorance and reserve, despite being quite intelligent. She chooses to be a passive participant in lessons and despite having only a physical disability, she assumes the mantle of one with a learning difficulty as well.

Finally, Beth believes her teachers view her as a disruptive student and she displays behaviour tantamount with that label. As suggested in Cooley's (1902) 'Looking Glass Metaphor,' these students not only perceive themselves in a negative way due to the perception of how they are viewed; but in all respects, they appear to carry a stigma (Goffman, 1963).

A stigma is a term that was traditionally used to refer to bodily signs exposing something bad about the moral status of the signifier. It is assigned based on a perception that other people may have of an individual and ascribes an attribute to an individual that is deeply discrediting. Such attributes are also called a failing, a shortcoming or a handicap.

Goffman (1963) identifies three types of stigmas. Firstly, there are abominations of the body, which are usually the result of various physical deformities. The second carries a blemish of individual character signifying someone as weak will, having a mental disorder or homosexuality. Finally, there are tribal stigmas of race, nation and religion- these being stigmas that can be transmitted through lineages and equally contaminate all members of a family.

Such labels have particular social meanings both for those who have attached them and those who are stigmatised (Frankham and Kerr, 2006) in that they constitute a special discrepancy between virtual and actual social identity. In one respect they cause people to develop particular anticipations in terms of the expectations they have of those who are discredited. This can be seen in the actions towards the stigmatised and in the use of stigma terms such as ‘cripple,’ ‘bastard’ and ‘moron’ that are commonly constructed and tend to impute a wide range of imperfections on the basis of the original one. Thus, the individual who might have been received easily in ordinary social intercourse, is now seen to possess a trait that can cause others whom he meets to turn away from him (Goffman, 1963).

The stigmatised is then aware of how he is perceived and knows that, on the basis of his past, he is discriminated against. Based on this, he attempts to demonstrate his defensiveness about his unfair treatment in the need for acceptance or attempts to be seen as normal. His defensive response to his situation may then be perceived as a direct expression of his defect and then perceive both defect and response as just retribution for something he or his parents or tribe did and hence a justification for the way he is treated.

I argue that some of the students in this research have previously internalised their stigmas. Lisa, it is suggested, has been stigmatised with an ‘abomination’ of the body because of her physical disability. As early as Year 7, she was a victim of verbal and physical abuse, being bullied by her peers and called derogatory names such as disabled, cripple, handicap, dunce and stupid. What is even more damaging is the perception that teachers share this view and as she is assigned this label, she has sub-consciously accepted it in some contexts, for example, classrooms.

Beth has been stigmatised carrying a blemish of individual character. She too has been called stigma terms such as disruptive, attention seeker, coo coo, mental and troublesome. Her manifestation of such behaviour in specific lessons seen in her interactions with specific peers and teachers, means she has not only acknowledged this but has internalised these stigma terms. She openly admits that her behaviour is determined by her mood and to some extent, the context. Knowledge that they are stigmatised and internalizing their stigmas, means the cry of these students for acceptance is sometimes manifested in examples of withdrawn, disruptive and in extreme cases, self-harming behaviours.

Charmaine too carries a stigma, a tribal one and is perhaps the one who has internalised it the most. As female members of her family have had a history of sexual abuse, this can be viewed as a generational curse for as Goffman (1963) states, tribal stigmas are transmitted through lineages and equally contaminate all members of the family. For her, it is the shame of not only being sexually abused at a young age but the idea of lacking in chaste for her prospective husband that is difficult to accept as in her culture, she is viewed as used commodity.

Repairing one's self-esteem is no easy task, however, to improve their esteems and develop a sense of belonging, each child must feel he is important and valued (Margerison, 1996). I have found that this sense of belonging is engendered within Th. Inc. as it is through the nurturing relationship that these students are re-educated about themselves, knowledge which is then used to aid in forming a new social identity. This then forms a perception of self as valuable because they believe this is how they are viewed by significant others. The influence of these significant adults is therefore felt by young people in a variety of ways however, one of the major influences is the power they have in the formation of the self-concept (Galbo, 1984).

To further expound this argument, I draw on Pringle's (1980) seminal work on the needs of children. In this he describes the long term effects of a child's continued exposure to circumstances in which his essential affective needs are denied. According to Pringle (1980) a child's emotional development is determined by the extent to which his needs are fulfilled in the following areas:

1. Need for love and security.
2. Need for new experiences.
3. Need for praise and recognition.
4. Need for the chance to exercise personal responsibility.

Accordingly, when these needs are fulfilled, the individual's sense of self-worth is nourished and this allows him to develop self-esteem through his internalization of the view of him by those who are important.

This idea can be applied to a number of students in this research. Tom, for example, struggled with a positive self-concept as he was constantly bullied by his peers. Stigma terms left him feeling dejected and lacking in confidence. Despite the support from home, the perceptions of his peer group were quite negative and weighed heavily upon him. He internalised such labels and viewed himself as worthless. This often resulted in him becoming angry and frustrated over the situation due to his inability to retaliate against these negative comments.

During our later conversations, however, there is evidence that Tom’s self-concept has been repaired as he speaks of his ability to embrace his difference. He has also become more accepting of who he is.

Another example is evident in the accounts provided by Martha. Like Tom, she has been a victim of peer bullying since Year 7 and assigned labels such as fat, piggy and blob. These impacted on her overall self-esteem, resulting in a view of herself as unattractive and unworthy. A negative self-image also affected her ability to concentrate in lessons and created a low academic self-concept. Like Beth, Martha’s story reflects Cooley’s (1902) theory of ‘The Looking Glass’ as she loathed the image she often viewed in the mirror.

However, during one of our later conversations, Martha tells of the positive image she now holds of herself, embodied in a new physical self-concept. Taking the advice of Th. Inc. staff, she has internalised an improved social and psychological self-concept (Marsh, 1986), as by concentrating on specific aspects, she is helped to improve her self-concept in that area.

Baumeister (1997) argues that the formation of self-concept is dependent on a variety factors which include the sources of feedback available from family and peers and the child’s own developing ability to understand himself in abstract ways. It is argued that through their relationships with Th. Inc. workers, negative self-concepts once engrained are reversed. Throughout this research, students appreciated being listened to by Th. Inc. staff. There was a sense of true engagement with the ideas and issues discussed within the therapeutic context and this, I argue facilitated the development of healthy personalities. Positive relationships seemed then to have more of a profound impact on the direction that individual lives take, suggesting it is never too late to change a life trajectory (Howard, Dryden and Johnson, 1999). A programme of Th. Inc. has therefore reversed damaged egos by helping to develop positive self-concepts among these students. This has been achieved through the establishment of relationships based on trust and acceptance. Such relationships, it is suggested are essential in bringing about positive changes in the lives of all children but especially, those most vulnerable. The significance of such relationships is also echoed in the many positive accounts provided by students when speaking of their relationships with respective Th. Inc. staff.

This finding not only supports the argument that supportive figures are essential in repairing damaged self-concepts but also emphasises the significance of teachers and their ability to nurture children's self-esteem (Lawrence, 2006). Schools therefore need to assume greater responsibility for building trusting relationships, for setting and consistently enforcing reasonable limits and rules and for creating a positive and caring environment (Bani, 2011). Suggested here is as secondary attachment figures (Ainsworth, 1991), adults can advance children's feelings of security by being supportive to them in stressful situations. The extent to which a teacher is encouraging and reassuring is also critical in developing the teacher-student interaction, as teachers are the most popular source of formal support among 15-year-old school students (Moran, 2007).

This finding also reinforces the need for pastoral care as though an important development in schools since the 1950s, changes in recent years to the social environment in schools have made the 'tutor' or pastoral role of the teacher more difficult. This is concerning as the reduction in extra-curricular societies and sports groups has made it more difficult for students to establish special relationships with teachers to whom they can turn if they experience problems (Kniveton, 2004).

Therapeutic Inclusion and the development of Resilience

Previously I argued one of the ways Th. Inc. impacts on students is that it provides students with much needed respite in the form of rest from difficult circumstances within school and at home. Opportunities for respite affords students personal space, privacy and a greater sense of control over their affairs, all necessary for reflection and change. I have also argued that opportunities to develop interpersonal relationships and form secure attachments allow students to value themselves as they are viewed as valuable to others. This further results in repaired self-concepts (See Cooley's Looking Glass Metaphor). In this section, I will discuss the role of Th. Inc. as a school based protector factor in promoting resilience among students. Resilience will be measured based on students' and some staff perceptions of this concept demonstrated in the following areas:

- Improvements in students' self-esteem.
- Students' ability to communicate and co-operate in greater social contexts.
- Students' ability to demonstrate empathy towards others.
- Students' development of personal goals and aspirations.

Recent theoretical developments in mental health promotion suggests that psychological wellbeing has its roots in resilience (Commonwealth Department of Health and aged Care, 2000). The concept is construed within a universal perspective focusing on common processes that promote positive social behaviours among normally developing children and young people as well as those who may be at risk in their development (Cefai, 2008). Common definitions centre on a set of qualities or protective mechanisms that give rise to successful adaptation despite the presence of high risk factors during the course of development (Benard, 1991).

Masten (2001) suggests resilience is a class of phenomena characterised by good outcomes in spite of serious threats to adaptation or development. Rutter (1990) proposes it is the capacity of individuals, schools, families and communities to cope successfully with everyday challenges including life transitions, times of cumulative stress and significant adversity or risk. Within these definitions exists two fundamental constructs; the notion of 'adversity to risk' and 'positive outcomes' regarding social competence or successful development.

The term at risk is a broad one and numerous factors are considered likely to compromise children's development. These include poverty, abuse and neglect, developmental disability and parental illness and psychopathology. In education, it usually refers to children and young people who are at risk of school failure by virtue of coming from a disadvantaged background such as a deprived socio-economic background, region, ethnic status, family circumstances and language (Organization for Economic Development (OECD), 1995).

Risk factors for various disorders include factors that operate at the individual level such as (physiological factors and prematurity), also the family environment and levels of interaction that can incorporate poor and inconsistent parenting practices);

peers and social interaction (for example, social rejection or affiliation with deviant peers); and school experiences such as academic failure, low bonding to school) (Consortium on the school based promotion of social competence, CSPSC, 1994). Other school based risk factors include low expectations for students' achievement, an unsafe school and the use of pull-out programs and negative labelling of children with SEN (Wang and Haertel, 1995).

Exposure to risks are known to increase the probability that children will enter into dysfunctional development trajectories that can result in drug use, criminal involvement and delinquency, long term unemployment or mental health problems (Ogden, Sorlie and Hagen, 2007). However, protective factors can help to mitigate the harmful effects of risks (Schoon and Bartley, 2008). Protective factors are identified as effective parenting, a supportive relationship with a significant carer, opportunities for social support, a network of informal and formal relationships, good educational experience and engagement with religion and religious belief (Fonagy, Steele, Higgitt and Target, 1994).

Early studies of the 1970s construed resilience in terms of individual invulnerability and focused on individual characteristics such as problem solving skills and stress resistance. Later studies, however, tend to show that positive outcomes, in the face of adverse circumstances, can be influenced by processes besides individual characteristics including the family, the school and the community (Cefai, 2008). It is now believed that development results from the dynamic interactions between various systems that impinge upon the child's life (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Within this context, schools have significant and sustained contact with most children during the formative years of personality development and can be ideal places for cognitive and socio emotional development to be nurtured and supported (Cefai, 2008). Research into these areas highlight the potential contribution of teachers, peer groups and the school environment to the development of resilience. They imply that school-wide efforts promoting positive behaviour support within a framework of good student-teacher relations, might contribute to an enhancement of protective factors in students at risk (Ogden, Sorlie and Hagen, 2007). Resilience literature then agrees on three key school qualities that promote positive academic and social outcomes and compensate for risk factors such as socio economic disadvantage (Benard, 1991; Pianta and Walsh, 1998; Rees and Bailey, 2003). Among these include:

1. Caring relationships between teachers and students based on teacher concern, care, respect and support towards students. An ‘ethic of caring’ (Noddings, 1992) broadens such relationships behind the classroom walls to include caring student-student, teacher-teacher and teacher-parent relationships.

2. High expectations for students to do well through teacher practices that are child centred, use students’ own strengths and interests and tap into their intrinsic motivation for learning.

3. Students’ meaningful involvement and responsibility with opportunities to express opinions, make choices, solve problems and work with and help others in a caring and healthy environment.

Achievement in other areas such as music, sport or peer popularity have also been found to promote resilience (Richman, Rosenfeld and Hardy, 1993). It is also argued that the acquisition of social skills, which forms the basis of social competence are among the factors which can influence trajectory changing processes (Rutter, 1985; CSPSC, 1994; Luthar, 1995). The literature therefore suggests that schools can foster resilience through providing opportunities for students to feel connected to adults within a community, providing autonomy experiences, supportive adults as role models, offering a secure base to which students can retreat, providing opportunities for them to re-build their self-esteems and provide positive high expectations of all students.

Other factors that can develop resilience include affective outcomes such as achievement orientation, self-efficacy; academic self-concept and internal locus of control (Lewis, 1999). Hechtman (1991) also includes as internal resiliency building factors, the child’s temperament, the maintenance of a high level of self-esteem, a realistic sense of personal control and a feeling of hope. Brooks (1994) further adds that resilience can be developed through a range of strategies that focus on specific areas of competence, often referred to as ‘islands of competence’ or areas that are, or could be, sources of pride and accomplishments.

Rutter (1985) has also discussed the importance of internal working conditions such as self-esteem and self-efficacy and provides empirical evidence that the experience of success in one arena of life can lead to enhanced self-esteem and a feeling of self-efficacy, enable students to cope more successfully with the subsequent life challenges and lead to adaptations. These make successful coping more likely while a sense of helplessness increases the likelihood that one adversity will lead to another. This implies that the child who has a positive self-concept is more likely to develop strategies that allow him to cope with adversities. This idea will now be explored in greater detail.

Internal assets associated with resilience

Resilient children are known to have various strengths or internal assets which, when coupled with environmental or external strengths, can be described as protective factors (Stewart, Sun, Patterson, et al, 2004). They are commonly recognised by their high self-esteem, internal locus of control, optimism and clear aspirations. Achievement and goal orientation are also common features and so is reflectiveness and problem solving, respect for the autonomy of themselves and others, healthy communication patterns and the capacity to seek out mentoring adult relationships (Rutter, 1987; Fuller, 1998).

A key variable in determining resilience is self-esteem. The latter incorporates the feelings and thoughts an individual has about his competence and worth, about his abilities to make a difference, his ability to confront rather than retreat from challenges, to learn from both success and failure and to treat himself and others with respect.

Many of the risk factors identified earlier in this section are experienced by students who participated in this research. It is argued, however, despite the many adversities experienced, at home and within school, they have managed to adapt to school and Th. Inc. has functioned as one of the school based resilience promoting indicators supporting their adaptation. Th. Inc. has also developed many of the qualities that promote positive academic and socio-emotional outcomes through a number of ‘internal assets,’ which serve to promote resilience.

Self-esteem and Resilience

Brooks (1994) argues that self-esteem and resilience are nurtured when caregivers communicate realistic appreciation and encouragement to children. Reinforcing their accomplishments with praise and in particular, Behaviour Specific Praise is therefore used as a resilience promoting factor. Words and actions help children feel positive, are energizing and demonstrate the existence of people who appreciate and believe in them. Examples of these have already been cited earlier in this research and it is suggested they serve as examples of encouraging statements used within the therapeutic context to reinforce the idea that positive behaviour is encouraged.

Celebrating achievements

Opportunities are also constantly embraced to celebrate students' achievements regardless of how insignificant these are perceived. This results in a positive self-esteem that will guide and motivate actions, the outcomes of which affect self-esteem so that a dynamic, reciprocal process is continuously in force (Brooks, 1992). An example is evident in an excerpt taken from a discussion with Charmaine about her accomplishments in one of her subjects. In this, Charmaine appears nonchalant about her success. However, staff embraces the opportunity to encourage and celebrate her achievements.

Enhancing decision making skills

Enhancing decision making skills has also been cited as a resilience promoting factor and has been used by staff in this research. In an earlier chapter, it was discussed that Th. Inc. sessions are 'democratic,' predominantly child led in nature as opposed to the autocratic teacher led style that exists in some classrooms. This encourages a level of autonomy among students, offers them a choice that is empowering as these allow them to take the initiative for decisions related to their progress and learning. These then help students feel in control and increase their sense of ownership and can be empowering- important components in strengthening resilience. Th. Inc. sessions also commence with an understanding of students' limitations, such as lacking in confidence and low self- esteem and use strategies that overcome these deficiencies. These engender a sense of pride as well as enable students to feel they are making a contribution to their school community (Brooks, 1988, 1990). Also reflected are relationships based on equality and mutual respect.

Promoting self-discipline.

Self-discipline has also been cited as a resilience promoting skill as if children are encouraged to assume responsibility for their actions and perceive rules as being fair, they will understand the purpose of these rules. They will also contribute within reason to their formation, along with guidelines and consequences. During interviews with staff as well as in my analysis of some Th. Inc. documents, the notion of ‘personal responsibility’ is emphasised to students reinforcing the need for them to own their actions. Within the therapeutic context, rules that govern behaviour are framed collectively between students and staff, thus reinforcing the idea of shared responsibility. During Th. Inc. sessions, positive behaviour is not only modelled but encouraged. Role play activities also offer students time to reflect on their behaviours and forces them to consider alternative forms of socially accepted behaviours. In this respect, students are taught self-discipline and develop an ‘internal locus of control,’ a concept linked to the theory of attribution. The following section will now explore this theory and its significance to the current study.

Attribution Theory:

Self-efficacy, an aspect of the self-concept, is the perception one holds as to how one is able to achieve success in a particular area (Lewis, 1999). In his discussion on this topic, Schunk (1987) states that the common practice of promising positive future outcomes for present efforts is unlikely to lead to changed behaviour among children as the discouraged child has little in his experience to suggest that such a belief is a sensible option. Rather, he sees it necessary to take actual instances of successful behaviour and demonstrate to the child his degree of competence as this helps him to comprehend the part he plays in that success. This is described as modelling one’s behaviour, a practice commonly used by staff in Th. Inc.

A known example is given in one staff’s praise to a student on achieving all 1s on his behaviour report. This act of ‘modelling’ therefore demonstrates that his positive behaviour is not only acknowledged but encouraged, rewarded and should always be repeated.

Within the therapeutic context, praise focuses on ignoring instances of negative behaviour with the hope that students will be encouraged to display more positive examples. Enabling students to believe that success is possible reinforces the idea that their efforts may be directed to profitable, rather than disruptive activity. An associated construct in achieving this is, the ‘internal locus of control.’ This represents the extent to which one believes one is responsible through actions for the things which befall one in life.

It is argued an individual with an external locus of control is likely to believe that events are largely beyond his control, that fate or the actions of powerful others are responsible for outcomes and it is not worth trying to affect what happens. In contrast, someone with an internal orientation is more likely to accept responsibility, to recognise the contribution of his own efforts or lack of them and to accept the challenge of working towards improved outcomes. Consequently, those with a more internal orientation are likely to face adverse conditions with resilient responses based on the level of motivational style and attributional stance as the latter is the process by which one confers meaning onto events by attributing the causes to them.

Attributions therefore become powerful determinants of future actions as attributing the causes of such difficulties to forces outside one’s control and adopting a stance that a situation is helpless can result in the unlikely development of resilient responses. Having a low self-concept and an external locus of control can therefore lead to an inverse of the normal, healthy attributional pattern. This negative loop is further confounded by the self-consistency theory, which suggests that once a self-concept has been formed, the individual works hard to ensure this label is maintained and so, the prophecy becomes fulfilling (Lewis, 1999). The psyche of some students in this research can be used to support this theory.

Beth for example believes that she is disliked and constantly singled out by some of her teachers and this causes her to ignore their requests to conform to positive behaviour. She admits to being troublesome, argumentative and ‘zones out’ as she believes her teacher is the one who initiates conflicts between them. In this case, there is a deliberate attempt to prove she will be challenging thus lending support to Lewis’ (1999) self-consistency theory.

In some of our early conversations, Beth also expresses the extent to which she struggles in her relationships with peers and some of her teachers. Interactions with teachers were highly confrontational and based on a perception of unfair targeting. They show that Beth attributes blame for her negative perception on her teacher's reactions towards her. Her attributional stance then determines her actions for upcoming lessons as she has already determined how productive they will be. She is also aware that she is labelled difficult, a challenging student, a title she has internalised and so her behaviour reflects this description. Thus, as Lewis (1999) argues, the prophecy becomes fulfilling as she is not motivated to change such behaviour.

In later conversations, however, Beth attributes more of a positive stance despite the fact that her relationship with her teacher is still an antagonistic one. This can be the result of an extended period of 'working on the self' (Charlton, 1992) to develop a number of internal assets all of which are associated with resilience. She has gained an improved social self (Marsh, 1990) and with this, a new self-concept. Opportunities for encounters have nurtured her internality (Henderson, 1980) within a context that has developed a healthy mental state and she is able to perceive change as something that is possible and positive. A positive self-concept has enabled her with an internal locus of control, one that imposes the need to accept responsibility for her actions, to recognise the contribution of her own efforts or lack of them and accept the challenge of working for improved outcomes (Lewis, 1999). An improved 'self-image' means efforts are now inversely directed not at successful learning but at maintaining her level of self-worth so that efforts are directed in fruitful rather than harmful actions (Lewis, 1999).

Additionally, her acquired resilience can be measured in two areas. The first is demonstrated in her ability to communicate and co-operate in greater social contexts while the second in her improved levels of self-esteem.

The second example is seen in a response provided by Tom, a student who was bullied by his peers but later demonstrates an internal locus of control by accepting and understanding the consequences of his behaviour. Within his accounts, there is evidence of optimism and clear aspirations as he speaks of looking forward to the future.

The final case I wish to draw on is John, the student who struggled with managing his anger. We will recall that during one of our later conversations, John recounted an incident at college in which he demonstrates his ability to maintain self-control, using an internal locus of control, to diffuse a volatile situation involving another student. On this occasion he is able to maintain control during an adverse situation. He demonstrates three internal assets or strengths recognised among resilient children: his ability to demonstrate empathy towards another, the ability to communicate and co-operate in greater social contexts; and finally, the development of personal goals and aspirations as well as self-esteem.

Firstly, he uses communication to diffuse a volatile situation. Another quality demonstrative of resilience is empathy, the ability to understand and share the feelings of another as he is able to place himself in his peer's situation and empathise with his feelings. This demonstrates his ability to connect with the emotions of another and place these above his own feelings. Within John's account is also a sense that he is able to reflect on his past behaviour and within this is evidence of an improved self-image. He has also developed goals and aspirations. Finally, his internal locus of control allows him to address this adverse situation using pro-social behaviour. In this case, he has learnt the meaning of his own behaviour. He appears to have developed a sense of being a valued member of the community (the school) and has learnt that personal reward in the form of self-esteem and recognition can result from constructive participation in community life (Cooper and Tiknaz, 1999).

Cefai (2008) defines educational resilience as socio-emotional competence and educational engagement in the classroom. The former refers to the social and communicative skills children use to cultivate relationships with adults and peers to succeed in an environment. These include helping and working collaboratively with peers as well as autonomy and problem solving skills. Within both these accounts, there is evidence that this skill has developed in students' abilities to control their emotions and remain resilience despite still being affected by adverse circumstances. This finding suggests that most children seem to have self-righting tendencies and that competence, confidence and caring can flourish even under adverse circumstances (Werner and Smith, 1988).

Contribution to knowledge

The main aim of this research is to determine the merit of a programme used in one mainstream secondary school, by evaluating its perceived impact on a group of students with impaired social and emotional skills. A secondary aim is to determine its perceived impact on staff and the whole school. The programme evaluated is referred to as Th. Inc., the theoretical orientation of which is the Classic Boxall NG. As a variant or different form of this intervention, Th. Inc. adheres closely to the principles of this NG model. The main methodological tool used to achieve the overall aim is 'student voice.' Staff interviews, observations and documents are also used to determine other areas of impact. Analysis of data suggests that Th. Inc. impacts positively on students who access it, producing a number of changes within the child. Impact is also extended to staff in areas of personal and professional gains as well as the whole school.

This research therefore suggests that variant forms of NGs based on therapeutic approaches can provide the level of support needed for children in secondary school and work to adjust their social, emotional and behavioural levels. Other significant areas of impact for students include:

1. Respite: as it provides opportunities for students to gain a reprieve from distressing situations at home and within school. Time spent away from sources of conflict then provides opportunities for reflection, planning and formative action, which eventually enables them with a number of skills.
2. Relationships: as Th. Inc. also provides opportunities to establish relationships that are based on value, respect and acceptance. As students are treated in a non-judgemental way they feel loved and cared for. This relationship is pivotal in repairing damaged self-concepts.
3. Resilience: which is demonstrated as students are enabled with a number of internal assets which include communications skills, goals and aspirations, improved levels of self-esteem, empathy and an internal locus of control.

This analysis makes an important contribution to knowledge as it challenges the perceived argument that secondary NGs may not be age appropriate for older children. Rather it testifies that variant forms using therapeutic models continue to provide the level of support that adolescents need in secondary schools to ensure their adjustment to school is seamless. The study further emphasises that sound, reliable relationships are essential for healthy social, emotional and psychological development, within a context that supports students' inclusion.

The following chapter will present a summary discussion of the study's key findings. This will commence with a review of the contribution to knowledge and progress to a discussion of some of the key issues raised in the research. Following this, a number of recommendations will be made based on the perceptions of staff. The study will then end with suggested areas for future research.

Chapter Six:

Respite, Relationships and Resilience:

The impact of Therapeutic Inclusion.

Introduction:

This research sought to determine the merit of a programme used in one mainstream secondary school, by evaluating its perceived impact on a group of students with impaired social and emotional skills. A secondary aim was to determine its perceived impact on staff and the whole school. The programme evaluated is referred to as Th. Inc., the theoretical orientation of which is the Classic Boxall NG. As a variant or different form of this intervention, Th. Inc. adheres closely to the principles of this NG model. The main methodological tool used to achieve the overall aim is ‘student voice.’ Staff interviews, observations and documents are also used to determine other areas of impact. Analysis of data suggest despite being a variant of the Classic Boxall NG, Th. Inc. impacts on staff personal and professional development as well as noticeable impact at the organizational level. Among students, impact is seen in a myriad of changes within the child. Other significant areas include providing respite, developing sound relationships and building resilience.

Respite:

One way in which Th. Inc. impacts is in the measure of respite it provides students from discomforting situations in their lives, by removing them from the source of their distress. Students cited the school as contributing to high levels of anxiety through peer bullying, discordant relationships with peers and some teachers. Respite from these areas, provides students with a personal space in which they can relax, affords them privacy to reflect and regroup and grants some degree of personal control over their lives. From this, students are given a chance to decide on formative action for the future.

Relationships:

Th. Inc. further facilitates opportunities for students to develop secure attachments with reliable adults. Characteristic of the therapeutic relationship, Th. Inc. staff demonstrate a number of nurturing qualities such as understanding, trust, respect and genuine acceptance of students, irrespective of their past or personal circumstances. Such relationships contrast with what exist in some of their mainstream classrooms. The relationships formed between staff and students mirror the adult/child described by the pioneers of the Classic NG (Boxall and Bennethan,

2006) as it encourages students to experience feelings of self-worth and develop a sense of mastery and control of events (Boxall, 2002). This is mainly achieved by enabling them to value themselves through the experiences of being valued and cared for by others (Cooper and Lovey, 1999). As with the Classic Boxall NG, in which young children require healthy mental states to adapt to school, students in this research also require this level of attachment with peers and adults if they are to successfully develop healthy personalities and adjust to school.

Resilience

Finally, it is argued that Th. Inc. functions as one of the school factors that supports the development of resilience. Through secure engagement, students are able to develop assets in areas that include healthy communication patterns, optimism, empathy, self-esteem and problem solving capacity.

The rest of this chapter will summarise the findings of the research in relation to each research question, discuss a list of issues raised in the research and recommendations to these, discuss the implications in relation to key findings; and highlight suggested areas for future research.

Findings in relation to Research Questions:

Research Question 1:

1. Using ‘student voice,’ in what ways does Therapeutic Inclusion impact on students’ and equally, to what extent does this support their inclusion in school?

Th. Inc., it is suggested, produces a number of changes within the child. These include self-regulation, improved levels of self-esteem, confidence, empathy and an internal locus of control. Social and emotional learning is also apparent. Students and Th. Inc. staff also suggest these skills are useful in helping students adjust to the demands of school, thereby ensuring they remain in mainstream education.

Research Question 2:

2. What strategies are used within Th. Inc. and how are they perceived to impact on students in terms of staff perceptions?

Staff within the therapeutic context identify three strategies used to enable students: art therapy, communication and role play. Significantly, staff found these strategies useful in developing a number of internal qualities within students. Among these include:

- Confidence.
- Independence.
- Self- control.
- Empathy.
- Independence.
- Rational thinking.

Other areas of impact include:

- Having a greater sense of reality.
- Tapping into students' sub-conscious.
- Developing greater levels of self-expression.
- Providing avenues for reflection.
- Providing an emotional release.
- Developing a greater sense of awareness.

Research Question 3:

3. What is the perceived impact of Th. Inc. on staff, as well as the organization, based on staff perceptions?

Staff within the therapeutic context identify a number of personal and professional gains, including impact at the organizational level. Personal and professional gains include acquiring:

- A reassuring presence.
- Skills in empathy
- Greater skills in listening and understanding.
- An increased awareness of students' issues and roles that support their learning.
- Increased levels of confidence.
- New interests.

Gains at the organizational level include:

- Improving the school's level of attendance through an improvement in individual students' attendance.
- Opportunities to liaise with other professionals especially in areas that provide external support to vulnerable students.
- Deepening relationships between staff and students.
- More opportunities for disclosures that improve the levels of school support for vulnerable students.

Research Question 4:

4. What factors limit the systemic operations of Th. Inc. within the school?

Staff identified a number of issues they perceived to limit the systemic operations of the programme within the school. These include:

- A lack of support and guidance from management.
- Limited opportunities for refresher training.
- The absence of machinery to record data and programmes to disseminate information.
- A lack of collaboration among similar pastoral programmes within the school.
- Low status afforded to pastoral programmes such as Th. Inc.
- The programme not being perceived and functioning as a whole school resource.
- Overused resources and low budgetary allocations which limits opportunities for purchasing new material.
- A feeling on being overwhelmed and at times, low morale among Th. Inc. staff.
- The absence of whole school support and appreciation for pastoral programmes due to the predominance of an academic culture within the school.

Research Question 5:

5. What changes are suggested to facilitate effective operations of Th. Inc. within the school?

To improve the operations of the programme, recommendations by teaching and pastoral staff included ideas such as:

- The need for greater parental involvement in the programme beyond requests for student participation.
- Selective teacher training to develop a greater understanding of Th. Inc. principles and extend these to their mainstream classrooms.
- Greater focus on the Th. Inc. programme as a whole school intervention in staff in Service Training Days to disseminate information.
- Refresher training for all Th. Inc. staff with greater opportunities for communicating ideas with specialist personnel and increased dialogue with external agencies.
- Investing in proper machinery to aid in recording and disseminating information to all staff on the Th. Inc. programme.
- Greater collaboration of programmes within the school to extend existing knowledge among all staff.
- Consideration of the procedures employed in assessing students who access the Th. Inc. programme.
- Greater budgetary allocation to the programme as well as an additional room to cater to the growing demands of the intervention.
- Greater emphasis as a whole school on pastoral programmes.

Contribution to Knowledge

This research suggests that variant forms of NGs based on therapeutic approaches can provide the level of support needed for children in secondary school and work to adjust their social, emotional and behavioural levels. Other significant areas of impact for students include:

1. Respite: as it provides opportunities for students to gain a reprieve from distressing situations at home and within school. Time spent away from sources of conflict then provides opportunities for reflection, planning and formative action, which eventually enables them with a number of skills.

2. Relationships: as Th. Inc. also provides opportunities to establish relationships that are based on value, respect and acceptance. As students are treated in a non-judgemental way they feel loved and cared for. This relationship is pivotal in repairing damaged self-concepts.

3. Resilience: which is demonstrated as students are enabled with a number of internal assets which include communications skills, goals and aspirations, improved levels of self-esteem, empathy and an internal locus of control.

The analysis makes an important contribution to knowledge as it challenges the perceived argument that secondary NGs may not be age appropriate for older children. Rather it testifies that variant forms using therapeutic models continue to provide the level of support that adolescents need in secondary schools to ensure their adjustment to school is seamless. The study further emphasises that sound, reliable relationships are essential for healthy social, emotional and psychological development, within a context that supports students' inclusion.

The following section will discuss a number of issues raised within the research as well as suggested recommendations to address these issues. These are based on Research Question 4.

4. What factors limit the systemic operations of Th. Inc. within the school?

Recommendations are provided below which addresses Research Question 5:

5. What organizational changes are needed to facilitate the proper functioning of Th. Inc. within the school?

Issues raised within the research with suggested recommendations.

Issue raised: Personal, Social and Health Education.

Opportunities to embed social and emotional skills as well as enhance Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) are provided through interventions such as Th. Inc. However, children spend most of their time in classrooms and for many who experience SEBD, this is where their problems originate creating a sense of ‘fright or flight.’ Addressing this issue within classrooms may not be a simple task as within the current school there is little scope for teaching this within the curriculum. Not only is weekly staff development training focused improving teaching and learning but PSHE has been replaced by additional lessons in Mathematics and English and taught for 15 minutes during form time and one hour each half term to all year groups.

Recommendation:

Suggested here is the need for more curriculum time that can teach the social and emotional aspects of learning within classrooms or as part of the wider curriculum. Greater consideration should therefore be given to reintroducing subjects such as PSHE as part of the school’s core curriculum. This may also create opportunities for Th. Inc. staff to work alongside classroom teachers to extend the principles of Th. Inc. to classrooms and thereby extend it to the whole school. An added benefit is this can provide teachers with an even greater awareness of strategies used within the Th. Inc. programme and so have the potential to extend their professional repertoire as to how to incorporate such strategies to deal with varying needs in classrooms.

Issue raised: parental involvement in Th. Inc.

One issue raised during the research is that of parental involvement and the model used by this school. The rights of parents to become active agents in their children’s education has been encouraged in respective Education Acts (1988, 1992, and 1993), as well as in an expressed a commitment to parental partnership (DfEE, 1994). These all suggest the involvement of parents is crucial if their children are to be successful at school. This is even more necessary for those children with SEN and in particular, SEBD. Within the current school, the model of parental involvement is minimal as parents are informed of their children’s need to access Th. Inc. and consent must be granted for participation. However, there is no further evidence of parental involvement beyond providing their initial input or feedback to the school.

Recommendation:

Suggested here is the need for increased partnerships between parents and the school particularly when working on pastoral programmes.

Issue raised: the dissemination of Th. Inc. information.

In the current research, staff was especially concerned about the means through which information on Th. Inc. is disseminated throughout the school. This they argued did not always lend to a full understanding of Th. Inc. as a school based intervention or its role and purpose.

Recommendation:

Greater attention needs to be paid to the ways in which information is disseminated to all staff within the school particularly regarding whole school programmes. Days designated to ‘In Service Training, (INSET) have been identified by Th. Inc. staff as ideal starting points from which to disseminate information to the whole school on the programme. Added to this, one or two sessions can be allocated during weekly training sessions that can provide training on Th. Inc. as a whole school intervention. This may lead all staff to become proficient in using some of the Th. Inc. strategies in support of all students in their classrooms.

Issue raised: Th. Inc. training.

Th. Inc. staff also expressed their concerns regarding the absence of opportunities for refresher training on delivering the Th. Inc. programme as many had their initial training at least 4 to 5 years previously.

Recommendation:

Regular refresher training should be considered mandatory to all staff who deliver Th. Inc. sessions to students.

Issue raised: the absence of specialist staff.

Th. Inc. Staff lamented the absence of specialist services within or attached to the school from which they could receive on hand advice when dealing with severe cases when these are presented.

Recommendation:

Steps should be taken to enlist the services of trained specialists or to train a select group of workers within the Learning Support Department who are sufficiently skilled to deal with students considered beyond the scope or expertise of Th. Inc. staff. This can include systems that can increase opportunities for dialogue with external agencies and stakeholders. Binnie and Allen (2008) list a number of initiatives that can support schools and this should be considered.

Issue raised: the feasibility of the Th. Inc. Room.

Another concern raised by Th. Inc. staff regards the number of students who need to access Th. Inc. against available spaces that would permit. There are also concerns regarding the size of the room as well as the current system used for timetabling students for access.

Recommendation:

Given the size of the school and the growing prevalence of SEBD consideration should be given to investing in more than one Th. Inc. Room to facilitate increasing numbers of students. Additionally, group sessions could be trialled on a regular basis as this may ensure greater numbers are able to access Th. Inc. Consideration should also be given to the length of time students are assigned to Th. Inc. as under the present system of termly rotations, students who appear in urgent need of support may require longer periods in the programme. As demand for this service appears to outweigh supply, this cannot always be guaranteed. Consideration should also be given to re-rooming Th. Inc. operations to a site that is better suited in terms of appropriateness and size.

Issue raised: the absence of record machinery.

Another issue Th. Inc. staff noted is the absence of machinery that enables them to effectively record data, case studies and impact reports.

Recommendation:

Proper machinery is needed to ensure that data, case studies and impact reports are recorded as this can assist in assessing the merit of Th. Inc. as well as areas of impact.

Issue raised: the absence of a collaborative approach.

Some Th. Inc. staff expressed their concerns regarding the absence of a collaborative approach among pastoral programmes to supporting students' developmental needs. This, they argue, often leads to an alliance of ideas but in some cases, re-inventing the wheel.

Recommendation:

There is need to consider the many programmes used within the school that foster social and emotional learning and work collaboratively to ensure ideas are collated towards a common good. Cole, Visser and Daniels (1999) suggest the need for a model for dialogue, cohesiveness and communication to exist in and between different levels and sub-systems of the school. This model can be given some consideration in this context as Th. Inc. staff perceive they can benefit from such collaboration.

Issue raised: the whole school impact of Th. Inc.

As an intervention, it is suggested that Th. Inc. has impacted positively at the organizational level. Despite this, many of the principles and practices do not permeate the entire school and this limits opportunities to assess the true impact of the resource.

Recommendation:

The school needs to consider the whole school impact of Th. Inc. and how best these can serve to support the school's Inclusive Agenda. Kennard (1994) provides a starting point in defining the characteristics of the Therapeutic Community. Exploring this concept may be a useful.

Issue raised: the dissemination of information to academic staff.

Teaching staff comment on the lack of information provided regarding the Th. Inc. programme and the extent to which this limits effective planning for students within their classrooms. In the current school, information is distributed on a need to know basis in order to ensure confidentiality is maintained.

Recommendations:

Given the pivotal role that teachers play in promoting inclusion in their classrooms and the wider school community, steps should be taken to ensure staff is informed of presenting issues that affect individual students who access Th. Inc. This is necessary as such information can facilitate effect planning of lessons which can cater to the needs of all students in lessons. A whole school collaboration is also essential for the effective functioning of the Th. Inc. programme.

Implications of the research.

This research evaluated a variant form of the Classic Boxall NG used in one mainstream secondary school, to determine its merit to a group of students, staff and the organization. The programme evaluated is referred to as Therapeutic Inclusion and has its theoretical orientations in the Classic Boxall model. Findings reveal that Th. Inc. impacts on students, facilitating social and emotional learning. Other significant areas of impact include providing students with respite from discordant school and home environments, fostering sound reliable relationships and developing skills which promote resilience. Impact is also seen at the organizational level as well as personal and professional gains for staff who engage in the programme.

In particular, findings highlight the significance of supportive relationships that abound within a culture of inclusion that helps support adjustment to school, for students with SEBD. Full benefits of the programme are, however, compromised by gaps in communication systems, issues regarding the monitoring of approaches and its dissemination of practises into mainstream classrooms; as well as the failure to embed the intervention into the 'whole-school' culture.

Findings raise a number of issues in relation to the pressing need for approaches to dealing with children who experience SEBD, for such approaches to be integrated into whole school priorities and strategies, the importance of sound relationships and need for schools to nurture an ethos of inclusion.

Approaches to dealing with children with SEBD.

One area the findings has shone light on is in approaches to dealing with students who experience SEBD and the need for these to focus on developing social and emotional learning. The Collaborative to Advance Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has identified social and emotional skills to include:

1. Communicating effectively.
2. The ability to work cooperatively with others;
3. Emotional self-control and appropriate expression;
4. Empathy and perspective taking;
5. Optimism, humour and self-awareness, including strengths;
6. Ability to plan and set goals;
7. Solving problems and resolving conflicts thoughtfully and non-violently;

8. Bringing a reflective, learning-to-learn approach to all domains of life.

Within students' accounts is evidence that many of these skills have been acquired as young people are able to celebrate their own progress while acquiring new skills that help reduce barriers to success in a mainstream school. Healthy mental states also flourish which promote resilience. These strengths they utilise to weather the turbulent storms of adolescence and counter the many problems they experience in school and life in general.

Findings therefore suggests that Th. Inc. has fulfilled several of the functions of the family identified in Rutter (1990). Social skills were learnt through the shaping of behaviour via the encouragement and discouragement of particular behaviours. Communication allowed students to set standards, establish norms, develop expectations and their ideas were allowed to grow. There is also evidence that Th. Inc. has functioned as a mechanism that provides emotional development and this led to a number of internal assets characteristic of resilient children, thus making it easier for students to adjust better to school or different life contexts. Thus, students are able to regulate their emotions and demonstrate self- control, zeal and persistence and motivate themselves (Goleman, 1988).

Recent government initiatives such as Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) and CAMHS emphasise the need to support students with mental health in schools. However, too often there is an expectation that such skills can be learnt through formal instruction. This was not the case as in this study some students learnt social and emotional skills through adults modelling of positive behaviour and observation. An important approach may therefore need to capitalise on implicit or informal learning opportunities within classrooms.

Children can also be supported to develop skills by constructing stimulating learning experiences, creating opportunities for them to practice, providing constructive feedback and having parents or teachers model those skills and behaviour (Lopes and Salovey, 2004). Activities such as circle time, peer support approaches and mentoring (Majors, Wilkinson and Gulam, 2003) have proven to be quite successful. Another strategy can be providing more opportunities that nurture emotional skills in students through communication; communication of thoughts, feelings and ideas. An approach to working with children with SEBD then relies on an awareness of the affective needs of children as well as the institution's need for effective management (Cooper, 1999).

The significance of supportive relationships

Findings of this research also have implications for the nature of the student/teacher relationship in schools. In this study, students report that they value the secure relationships developed with adults more than the physical space and activities they engaged in. The safety and comfort they find allows them to receive much needed respite. The trust placed in Th. Inc. staff enables them with skills of confidence to confront their fears, shortcomings and weaknesses and willingly embrace opportunities for change. Social interaction allows students to perceive themselves as worthy individuals and develop positive self- concepts. Finally, it is in part through positive connections with significant others that internal assets are engendered, allowing students to develop resilience. Strong supportive relationships are therefore critical for achieving and sustaining adaptation (Luthar, 2006).

The significance of this relationship is further suggested by Bishop and Swain (2000). Based on one student's response to his pleasure in sharing 'the bread, the jam and some coffee in the morning,' they argue that food seemed to play a significant part in the broader concept of education in their NG. This issue is also discussed by Colley (2009) who suggests the nurture breakfast is a key activity whereby students and adults have the opportunity to prepare a small snack together before sitting communally to chat and observe social routines. Perhaps more than anything the nurture breakfast is symbolic as it demonstrates sharing and caring, it models prosocial behaviour for students and it satisfies basic human needs; that of security, belonging and protection. Consistent with Maslow's hierarchy of needs, this primary need has to be satisfied before learning can take place. In this case, the individual has to go through a nurturing process that equips him to meet his individual, psychological needs through social interaction. Within the home, this may or may not be engendered through the parent/child relationship. Within schools, this can be fostered through secure and supportive relationships by all members of staff, especially, classroom teachers.

The significance of such a relationship is further echoed in a response of one student in this research. In a conversation with Lisa, when asked about her feelings on the absence of peer groups as a form of social support during the latter years in school, her response was as follows:

> Lisa: I don't know. It's difficult. I think it didn't bother me. I didn't necessarily get friends from it but it didn't really bother me that I didn't have friends. Definitely by Year 10, it wasn't bothering me that I didn't know people. It used to bother me but it stopped.
>
> Researcher: why do you think it stopped bothering you?
>
> Lisa: because I had Vicky.

This statement speaks volumes. Not only does it highlight the significance of these relationships to students but it points to the need for human interaction, the need for supportive relationships during this crucial time, that of parents, teachers or peers, as students' affective domains desire nurturing. As one of the child's primary need is for attachment to and connection with others (Cooper, 1999), successful interventions for these students should then always focus on creating opportunities in which such attachments can be safely made. This can be achieved in part through an adjustment of the child's environment and changing the ways in which significant others see and interact with him and assist him in perceiving himself and others in more positive ways. Social interaction is therefore crucial as it is through interacting that behaviours are demonstrated and understood.

Peer support is equally argued to be a salient dimension of socialization and aids in school adjustment. It promotes internalization of values, feelings of affective ties and relatedness or belongingness in students (Ryan and Powelson, 1991). It is also known to enhance the well-being of all involved. The perceptions of friends and classmates as socialization agents also account for unique differences in several measures of school adjustment, as most students report school-supportive peers, as well as high levels of emotionally supportive classmates and positive peer influence (Studsrod and Bro, 2011). The latter study supports previous research which not only document the relationship between peer relations and school-related measures (Lubbers, Van Der Werf, Snijders, et al, 2006) but also shows that school adjustment is not a purely individual, intrapsychic state but is embedded in a complex web of social and personal relationships (Goodenow and Grady, 1993). Social support is therefore a key factor in school adjustment.

This is especially significant within the current school exclusionary practises are fostered through setting based on ability groups as well as seating arrangements in some classrooms. There is also the presence of break and lunch clubs that are operated by the Learning Support Department. While these are organised to support the transition of vulnerable students into the main culture of the school, we must question the extent to which they do promote exclusionary practises as students are separated from their peers and placed in homogenous groups.

Research into peer relationships based on gender differences also indicate that females are more likely than males to receive more salient benefits from friendships, among which can include higher levels of closeness, nurturance, affection, trust and acceptance (Rose and Rudolph, 2006) as well as adjusting well to school. Despite this, of the five females who participated in this research, four struggled with developing and maintaining positive peer relationships as these were marred with discord and conflict.

Social support and how it is construed by young people includes an individual’s perception that he is cared for, esteemed and valued by people in his social network (Demaray, Malecki, Davidson, et al, 2005). Such support enhances personal functioning, assists in coping adequately with stressors and may buffer from adverse outcomes. Added to this, it transpires from multiple sources such as parents, teachers, close friends, classmates and school and consists of multiple types such as emotional, informational, appraisal and instrumental, which can all serve to improve a student’s adjustment and outcomes (Malecki and Demaray, 2002). While support from parents and peers is instrumental, support from people within the student’s school is still a significant predictor (Demaray, Malecki, Davidson, et al, 2005), suggesting school staff may be an important factor, having a potentially lasting effect.

Despite this, Kniveton (2004) found among 623 students aged 15-19 that teachers appear relatively low on the list of persons whom they refer to for assistance in dealing with their problems. Rather than reflect the characteristics of the particular school, he argues these results are more likely to reflect the traditional adolescent reluctance to turn to authority figures and the role played by teachers. The fact that students spend 80% of their school day in classrooms and 15,000 hours by the end of their secondary years (Rutter, 1985), appears to not auger well for the nature of student/teacher relationships. As classroom practitioners, we are then led to consider the salient question, how can a balance be struck between fulfilling the requirements of school and national targets and attend to the social and emotional needs of all children within classrooms to ensure they are adequately supported?

This question places additional demands on schools to reconsider the need for teachers to re-embrace their pastoral roles as for too long, teachers' emotional security has rested on their ability to keep classes under control, which for most teachers meant keeping children at a distance (Bennathan, 1996). The image presented to students is then rather impersonal and almost one-dimensional. Students with SEBD need extended access to the *real* people behind the professional façade (Bennathan, 1996), they desire caring, skilled and motivated staff who are willing to make themselves available in relationships for them (Balberine in Cole, Visser and Upton, 1998). What then appears essential are two important components of our reference model for teaching students with SEBD, quality relationships coupled with an environment where learning is highly reinforced (Royer, 1999).

This forces us to revisit the discussion on the role of the school in fostering a culture of inclusion.

The importance of an inclusive school culture

There is most importantly, the need for schools to develop a culture of inclusion which is able to support all students but especially the most vulnerable. Inclusion continues to be a national agenda as in recent years, education policies continue the espoused commitment towards ensuring children with SEN are fully supported and included into their mainstream schooling. In 2010, the Equality Act was passed which prohibits any education provider, private or independent to discriminate between students on the grounds of disability, race, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief or sex.

Specific to children with SEBD, further guidance was provided in 2014 with the publication of the Mental Health and behaviour in schools, (DfE, 2014). This document provides:

- Advice on how and when to refer to the CAMHS.
- Support for children with SEBD.
- Information on strengthening pupil resilience.
- Information on how to identify pupils likely to need extra support; and
- Information on where and how to access community support.

Added to this, in 2015, 'Counselling in schools: a blueprint for the future' was published by the Department for Education. The guidance applies to primary and secondary schools and is written for school leaders, head teachers, governing bodies and those with day to day responsibility for mental health issues in schools. It provides counselling as a psychological therapy to improve the mental and wellbeing of children.

Statutory guidance is further provided in ‘Listening to and involving children and young people’ (DfE, 2014). Applied to all maintained schools, this legislation is underpinned by the general principles of the United Nations conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNESCO, 1989); and provides information when considering how best to provide opportunities for students to be consulted on matters affecting them or contribute to decision-making in their school (DfE, 2014). The implication here is on developing ‘pupil voice’ stakeholders will be forced to listen to the views of students and/or involve them in decision making. This further reinforces the government’s commitment to the promotion and protection of children’s rights as not only does student involvement encourage them to become active participants in a democratic society but it contributes to achievement and attainment ((DfE, 2014).

The most recent legislation imposed under the conservative government, The Children’s and Family Act 2014 has also impacted significantly on the way children and young people with SEN and disabilities are supported in education. The new law appears to be more future focused as the approach to SEN is more on ‘outcomes-’ identifying what the child, parents and professionals want the child to achieve in the short, medium or long term.

The new SEND Code (DfE, DoH, 2015) further reflects the changes introduced by the Children and Families Act 2014, as it introduces new changes with regards the role of schools in identifying, providing for and supporting children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). It proposes a radical change in the laws that govern the SEND system, by offering simpler, improved and consistent help for children and young people with SEND.

This includes extending provision from birth to 25 years, allowing professionals to provide more tailored support to families; and replacing the graduated response to identifying, assessing and providing for children with SEN with a four-part cycle which includes assess-plan-do-review; also referred to as ‘the graduated approach.’ The new SEND Code 2015 also replaces ‘statements of SEN’ with Education, Health Care Plans. Paragraph 9.5 explains that ECHPs should be ‘forward looking. They should help raise aspirations and outline the provision required to meet the student’s needs and support them in achieving these. The idea of joint services means the ECHPs now take into account, the holistic needs of the child, ‘education, and health and care services. There is also the introduction of government programmes such as CAMHS, NHS mental health services, which include multi-disciplinary teams that consist of nurses, psychiatrists, psychologists, social and support workers.

Despite the obvious commitment, national efforts continue to be overshadowed by the dominant academic culture that pervades within many schools as the focus continues to be on securing targets and ensuring attainment. Unfortunately, this has created a system in which schools are becoming places where children are unhappy, restricted and continue to fail. In some respects, it is responsible for a number of exclusionary practices despite promoting an ideal that supports inclusion. As reported in this research, students expressed their concerns about the lack of support and care from some mainstream teachers. They believed there was more of an emphasis on teaching than supporting them in a pastoral capacity.

Conversely, one of the reasons they valued participating in the Th. Inc. programme is due to the love and appreciation they received. The milieu in which they are encouraged to share ideas is one of acceptance, care and respect. There is therefore a need to strike a greater balance between the two conflicting agendas to ensure that children perform well within a culture that embraces them and is supportive. As suggested by Bettelheim (1955), the environment as well as the individual are key to this culture. If schools are then to become truly inclusive, changes must take place at all levels. Their ethos is therefore crucial.

Daniel, Visser, Cole, et al (1998) and Visser, Cole and Daniels (2002) found schools to be most successful with students with EBD when they worked at being:

- *Communities* that were open, positive and diverse; not selective, exclusive or rejecting.
- *Barrier free* in terms of curricula and support systems.
- *Collaborative* within the school between staff and between staff and students (Cooper, Smith and Upton, 1994; DfE, 1994b; Garner, 1996; Ofsted, 1999).
- *Equality* promoting schools stressing every students’ rights and responsibilities.

At the micro level, I argue that this can begin with a change in teacher cognition in order that they better respond to students, as their attitudes towards inclusion are closely linked with their acceptance of children with a disability (Ward, Center, Bochner, et al, 1994; Forlin, Douglas and Hattie, 1996b; Scruggs and Mastropieri 1996). In so doing, they will become more receptive, open and accepting to students with SEN. Such change is crucial as SEBD can be context specific and perceived by some teachers as simply disruptive behaviour. This finding is not uncommon as given the drive to attain targets, some teachers may have a low tolerance for challenging behaviour. Additionally, as found by Cole, Visser and Daniels (1999), many seemingly fit into Power's (1996) academic tradition. This suggestion highlights three areas of concern.

Firstly, among some teachers there may be the perception that their responsibility lies with teaching and not providing pastoral support. This Bishop and Swain (2000) view as 'conflicting conceptions of children's problems and education as intervention,' in which teaching is seen as imparting knowledge of Mathematics and English. The problem then becomes the disruptive behaviour of a small number of children.

The second issue centres on the extent to which some teachers are actually trained to manage difficult behaviours presented in classrooms and what practical training is required for those who specialise in the diagnosis and remediation of children with SEBD (Burnard and Yaxley, 2000). According to the latter, this issue has been caused by Initial Teacher Training (ITT), which has marginalised the behavioural aspects of teaching due to the focus on what teachers are teaching rather than the combination of how and why they are teaching. The issue is further complicated by the nature of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) training in schools for SEBD children.

A final issue is that of the social versus the medical model of disability as research has shown that teachers' attitudes towards disability is ruled by their perceptions of such students. Chazan (1994) for example found that many mainstream teachers have negative perceptions of and limited tolerance for problem behaviour in the classroom. Outward naughtiness and disruptiveness often then mask one's view of a child's underlying emotional difficulties and the need for differentiated responses, alterations to teacher's style and attitudes or changes to school systems (Cole, Visser and Daniels, 1999). With the current demands on teachers to deliver a curriculum and achieve national targets, these subtle or not so subtle forms of behaviour can be ignored or go unnoticed in classrooms.

Secondly, at the core of an inclusive school is also the need to develop an ethos of care and receptivity. In this research, students report feeling alienated and disconnected from the school. Some requested transfers to another school while others contemplated refusing to attend. Conversely, they report experiencing feelings of welcome, love and appreciation within the Th. Inc. Room. Th. Inc. staff also report feeling undervalued, dejected and having low morale due to a pervading sense that their efforts and programmes such as Th. Inc. carried little or no value within the dominant school culture.

An inclusive culture therefore requires caring, listening staff who are willing to learn from their practise. Successful inclusion of students with SEBD relates strongly to the commitment of teachers and support staff and their work in general and to teach each of their students (Daniels, Visser, Cole, et al, 1998). Staff of inclusive communities are caring people who create caring communities. They avail themselves to talk and listen to students (Cole and Visser, 1998; Daniels, Visser, Cole, et al, 1998a; Cole, Visser and Daniels, 2001).

The model of inclusion needed is therefore one that supports an inclusive school culture. This ensures all its members feel valued and included. Within this model are also students, parents, teaching and auxiliary staff. Such a culture begins with a shared commitment and responsibility among all staff to include all students in learning together as a way to decrease exclusionary pressures. There is also a focus on the individual needs of every student, recognising their differences and allocating adequate support to ensure equal opportunity is extended to every child to maximise his fullest potential (Carrington, 1999). Added to this is a sense of value and respect for the individual differences of children and staff who embrace diversity as opportunities for enriched learning.

Another aspect of this inclusive model is the role of the school in staff development initiatives that build the capacity of staff through an enhancement of their skills to ensure all students are able to access the full curriculum. This includes extending the professional repertoire of staff through the provision of adequate and appropriate training to ensure that everyone is competent and confident in the dissemination of their duties. This includes investing in training and development of academic as well as pastoral staff; and, as all members of the school community are included, support and clinical staff are also viewed as integral members of the school community and afforded professional development.

Parental involvement is also key as the school works towards actively involving all parents, including those with disabilities and from diverse backgrounds. This is important as within the current school, parental inclusion in matters that relate to their children is minimal.

Finally, an inclusive model works to ensure that resources are available throughout the school for the systemic operation of all programmes and not simply those in specialised areas. This includes having staff collaborate and serve as resources for each other.

Summary discussion

The supportive culture evident within Th. Inc. led to the enablement of students who access the intervention. Evident in this are supportive relationships and high expectations for attainment, as well as behaviour and opportunities for social engagement and life skills. As a practitioner, I have witnessed the demise of a profession as teachers are forced to become slaves to a system that places academic advancement over the social, emotional, moral, cultural and spiritual development of their students. What was once a vocation for many has become a highly bureaucratic system, as children are programmed to function in response to national targets and agendas in the drive for schools to be termed effective. Here lies part of the problem as there are evident tensions between alternative conceptions of what constitutes an effective school. The dominant ideology within the school effectiveness movement suggests that schools are effective if they attain high examination results and are at the top of the league tables. Other schools are viewed as effective based on the ‘value added’ measures, which take into account their location, intake and recent history. However, both are judged with examination results as key indicators. The question remains, however, under the current political climate where schools are set in competition with one another, are there any incentives to promote their commitment to supporting less able learners? (Corbett, 1999).

This may be why interventions such as Th. Inc. have been received with such favour by students who access them as they provide opportunities to experience elements that are absent from classrooms and by extension, the entire school. Given opportunities to communicate with Th. Inc. staff, the message resonates that someone is available and willing to listen. Listening and responding makes students feel loved, valued and appreciated. In this respect, relationships are therapeutic as it is through such relationships that students are able to go through a period of self-realisation, identity formation and individuation (Cooper and Lovey, 1999).

There is then a need to remember that schools are not only places where students' academic abilities are developed but where young people learn how to socialise. This in turn allows their personalities to develop through significant and meaningful relationships with peers and adults who are dedicated to their well-being. Schools are also very important social training grounds as for some children who enter the classroom with significant deficiencies in their socialization process, school is, the second and sometimes the ultimate chance to develop such skills to successfully find their place in their community and to live a meaningful and rich professional life (Royer, 1995, 1996). If the governments' Inclusion Agenda is to be realised, there is a need to ensure those in need of support are provided with every opportunity to learn within a culture that is considerate of their varying needs. I believe that such an approach is grounded in pure common sense and as Bowers (1996) states, putting the 'E,' and in this case, 'emotion' back into the profession. Being politically astute supporters of an inclusive education ideology therefore requires working within the new conceptual frame of reference to use market measures to foster those values that need to be enhanced (Corbett, 1999).

To achieve such a paradigm shift, we therefore need to give equal consideration to both agendas; the Standards as well as the Inclusion Agenda. Should this be considered, only then may we be able to affirm that we are creating a truly inclusive educational system and in so doing, 'narrowing the gaps' between SEN and non-SEN students. Then and only then can we truly acclaim that we are moving towards a model of Inclusive Education that is close to the ideal- if only it is an ideal to which we strive.

As there were obvious limitations to this research, the following section will list a number of areas considered for future research.

Areas for future research.

1. This research focused on gaining the views of students and staff on the impact of Th. Inc. However, the views of parents were not considered. A number of studies have used the perceptions of parents who attest to improvements in their children as a result of participation in the NG (Binnie and Allen, 2008; March and Healy, 2007). There is then much scope in exploring the views of parents as a way to harness further information on the perceived ways this intervention impacts on students in this school.
2. Binnie and Allen (2008) suggest that NGs do not stigmatise children who access them since the intervention is part of a whole school approach to supporting their needs. The present research has included the views of some members of staff as well as students of which includes their initial perceptions of this intervention. Some students expressed concerns about the stigma attached to attending engaging in the program or even attending the unit. Additional research could then explore the perceptions of students in terms of the stigmatising effects of accessing Th. Inc. within this school.
3. Some students in this study accessed Th. Inc. for one hour a week and in some cases, for a maximum of five years. As a teacher and researcher, most interviews with students were conducted during school hours when students were pursuing option subjects such as Art, PE, Drama, Dance and Music. There is an awareness of the ‘opportunity cost’ resulting from the loss in learning time as a result of their engagement. In their study, Cooper and Tiknaz (2005) discuss the idea of opportunity cost and gains for their students who were separated from their mainstream classrooms. It would therefore be worthwhile to investigate the opportunity cost to students to consider the ways in which they may be ‘excluded’ from learning in other aspects of the curriculum due to their participation in Th. Inc.
4. All students who participated in this research remain educated in mainstream education. Thus far, the study identifies two success stories having progressed to college despite being perceived vulnerable to exclusion from Year 7. It may

be worthwhile conducting further investigations to determine the extent to which students are able to successfully adapt to further education and adult life, having benefitted from support programs such as Th. Inc. in this mainstream secondary school.

5. In this research, time spent accessing Th. Inc. varies depending on individual students’ needs and this can last from 6 weeks to 5 years. It may therefore be worthwhile comparing the impact of short and long term Th. Inc. intervention on respective students.
6. Based on this study, interesting trends were observed along gender lines regarding presenting behaviours associated with SEBD. For example, while it may be common to find the internalising forms of behaviour in girls, there is evidence of this in two boys who presented behaviours considered to be withdrawn and anti-social. There may therefore be some scope for future research into the prevalence of presenting behaviours associated with SEBD along gender lines.
7. Finally, based on the perceptions of students, the study suggests that Th. Inc. can be a highly promising form of provision for students with a range of SEBD. There is also evidence to suggest that the provision can also benefit the wider school in terms of developing nurturing practices among Th. Inc. staff. The extent to which these qualities can be extended to mainstream classrooms is an area worth exploring as this again remained outside the remit of this study.

Concluding remarks

Yell, Meadows, Drasgow, et al (2009) writes:

> "Every day students walk through the doors of the school building and into the classroom, a backpack slung over their shoulder. However, more than often, they arrive at school with more baggage than contained in the backpack. Feelings of worthlessness, low-self- concept, inadequate coping mechanisms necessary to engage in socially appropriate ways; and being ill equipped to handle authority may lurk in the recess of the student's mind. This may well cause the student to react inappropriately by acting out, refusing to follow rules, become violent or withdrawing. In front of the class stands a teacher ready to impart knowledge designed to assist students in learning life's lessons. The effective, intelligent professional teacher is girded with the best curricula and the most winning attitude toward the individual potential of each and every student. Ready to tackle whatever is hiding or falling out of that backpack."

The above quote encapsulates the experiences of many students today as well as the expectations of teachers. As one of the many roles of schools is to educate children so they can contribute productively to society through work and procreation, the measure of support they provide is paramount. The ideal of inclusion which started almost twenty years ago as an approach to accommodating children with disabilities in mainstream schools has evolved. Inclusion now encompasses any additional support that can be extended not only to those formally assessed as having SEN but to any child, to ensure a seamless an adjustment to school.

As a form of pastoral support, Th. Inc. provides opportunities for such skills to be taught and developed. The positive areas of impact achieved for students in this school suggest it is time to re-consider the role of pastoral care, along with a need to focus on providing an ethos that is supportive of all children with varying needs.

The accounts provided by students and Th. Inc. staff suggest that Th. Inc. has impacted positively in areas such as social and emotional learning and this has supported their inclusion in school. Of the eight students identified as vulnerable prior to accessing Th. Inc., until the time of writing the final report, all eight have remained in mainstream education. Two have progressed to study at local Sixth Form Colleges. John who had an unsettling start and trouble with the police has stated during many of our discussions that accessing Th. Inc. has helped him to remain in mainstream education. Lisa, who once had an avid distaste for secondary school because of the absence of supportive peer groups is also at a local college. She has a group of friends, she is a lot more confident and she is actively pursuing a healthy relationship. Sara though transferred to another mainstream secondary school remains in education. During our last conversation, she informs me that she is progressing quite well. She no longer receives any form of support for her learning and she has become more of an independent learner. She is also in a healthy relationship.

All other students remain educated at the secondary school where the fieldwork was conducted. Mark is managing his stress and feels more positive about school. He too has a small group of friends and is looking forward to Year 10 when he will be starting his GCSEs. Beth now in Year 9, though experiencing an unsteady start continues to receive support from Th. Inc. and is looking forward to a fresh start in Year 10. Martha, Tom and Charmaine will also be progressing to Year 10 in the following academic year. Tom and Martha are no longer supported by Th. Inc. having shown positive signs of adjustment in Year 9.

These students all perceive their adjustments to result from their involvement in Th. Inc. and to be real and as such, this becomes their reality. A reality that offers respite with time to reflect on their personal circumstances, one that is filled with significant others who accept, value and respect them regardless of their past experiences and one in which they are able to grow in confidence and gain internal assets that aid in them becoming resilient.

Interestingly, Professor Melvyn West argues, given the nature of children with SEBD, the acquisition of social and emotional skills and in particular, emotional intelligence, may arguably be a valuable currency with which these students can negotiate later in life as these will ensure they progress to some form of employment, education or training to reduce the risk of becoming NEETs. With the above view I concur as will those who pursue an Inclusive Agenda, as the aims of education will be partially achieved. Proponents of the Standards Agenda, however, may view the academic achievement as more of an added value. Despite these conflicting views, should government policy continue to actively pursue both the Standards and Inclusion Agenda simultaneously and not address the existing paradox, it is the view of the current researcher that those responsible for the development of education in England have yet to reconcile the educational dogma with reality.

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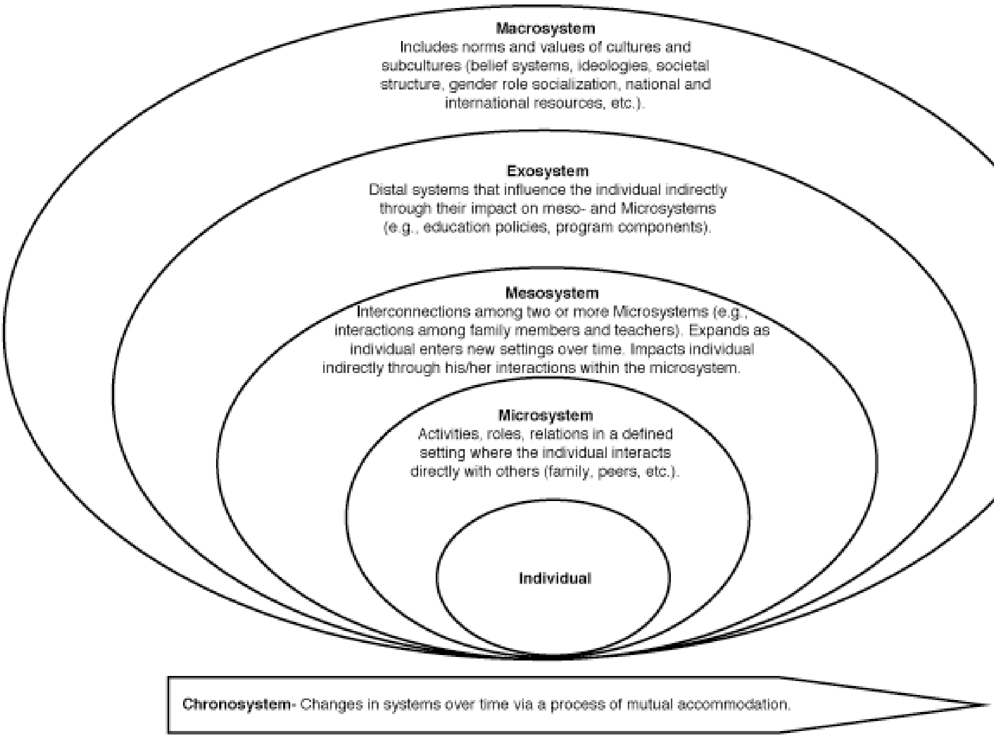
Appendix A

Notes explaining Bronfenbrenner's system theory


Macrosystem
Includes norms and values of cultures and subcultures (belief systems, ideologies, societal structure, gender role socialization, national and international resources, etc.).
Exosystem
Distal systems that influence the individual indirectly through their impact on meso- and Microsystems (e.g., education policies, program components).
Mesosystem
Interconnections among two or more Microsystems (e.g., interactions among family members and teachers). Expands as individual enters new settings over time. Impacts individual indirectly through his/her interactions within the microsystem.
Microsystem
Activities, roles, relations in a defined setting where the individual interacts directly with others (family, peers, etc.).
Individual
Chronosystem- Changes in systems over time via a process of mutual accommodation.

(Bronfenbrenner, 1979)

APPENDIX B

Strategies based on learning theories used to manage challenging behavior

Studies based on Behavioral approaches.

Some studies have researched the use of teacher feedback as a viable method of increasing academic growth and reducing disruptive behavior in class (Dolliver & McLaughlin, 1985; Fairchild, 1976; Schumaker, Howell & Sherman, 1977; Witt, Hannafin, & Martens, 1983); (Davies & Mc Laughlin, 1989). Schumaker, Hovell and Sherman (1977) for example, compared praise alone to tangible reinforcers given by parents contingent upon positive teacher feedback via the use of a daily report card; and argue that praise accounted for improvement in behavior in one of the subjects. Behavior was also seen to improve with the other student when tangible reinforcers were added. Finally, Lahey, Gendrich, Gendrich, et al (1977) found that praise was sufficient to reduce disruptive behavior in a kindergarten setting.

Davies and Mc Laughlin (1989) report on a study of two six year olds and an eight-year-old, assigned to a resource class for disruptive and inappropriate social behavior, and low academic achievement. ‘Target behaviors’ considered disruptive included those that were disruptive and detrimental to other students completing an assigned activity. They report on the success in the following three areas:

1. The use of the daily report card and home-based contingencies was effective in decreasing disruptive behavior in school.
2. The data on the third grade student revealed that decreasing inappropriate behavior can increase assignment completion.
3. A simplified report card system to be effective in improving academic skills, a finding which replicates the work of other experimenters (Karraker, 1972; Martin & Mc Laughlin, 198).

Their findings also point to a significant improvement in the behavior of subjects during classes, based on the perceptions of parents, homeroom teachers and peers that

Shook, LaBrie, Vallies, et al (1990) also report on the effectiveness of a token economy on specific forms of inappropriate social behaviors among three students in a regular first grade classroom, when social consequences such as teacher praise and approval were ineffective. Persistent monitoring of disruptive behavior they suggest indicates large decreases in disruptive behavior. This decrease in disruptive behavior was also maintained over time in follow up data. They argue for findings which are consistent with (Bushell, Wrobel and Michaelis, 1968) who also found that when they instituted a token program involving praise, tokens and backup reinforcers; disruptive behavior was reduced among their elementary grade school students.

Studies based on an Eco-Systemic approach.

One strand of the literature which proposes an eco-systemic approach to challenging behavior looks at the role of the teacher and effective classroom pedagogy. Weber (1978, 1982) for example, was among the earliest who tried to explore the symbiotic relationship that existed between SEBD and pedagogy. His argument is that a learning centered approach was essential to working successfully with pupils who were experiencing learning failure, as the key factor in their SEBD was in fact an inability to tackle the learning task; a common response to which was often, alienation or disaffection. The usefulness of such an approach is quite relevant as some students in this research perceived that their relationships with teachers as well as difficulty in accessing the curriculum, to be a source of their conflict.

Rayner (1998) also touches on the usefulness of pedagogy as a possible approach to dealing with (SEBD) in classrooms. He argues that common pedagogical approaches to SEBD tend to view pupil misbehavior as a priority and so focuses on the remediation of such behavior. This, he says results in a scenario in which effective pedagogy becomes more concerned with misbehavior rather than learning and pedagogy. He advocates the need for an educational re-conceptualization of SEBD by considering individual differences, teaching and learning. Like Weber (1978, 1982), he highlights the significance of the learning context and its power to shape behavior. In his view, as (SEBD) and associated learning problems are still presented, identified and framed within the learning context, behavior or misbehavior is a relative concept, is highly subjective, interactive and context bound; and this can sometimes contribute to the creation of (SEBD). He argues therefore, that an appropriate response to pupils experiencing (SEBD) must be grounded in a model of effective teaching and learning as there should be a greater need for teachers to focus more on the relationship between learning and behavior rather than personal deficits in the learner in planning a curriculum for pupils experiencing (SEBD). Pedagogy can therefore be a key into which access can be gained into the learning process as well as be instrumental in opening up the relationship between behavior, learning and teaching as it can draw on three distinctive aspects: the nature of teaching and the place of the pedagogue in pedagogy, the nature of learning and the individual learner. In his view, learning behavior and teaching behavior are integral to success and failure in learning and teachers should therefore work with the learning process rather than attempt to resolve issues which lie beyond the learning context.

Another strand of the ecological systemic literature focuses on the effects of the manipulation of spatial arrangements to achieve classroom management. Wheldall, Morris, Vaughan, et al (1981) for instance examine the hypothesis that differing classroom seating arrangements are setting events for different forms of class and teacher behavior. They sought to replicate and subsequently extend the findings of Axelrod, Hall and Tams (1979) who observed two classes under rows and tables but within a British context as they observed on task behavior in two junior classes comparing seating arranged around tables with seating in rows. They also tried to understand whether different classroom arrangements have any effect on class and teacher behavior. Their findings support the views of Axelrod, Hall, Tams (1979) and the findings of his American study that the table based setting arrangement is more so geared towards enhancing social interaction as it facilitates eye contact and provides a setting for increased participation in such encounters. On the other hand, rows formation tends to minimize social contact, allowing fewer occasions for the teacher to comment and more instances for desirable behavior. Based on these findings, in both classes, children whose behavior is low when seated around tables tended to benefit in terms of increased on task behavior when seated in rows. Additionally, a vast majority of individual children improved in on task behavior while seated in rows except for those whose behavior was already high. Their analyses showed that the effect was especially pronounced for children with low initial on-task behavior.

Similarly, Wheldall and Lin (1987) tried to replicate the findings of Wheldall, Bevan and Shortall (1981) which used additional classes in a special school for behaviorally troublesome children with moderate learning difficulties. They try to determine the functional importance of seating arrangements on student on-task behavior and disruptive behavior as well as any concomitant effects on teacher approval and disapproval. The experiment compared classroom behavior of both pupils and the teachers in two different seating arrangements- in tables and traditional rows formation. Examples of pupils' disruptive behavior were defined as interruption on the part of the pupils which drew attention of others in the class away from the tasks they were engaged in. These included talk-outs, unnecessary noises, turning around, leaving seats without teacher's permission, banging on desks and making aggressive acts towards peers. Examples of on-task behavior included attending to the teacher or the assigned task, showing an orientation towards the appropriate materials, manipulating learning aids, maintaining eye contact with the teacher and following instructions or teacher requests.

Their results indicate that substantial changes in both teacher behaviors and pupil behaviors were evident as a direct result of changes in seating arrangement in the experimental classroom for all three classes engaged; whereas the behaviors of both the teacher and students remained relatively stable in the control classroom. They therefore confirm that seating arrangements have significant effects on children's classroom behavior as well as on the behavior of their teachers. Their study also confirm that the rows formation is superior to tables arrangement for individual academic work as students' conduct improved, accompanied by increased on-task behavior and teacher praise was more forthcoming rather than disapproval.

Studies based on Cognitive-Behavioural approaches.

However, despite the fact that a perennial problem has been the exclusion of an increasing number of children and young people from school as a direct result of anger management problems (Humphreys and Brooks, 2006) and that reviews of research have pointed to the effectiveness of CBAM approaches with adolescents, there has been a relative paucity of empirical inquiry in this area relative to the scale of the problem.

One evaluation available is by Humphreys & Brooks (2006) who report on a short CBAM intervention aimed at reducing problem behaviors in schools among pupils at risk of exclusion. Though not maintained during the follow up period, they report significant improvements in behaviour in the area of 'total difficulties,' which showed a significant reduction during the programme. Analysis of 'conduct,' 'emotional,' and 'prosocial' domains also shows evidence of maintenance of positive outcomes.

Additionally, they argue the need for researchers and practitioners to 'look beyond the child' when hypothesising about causes of anger problems in educational contexts. Additionally, they emphasize that in the development of programmes to assist young people understand and control their anger first requires an understanding among practitioners of its origins and the contexts in which such anger is triggered. This they perceive is essential as while in cognitive-behavioural terms, anger is caused by maladaptive thinking patterns, which tend to masks an individual's core beliefs about himself and their surroundings, triggering negative emotional and behavioural responses (McGinn &Sanderson, 2001) individuals tend to bring life scripts; blueprints that influence behaviour (Steiner, 1990) to situations of potential conflict.

Similarly, Manning (1988) reports on the application of cognitive behaviour modification theory (CBM) in a regular classroom among children who have a history of mild classroom behaviour problems enrolled in grades 1 and 3. His use of an experimental group who experienced sessions in self-instructional cognitive training, practicing, and cueing allowed students to engage in the self-instruction as they were taught during sessions. They report of facilitation due to CBM training, both immediately after instruction had terminated and 1 to 3 months after training. Furthermore, the effects were seen to be more persistent for both grade 1 and grade 3 participants proving that, a treatment condition that included self-instructional training proved better than an intervention that is very similar except for its lack of instructions about self-instruction. In particular, as teachers perceived improved classroom behaviour and the experimental children became more internal in their locus-of-control beliefs; their results have led them to conclude that children can be taught to produce self-instructional mediators that promote regulation of behaviour.

Evans, Harden and Thomas (2004) who conduct a review of some of these strategies discussed above highlight a number of issues. Firstly, they argue that such approaches focus on the more overt forms of SEBD that are commonly displayed, the disruptive behavior, talking out of turn, aggression and fighting; and that some of the strategies are used to target four main groups of behaviors associated with SEBD. While the majority of studies evaluated strategies targeted towards either off-task behavior or disruptive behavior, fewer strategies evaluated strategies focused on aggressive behavior or socially inadequate behavior.

Furthermore, they add that while there was a shift away from seeing emotional and behavioral difficulties as problems located within individuals (the so-called 'medical model' of (SEBD) towards a more context-based approach, where behavior is seen as a response to particular situations; there was little indication of a greater focus on social justice and equal opportunities in framing the context within which support for pupils is offered. As such, they found that most studies were not framed in the context of supporting children but more so, in trying to reduce the social and behavioral 'deficiencies.'

Another interesting find is that approaches based on behavioral models did produce reductions in off-task and disruptive behavior amongst pupils with (SEBD). However, these were immediate and restricted to the period that the strategy was in place. Also because of the whole class nature of these interventions, an element of peer support and pressure appears to be important for the success of these strategies. I concur with this view as such strategies are common in trying to reinforce good behavior in classrooms at the school where this research is being conducted. These include praise post cards; positive postcards sent home, smiley faces on the boards and daily and weekly rewards for behavior and independence in working. However, it has been noted that while these strategies are effective, they are often restricted to the lesson and so do not produce any long term effects on these children. As a classroom teacher, it has been my observation that students will behave well once they realize there is a reward to be gained at the end of the lesson. However, they often revert to the problematic behavior the next day.

Additionally, they contend that studies using cognitive-behavioral approaches in their review showed positive effects immediately after the intervention but no long term effects were noted. This leads them to concur that such strategies strive for longer-term changes and tend to require more intensive or longer intervention periods. Furthermore, based on the small number of sound studies at the time of the review, they argue it is difficult to build a detailed picture of the essential components of cognitive-behavioral strategies for supporting children with (SEBD). This they perceive is difficult as different types of cognitive-behavioral strategies were evaluated in the review. Among these included, training in conflict resolution; teaching children to value each other and raise each other's self-esteem.

An Explanation of Psychotherapeutic approaches

Psychoanalysis, the first school of psychotherapy, was founded by Sigmund Freud. Freud theorised that problems originated within the human psyche and is rooted in childhood experiences and the unconscious mind. He believed that such problems could be remedied by allowing people to make conscious, their unconscious thoughts feelings and emotions; thus allowing them to gain a greater insight into the root of their problems through creating avenues that allow the individual to experience a release of repressed emotions and experiences. An overview includes:

a. Psychoanalytic, which is the first practice to be called a psychotherapy and encourages the verbalization of all the patient's thoughts, fantasies and dreams which allows the analyst to formulate the nature of the patient's conflicts causing him or her problems.
b. Behaviour therapy/applied analysis, which focuses on changing maladaptive patterns of behaviour to improve emotional responses, cognitions and interactions with others.
c. Cognitive behaviour that seeks to identify maladaptive cognition, appraisal beliefs and reactions with the aim of influencing destructive negative emotions and problematic dysfunctional behaviours.
d. Humanistic that is concerned with the human context of the development of the individual with an emphasis on subjective meaning and positive growth rather than pathology.
e. Systemic that seeks to address people in relationships as opposed to at an individual level and looks at the interactions of groups, patterns and dynamics.
f. Transpersonal which address the client in the context of a spiritual understanding of consciousness.
g. Body Psychotherapy- addresses problems of the mind as being closely correlated with bodily phenomena. Included in this can be a person's sexuality, musculature, breathing habits and physiology.
h. Psychodynamic- a form of depth psychology which focuses on revealing the unconscious content of a client's psyche in order to alleviate psychic tension.

APPENDIX C

A typology of definitions on Inclusion.

In one respect, inclusion is part of a political agenda. Such advocates support the view espoused by Salamanca (1994) arguing that, 'inclusive schools, are a more cost-effective means of delivering education for all being less costly to establish and maintain, educating all children together through establishing a complex system of different types of schools, which specialize in the education of specific groups of children.

Distinct reference to children who are *disabled* spawned some of the earliest assumptions of inclusion being an approach to serving children with disabilities within general education settings (Ainscow 2006). This view subscribes to the social movement of Inclusion as it is argued on the basis of a 'right and responsibility.' Advocates view the responsibility of national education systems as ensuring the education of all children (EENET 2002) as all children, wherever in the world have an inherent right to receive an education that does **not** discriminate, segregate or exclude. Defenders of this camp argue that, regular schools trying to become more inclusive are the most effective means of combating discrimination, creating welcoming teaching-learning environments, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all (Salamanca Statement 1994).

Finally, perceptions centred on inclusion being an innovation within special education (Lipsky and Gartner 1996) that required integrating special needs and specialist services within mainstream education. This view likens Inclusion to a developmental approach to education, exponents of which argue that if quality education for all is to be an ideal, then all children should be educated in mainstream schools to ensure that they actively participate regardless of any inherent disability. Here Inclusive Education is not perceived as a special approach to learning which integrates some learners with disabilities but one in which regular education is transformed in order to respond to different learners in a constructive and positive way (EENET 2002). It advocates a social model of disability, one that views the system as the problem and argues that schools need to be enabled to change in order to meet the individual needs of learners (Miles 2000).

APPENDIX D

Notes on the Boxall Diagnostic Developmental Profile

The Boxall Profile is a system of recording and analysing a child’s behaviour which highlights the compensatory experiences needed for him or her to progress (Bennathan, 1997). The Profile is arranged into two sections, each consisting of 34 random items which, when scored, fall into one of ten sub-strands allocated to each section. These descriptive items are then grouped into main strands based on the intrinsic relationship between them. Section 1 is used to determine a child’s cognitive and emotional development while Section 2 consists of items that describe behaviours that may be hindering relationships and learning. All items are scored on a scale of zero (does not arise) to four (yes or usually occurs), summed and then recorded on a histogram. A shaded area on the histogram indicates the norm for each sub-strand. Scores falling outside this area indicate the area and degree of difficulty for each child and these are used to plan interventions (O’Connor and Colwell, 2002).

APPENDIX E

SENCO/Teacher
Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire.

Follow up.

For each item, please mark the box for Not True, Somewhat True or Certainly True. It would help us if you answered all items as best as you can even if you are not absolutely certain. Please give your responses on the basis of the child's behaviour over the last month.

Child's Name____ Male/Female

Date of Birth ____

Description of child's behaviour	Not True	Somewhat true	Certainly True
Considerate of other people's feelings			
Restless, overactive, cannot stay still for long.			
Often complains of headaches, stomach-aches or sickness.			
Shares readily with other children (treats, toys, pencils etc.)			
Often has temper tantrums or hot tempers			
Rather solitary, tends to play alone.			
Generally obedient, usually does what adults request.			
Many worries, often seems worried.			
Helpful if someone is hurt, upset or feeling ill.			
Constantly fidgeting or squirming.			
Has at least one good friend.			
Often fights with other children or bullies them.			
Often unhappy, down-hearted or tearful.			
Generally liked by other children.			
Easily distracted, concentration wanders.			
Nervous or clingy in new situations, easily loses confidence.			
Kind to younger children.			
Often lies or cheats.			
Picked on or bullied by other children.			
Often volunteer to help others (parents, teachers, other children).			
Thinks things out before acting.			
Steals from home, school or elsewhere.			
Gets on better with adults than with other children.			
Many fears, easily scared.			
Sees tasks through to the end, good attention span.			

(Goodman, 1997)

Do you have any other comments or concerns?

Signature ______________________________ Role _____________________________ Date

Thank you for your help.

APPENDIX F

Rules within Therapeutic Inclusion

The following rules are used to guide behaviour within the Therapeutic Inclusion Room. Rules are designed in collaboration with students so there is a sense of shared responsibility.

RESPONSIBILITY

Accountability

- Think before you act.
- Before you make a decision to act in a certain way- think how it will affect others, what will be the consequences?
- When you do something wrong or make a mistake, (ADMIT IT) and accept the consequences. Do not blame others or make excuses!
- Don't take the credit for achievements of others.
- Dow hat you should or have agreed to do- even if it is difficult.

Excellence

- Set a good example.
- Always do your best.
- DON'T quit- keep trying.
- Make it your goal to always be proud of your performance (school work/homework/projects/chores/extra-curricular activities/music/drama/sports).

Being a good sport

- Win and lose with grace.
- Don't brag when you win or complain and make excuses when you lose.
- Take pride in how you play the game or how you perform. Don't just focus on whether you won/succeeded or not.

Self-control/self-restraint.

- Always control yourself.
- Control your temper.
- Don't throw things/scream/hit others or use bad language- self-control.
- Wait your turn.
- Show courtesy and good manners.

APPENDIX G

Home Questionnaire 1

(Before visiting the Th. Inc. Room)

Child's Name ______________________________________

Please circle a response for each question. Chose the one that is closest to the answer you want to give.

1. What do you think your child feels about school?

Loves it likes it
Doesn't like it Hates it.

2. How do you feel your child is doing in his/her lessons?

Very well Okay
Not very well Badly.

3. What do you think about your child's behaviour at school?

It is good It is ok
It is not good It is terrible.

4. What do you think about your child's behaviour at home?

It is good It is okay.
It is not good. It is terrible.

5. At school, do you think your child is:

Very confident Quite confident.
Not confident. Has no confidence at all.

6. At home, do you think your child is:

Very confident Quite confident.
Not confident. Has no confidence at all.

7. When your child is at school, do you think they are happy?

All of the time Most of the time
Occasionally Never.

8. When your child is at home, do you think they are happy?

All of the time Most of the time
Occasionally Never.

If there is anything else you would like to tell us about your child, please write in the space provided below.

Please sign your name below and tell us of your relationship with the child, that is (mother, father, guardian etc.)

Name: _________________________ Relationship _________________

Thank you.

APPENDIX H

Letter to parents

Dear Parent/Carer:

Your child is being invited to take part in a study for a Doctoral Degree entitled, ‘Social and emotional learning: investigating students’ perceptions of a Therapeutic Inclusion Room.’ Attached is an information sheet that gives information about the study. Before you decide to agree for your son or daughter to participate, it is important that you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others or the researcher, if you wish, as we would like you to fully understand what this research will involve. Should anything not be clear, I can be contacted at the number at the end of the information sheet to go through the information with you to help in making anything clearer.

I thank you so far for reading and please see the attached information sheet that gives all the details about the research and what it involves.

Pauline Walters

Research Student.

Information Sheet

‘Social and emotional learning: investigating students’ perceptions of a Therapeutic Inclusion Room.’

Who will be conducting the research?

The study will be conducted by Pauline Walters, a student at The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL and a teacher at the school, which your child currently attends.

Title of the Study.

The study he/she is being asked to participate in is called, ‘Social and Emotional Learning: investigating students’ perceptions of a Therapeutic Inclusion Room.’

What is the aim of the research?

The Therapeutic Inclusion Room is an approach that is used throughout the school to help support students to be successful in school. The main purpose of this study is to understand what students themselves think about the Therapeutic Inclusion Room; and what makes the time they share in there positive and rewarding. All of this will be done with the hope of how we can use some of these experiences to make learning in classrooms more enjoyable and rewarding. The findings from this study will therefore be very useful to the school, as they will help us to consider some of the best strategies that can be used to increase opportunities and improve educational experiences, therefore making the school a more pleasurable and rewarding place for all children.

Why has your child been chosen?

Your child has been chosen to participate in this study as he/she is one who already uses or has used the Therapeutic Inclusion Room in the past. Seven (7) other students will also be selected to take part in this study. It is hoped that gaining the views from students will be the best way to improve the overall delivery and quality of education all children receive within the school.

What would he/she be asked to do if he/she took part?

Should you agree to have your child participate, he or she will be interviewed about what he/she likes about the Therapeutic Inclusion Room. He or she will also be observed in specific lessons as well as during a few sessions in the Therapeutic Inclusion Room. I am aware that you will be concerned with the idea of your child being observed and the possibility that this may cause him/her to feel uncomfortable. Should you agree to have your child participate, I wish to assure you that he/she will only be expected to engage in activities he/she normally engages in when in this situation and that every effort will be made to ensure that he/she is in no way singled out as the one being observed. The process will involve observing him to learn more about the experiences and what they enjoy the most about being in these contexts.

What happens to the information collected?

Once the information for the study is collected, this will be used to make conclusions about what students enjoy most about their involvement in the Therapeutic Inclusion Room and how these experiences can be used to improve their participation in classrooms throughout the school.

How is privacy or confidentiality maintained?

During the entire study, all information I gain will be kept private and will not be shared with anyone. This will be kept in a safe environment and only I will have access to it. Your child’s identity will also be hidden by assigning pseudonyms, which will protect him/her. This will be done for each child who participates in this study. I want to assure you that as this research involves children, I have a responsibility to respect the rights and privacy of all who participate in this study. Please be aware however, that if any information is given that shows you harm yourself or someone else may be harming you, during the study, I do have an obligation to report this to a relevant authority within the school and this will be dealt with accordingly.

What happens if I do not want my child to take part or if there is a change of mind?

It is entirely up to you if you agree to have your child take part. If you do agree to have your child participate and change your mind at a later date, you will be free to have him/her withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without any worry or concern... If you do agree, you will be given an information sheet to keep and a consent form that should be dated and signed.

Will your child be paid for participating in the study?

Your child's participation is strictly voluntary and that no form of compensation, money or otherwise will be given for his/her participation in this research.

What is the length of the research?

The study will take approximately 12 weeks but the entire process will involve a maximum of 16 hours contact time. This will include 8 hours of observation time, 4 in the Therapeutic Inclusion Room and 4 in regular classrooms; and 8 hours of interview time, which will follow observations in both contexts). Please note this time will not be ongoing but will vary depending on timetabled lessons in classrooms and the Therapeutic Inclusion Room.

Where will the study be conducted?

The study will take place at the school, which your child attends and will be done only during normal school hours.

Will the outcomes of the research be published?

At this time, there are no plans to have the outcomes of the research published. It will be written in the form of a thesis, which will be available from the University's Library for public reference. However, if there are plans to have it published, you will be informed and all issues regarding your child's confidentiality and anonymity will be discussed again.

Contact for further information

As I am currently employed at the school as a teacher, I hold an enhanced Criminal Record Background (CRB), which allows me to be in contact with children. I have also obtained a separate (CRB) from the University of Manchester as this is a requirement of the university. Should you wish to clarify this you can contact the school for further details or you can contact the university at the address at the start of this letter. Again, please complete the attached consent form indicating whether or not you agree to have your child participate in this research.

What if something goes wrong?

If there are any issues regarding this research that you would prefer not to discuss with member of the research team; please feel free to contact the Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator by either writing to 'The research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator, Research Office, Christie building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL' or by emailing: Research-Governance@manchester.ac.uk or by telephoning 0161.275.7583 or 275.8093.
I thank you for your consideration in this matter.
Pauline Walters
Teacher/Research student.
0161.275. 3785

‘Social and emotional learning: investigating students’ perceptions of a Therapeutic Inclusion Room’

PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

1. I confirm that I have read the attached information sheet on the above project and have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions and that these were answered satisfactorily.
2. I understand that my child’s participation in this study is voluntary and that he/she is free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without having any effect on his/her marks or participation at the school.
3. I understand that all the interviews will be audio-recorded.
4. I agree to the use of anonymous names, which will be used to refer to my child.

I hereby grant consent for my son/daughter to take part in the above project.

....

Name of participant Date Signature

....

Name of person taking consent Date Signature

APPENDIX I

Letter to students

Dear Student:

You are asked to take part in a research for a Doctoral Degree called, ‘Social and emotional learning: investigating students’ perceptions of a Therapeutic Inclusion Room.’ You have been asked to take part in this as you are one of the many students who use the Therapeutic Inclusion Room. Before you decide to agree to being involved in this research, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what will happen if you decide to take part. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with your parents as we want you to understand well, what being involved in a research project would be like. If anything is not clear, I will be willing to go through the information sheet with you to help make things clearer.

Thank you for reading so far and please read the attached information sheet that gives all the details about the research and what it will involve.

Pauline Walters
Research Student.

‘Social and emotional learning: investigating students’ perceptions of a Therapeutic Inclusion Room’

Information sheet.

Who will be carrying out the research?

The research will be carried out by me, Pauline Walters, a research student of The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL. I am also a teacher at your school.

Title of the Research

The research you are being asked to participate in is entitled: Social and emotional learning: investigating students’ perceptions of a Therapeutic Inclusion Room.

What is the aim of the research?

I am interested in this area of research as I want to understand how students, like you, learn certain skills, what activities are used to help you gain these skills and what makes your experiences positive while in the Th. Inc. Room. As I hope to observe you in both the Th. Inc. Room and classrooms, I will also consider how some of your learning experiences in the Th. Inc. Room can be transferred to classrooms to help improve the quality of your learning, increase opportunities for you and make the school a more pleasurable and rewarding experience.

Why have you been chosen to participate?

You have been chosen to participate in this research as you are one of the many students who use the Th. Inc. Room for different reasons. You will not be the only one as seven other students have also been approached to participate in this research.

What would I be asked to do if I agree to take part in this research? If you agree to take part in the research, you will be observed over four lessons in the Th. Inc. Room and interviewed shortly afterwards to discuss your experiences. You will also be observed in four lessons in classrooms and will be interviewed shortly after these observations as well. I am aware that you may be concerned about being observed and may feel nervous about this. However, none of the other students will be able to tell that I am observing how you are getting on as I will be able to see everyone in the class. The idea is for me to collect information about how you learn, the experiences you have and the process that is involved in your learning. For example, if you were in a classroom, engaging in a group activity, while I would try to observe you, I would observe how the entire group gets along together and try to understand how the type of activities help you to learn best.

What happens to the information that is collected?

Once information for the research is collected, this will be used to make conclusions about what you enjoy most about your involvement in the Th. Inc. Room and how these experiences can be used to improve the quality of learning for you within the school.

How will the information collected on you be kept private?

During the research, all information about you will be kept strictly confidential and your identity will be hidden. Different names will be given to you so that neither you nor the school will be identified. This will be done for everyone who agrees to participate in this study as part of my role as a researcher, means that I must ensure and respect your privacy and agree to the rules regarding keeping all information about my participants between me and them alone. Also, information for the research will be written up stored away and once the research is complete all files will be destroyed after a suitable period. However, I must let you know that is during our observations or interviews, anything is revealed to be considered a serious offence or of being a criminal activity, I will have a duty to report this information to someone in authority at the school.

What happens if I do not want to take part or if I agree and change my mind?

It is entirely up to you if you agree to take part or not. If you agree to take part and change your mind later on, you will no longer need to participate without giving a reason or without any worry of it affecting how teachers treat you or the grades you may get in your school work. Even though your parent may respect you as an individual, I still need to know that you are willingly agreeing to participate in the research and I need to know that you understand fully what the project hopes to achieve and what you will be required to do if you agree to participate.

Will I be paid for my participation in this research project?

Please be aware that your participation is of your own free will and that you will not be given payment of any kind, in the form of money or gifts if you agree to participate.

How long will this research run for?

The research will run for a period of three to six months but will involve only 16 hours of contact time with you. This will include 8 hours of observation time, 4 in the Th. Inc. Room and 4 in regular classrooms; and 8 hours of interview time, which will follow observations in both contexts). Please understand that this time will not be ongoing but will vary depending on timetabled lessons in classrooms and the Th. Inc. Room.

Where will the research be conducted?

The research will take place at the school which you attend and will be done only during normal school hours.

Will the findings of the research be made public in a publication?

At this time, there are no plans to have the outcomes of the research published. However, the research will be written in the form of thesis and a copy will be available to the public in the University's library for public reference. If there are any plans to publish this work, I will inform you and your parent/carer of any issue regarding your rights to privacy and having your identity hidden.

What if something goes wrong?

If there is anything you are still unsure about or something that you would prefer not to discuss with me, please do not be afraid to speak with your Form tutor, Year mentor, Head of Year or the support worker within the Therapeutic Inclusion Room who will speak with me or my Supervisor at the University. If you are unhappy with how the research is going and you wish to make a complaint, you can with someone also contact the Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator by either writing to 'The research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator, Research Office, Christie building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL' or by emailing: Research-Governance@manchester.ac.uk or by telephoning 0161.275.7583 or 275.8093.

I thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Pauline Walters

Research student.

‘Social and emotional learning: investigating students’ perceptions of a Therapeutic Inclusion Room’

STUDENT AGREEMENT FORM

1. I have read and understood all the information about this research and being a participant in this. I have also had the opportunity to think about any questions or concerns I may have about it and I am satisfied that these have answered.
2. I understand what I will be asked to do in the research and who I can go to if I am not sure about anything.
3. I understand that I participating in this research of my own free will and that if I chose to no longer participate this will not affect my grades at school.
4. I understand that all the interviews will be audio recorded and I agree to this.
5. I also understand that my name will not be used in anything written about this research.

I agree to take part in the above research project.

....

Name of person agreeing Date Signature

APPENDIX J

Questionnaire for students to ensure they understand the research process.

1. Explain for me what this study will be about and why you are participating in it.

2. What will I, the researcher be doing during when I am in the Th. Inc. Room?

3. How do you think this research will benefit you as a pupil in this school?

4. What will be expected of you as a participant in this research?

5. While I am in the Th. Inc. Room observing you, what do you think I will be doing?

6. How would I expect you to behave if I was in a classroom or the Th. Inc. Room observing you for the research?

7. How do you think my presence in the Th. Inc. Room or a classroom will make you behave or react?

8. If you felt embarrassed or uncomfortable, how would you handle yourself and what would I expect you to do?

9. If you no longer wished to participate in the research, what would be expected of you?

APPENDIX K

LETTER FOR STAFF

Dear Colleague:

You are being invited to take part in a research for a Doctoral Degree entitled: Social and emotional learning: investigating students’ perceptions of a Therapeutic Inclusion Room. The main purpose of this research is to understand how students learn specific skills, what activities are used to help them acquire these skills and what makes their experiences positive and rewarding while in the Th. Inc. Room. This will be done by observing and interviewing students in specific classes and while in the Th. Inc. Room. Before you decide to agree to becoming involved, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if anything is unclear before you decide whether or not you wish to take part. Should anything not be clear, please feel free to ask any questions as I am available to go through the information sheet with you and help in making any issue clearer.

I thank you so far for reading and please see the attached information sheet that gives all the details about the research and how you may be involved.
Thank you for reading this.

Pauline Walters

Research Student.

‘Social and emotional learning: investigating students’ perceptions of a Therapeutic Inclusion Room’

Staff information Sheet

Who will be conducting the research?

The research will be conducted by Pauline Walters a research student at The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL and a teacher at the school in which you work.

Title of the Research.

The research you will be asked to participate in is entitled, ‘Social and Emotional Learning: investigating students’ perceptions of a Therapeutic Inclusion Room.’

What is the aim of the research?

The Therapeutic Inclusion Room is an approach that is used throughout the school to help support students develop the skills they need to be successful within school. The main purpose of this research is to understand how students learn these skills, what activities are used to help them learn these skills and what makes their experiences positive and rewarding while in the Therapeutic Inclusion Room. The experiences they share in there, will also be compared to those they may have in classrooms with the hope of understanding what aspects of the way they learn in the Therapeutic Inclusion Room, can be used in classrooms to help improve the overall quality of their educational experiences within school. The findings from this research will therefore be very useful to the school as they will help us to consider some of the best strategies that can be used to increase opportunities and improve educational experiences, therefore making the school a more pleasurable and rewarding place for all children.

Why have you been chosen?

You have been chosen to participate in this research as you work with or support students who use the Therapeutic Inclusion Room.

What would you be asked to do if you decided to take part?

Should you agree to participate in this research, as the main researcher, I will be observing you while in the Therapeutic Inclusion Room with other students during timetabled lessons as well as interviewing you to gain your views on the experiences some of these students may have shared.as a fellow colleague, I understand that it may be unsettling to you being observed and/or interviewed and that this may bring about some measure of anxiety. Should you agree to participate, I wish to assure you of my expectations and my role as a researcher during the entire process. My aim is to collect information about the experiences and the processes involved in students’ learning. During the entire time therefore, all information regarding your participation will be strictly confidential and your anonymity will be preserved. This will also be done for every member of staff and student who decides to participate in this research.

What happens to the data collected?

Once the information for the research is collected, all information will be written up by me and stored away securely on data sticks that will be encrypted. The data will then be used to make conclusions about what students enjoy most about their involvement in the Therapeutic Inclusion Room and how these experiences can be transferred to other learning environments within the school.

How is confidentiality maintained?

During the entire research, all information I obtain will be kept in strict confidence and will not be shared with anyone. This will be kept in a safe environment and only I will have access to it. Your identity will also be hidden by assigning pseudonyms which will protect you. This will be done for each participant in this study. I want to further assure you that as a researcher, I have a responsibility to respect the rights and privacy of all who participate in this research. Additionally, all material will be written up by me, the researcher, in a word program. Hard copies of notes taken during observations will be stored away and interviews will be stored safely on a data stick. All transcribed work will be stored on a personal computer and secured with a password access. Once the research is complete, these files will be destroyed. Please be aware however, that if any information of a criminal nature is discussed and/or revealed to me while conducting this research, I do have an obligation to report this to a relevant authority within the school and this will be dealt with accordingly.

What happens if I do not want to take part or if there is a change of mind?

It is entirely up to you if you agree to take part. If you do agree to participate and change your mind at a later date, you will be free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without worry. If you do agree, you will be given an information sheet to keep and a consent form that should be dated and signed.

Will you be paid for participating in the research?

Please be aware that your participation is strictly voluntary and that no form of compensation, money or otherwise will be given for your participation in this research.

What is the length of the research?

The research will run for a period of three to six months but the entire process will involve only 16 hours of contact time with you. This will include 4-12 hours of observation time within the Therapeutic Inclusion Room, depending on when you are timetabled and with which students and 4 hours of interview time, which may follow observations of your with specific groups of students.

Where will the research be conducted?

The research will take place at the school in which you are employed and will be done only during normal school hours.

Will the outcomes of the research be published?

At this time, there are no plans to have the outcomes of the research published. It will be written in the form of a thesis, which will be available to the public from the University's Library for public reference. However, if there are plans to have it published, you will be informed and all issues regarding your confidentiality and anonymity will be discussed again.

Contact for further information

As I am currently employed at the school as a teacher, I hold an enhanced Criminal Record Background (CRB), which allows me to be in contact with children. I have also obtained a separate (CRB) from the University of Manchester as this is a requirement of the university. Should you wish to clarify this you can contact the school for further details or you can contact the university at the address at the start of this letter. Again, please complete the attached consent form indicating whether or not you agree to have your child participate in this research.

What if something goes wrong?

If there are any issues regarding this research that you would prefer not to discuss with member of the research team, please feel free to contact the Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator by either writing to 'The research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator, Research Office, Christie building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL' or by emailing: Research-Governance@manchester.ac.uk or by telephoning 0161.275.7583 or 275.8093.

I thank you for your consideration in this matter.
Pauline Walters
Teacher/Research student.
0161.275. 3785

‘Social and emotional learning: investigating students’ perceptions of a Therapeutic Inclusion Room’

STAFF CONSENT FORM

1. I confirm that I have read the attached information sheet on the above project and have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions and that these were answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without detriment to any treatment /service.

3. I understand that all the interviews will be audio-recorded.

4. I agree to the use of anonymous names which will be used to refer to myself.

.... ……………………..

Name of participant Date Signature

Appendix L

Data collection episodes

The following table presents information of all data collected during this research.

Student interviews

Student Participants	**Interviews**	**Duration**	**Th. Inc. Observations**	**Duration**	**Classroom observations**	**Duration**
Sara	**4**	**160 mins**	**4**	**200 mins**	**6**	**6 hrs**
Beth	**4**	**160 mins**	**3**	**150 mins**	**4**	**4 hrs**
Lisa	**6**	**240 mins**	**5**	**250 mins**	**6**	**6 hrs**
Martha	**3**	**120 mins**	**0**	**Nil**	**4**	**4 hrs**
Charmaine	**5**	**200 mins**	**4**	**200 mins**	**5**	**5 hrs**
John	**4**	**160 mins**	**2**	**100 mins**	**4**	**4 hrs**
Tom	**3**	**120 mins**	**2**	**100 mins**	**3**	**hrs**
Mark	**3**	**100 mins**	**2**	**100 mins**	**3**	**3 hrs**

Appendix M

Data collection episodes

The following table presents information of all data collected during this research.

Teaching Assistant interviews

TA Participants	Number of Interviews	Duration
Susan	**6**	**240 mins**
Candice	**6**	**240 mins**
Vicky	**5**	**200 mins**
Trisha	**6**	**235 mins**

Appendix N

Data collection episodes

The following table presents information of all data collected during this research.

Teacher interviews

Teacher Participants	Number of Interviews	Duration
Teacher 1	**1**	**10 mins**
Teacher 2	**1**	**15 mins**
Teacher 3	**1**	**12 mins**

APPENDIX O

DETAILED APPROACH TO DATA ANALYSIS.

Data Analysis

Data was analysed using six stage approach to Thematic Analysis outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). This offers an accessible and theoretically flexible approach to analysing qualitative data; and can provide a rich and detailed yet complex account of data. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest three positions which govern the use of Thematic Analysis. The first being the essentialist or realist method which reports experiences, meanings and the reality of participants; the Constructionist method, which examines the ways in which events, realities, meanings, experiences and so on are the effects of a range of discourses operating within society; and finally, the contextualist method, which sits between the two poles of essentialism and constructionism and characterised by theories such as critical realism, which acknowledge the ways individuals make meaning of their experience and in turn the ways the broader social context impinges on those meanings while retaining focus on the material and other limits of reality.

The choice of approach to analysis was also driven by the theoretical positon regarding the aims of analysis as well as to utilise an approach to analysis that reflects reality. The theoretical position for this research regarding thematic analysis lies with the former, the essentialist or realist approach. What follows is a summary of the stages involved in the approach to analysis of data. A detailed account of this including diagrams which outline the processes is provided in Appendix H.

Before the six stages in the approach to analysis are outlined, a number of useful terms need to be defined:

- Data corpus- this refers to all data collected for the particular research project.
- Data set- refers to all data from the corpus that is being used for a particular analysis. This can include a specific piece or selection of data, for example, interviews or observations. Data sets can also be identified by a particular analytic interest in some topic in the data and the data set then becomes all instances in the corpus where the topic is referred.
- Data item refers to each individual piece of data collected, which together make up the data set or corpus.
- Data extract refers to an individual coded chunk of data identified within and extracted from a data item (taken from Braun and Clarke, 2006).

The second stage of analysis was to decide on the approach to coding, the inductive or bottom up way or a theoretical or deductive or top down way. The inductive approach means the themes identified are strongly linked to the data themselves (Patton, 1990). In this approach, the data has been collected specifically for the research and themes identified may bear little relation to the specific questions that were asked of participants nor are they driven by the researcher's theoretical interest in the area or topic. Inductive analysis is therefore coding the data without trying to fit it into a pre-existing coding frame, or the researcher's analytic preconceptions. However, as Braun and Clarke (2006) state, researchers cannot free themselves of their theoretical and epistemological commitments and data are not coded in an epistemological vacuum. They would also be driven by the researcher's theoretical interest in the topic. This was also the case with the current researcher as when coding began, the researcher had already read the interview transcript several times and had approached the process with some initial ideas.

In contrast, theoretical thematic analysis is driven by the researcher's theoretical or analytical interest in the area. This form provides less rich description of the data and a more detailed analysis of some aspect of the data. The process of coding for this research followed an inductive approach as themes were identified and linked to the data. The following outlines the six stages followed in analysing data and presenting the final report. It is essential to highlight, as stated by Braun and Clarke (2006), here that analysis is not a linear process but more recursive where there was movement back and forth where needed.

Stage 1: familiarising oneself with the data.

The first stage of analysis started with familiarising oneself with the data. The data set used in the current example of analysis is taken from an interview with one of the participants. Transcribing of data became an excellent starting point for the researcher and was a key phase of data analysis within interpretive qualitative methodology (Bird, 2005). It also allowed the researcher to create meaning, rather than simply engage in a mechanical act of putting spoken sounds on paper (Lapadat and Lindsay, 1999). This stage involved reading, re-reading and jotting down any initial ideas, which came to mind. As all data was collated by the researcher, analysis began with some initial analytic interests or thoughts; in this case, 'what do students gain from Th. Inc.?' and 'What do they like about the room?' The act of immersing oneself in the data at this stage led to the emergence of some meaning and early patterns. One data set was read through at least three times to get a feel of students' experiences. The research area was used to guide the induction of patterns in the data. An initial example of this process is outlined in the table below:

Data extract	**Initial ideas for coding to what students like about the room.**
"All they do is just nag you but like when you're in the Th. Inc. Room, you get to chill out and speak about whatever but like in lessons, they just they are always at you and it's like- shut up." Researcher: why do you think they asked you to go into the Th. Inc. Room? "Because for a bit of time out." Researcher: why do you need time out? "Because my mum keeps nagging me I think that's it anyway."	Teachers are nag. The room is relaxing. Needs time out/ away from teachers.
	Narrative script: She perceives teachers and mother as a problem but the room chills her out.

Stage 2: generating initial codes.

Having familiarised oneself with the data and generated an initial list of ideas about what is interesting in the data, the next stage involved producing initial codes from the data set. This took the form of coding interesting features of the data in a systematic way across the **entire data** set as well as collating data that was perceived to be relevant to each code and matching these with specific codes. During this second stage, a few initial themes were identified at the semantic or explicit level (explained above); and based on how interesting they appeared to be, within the context of the data set and with the research area in mind. Initial codes were data driven, meaning, they emerged from with the data and so were inductive rather than deductive. At this stage, the researcher worked systematically through the entire data set paying particular attention to each data item that was identified, identifying interesting aspects in the data items that could form the basis of repeated patterns or themes across the data set (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Notes were written onto texts analysing and colour coded to identify patterns. As interviews were extensive and data was not always limited to one research area, segments of data that related to the research area dealt with were colour coded for ease of reference. All actual data extracts were coded and collated within each code. An example of this stage can be seen in the table below:

Data extract	Initial ideas for coding linked to value of room	Initial themes/semantic level.
"All they do is just nag (how do students react to teachers' nagging?) You but like when you're in the Th. Inc. Room, you get to chill out and speak about whatever but like in lessons, they just they are always at you and it's like- shut up." Researcher: why do you think they asked you to go into the Th. Inc. Room? "Because for a bit of time out." Researcher: why do you need time out? "Because my mum keeps nagging me I think that's it anyway."	Teachers are nag. The room is relaxing. (What is the value of chilling out?) Needs time out/ away from teachers. Mother seen as a problem. Liking for a subject Teachers seen as a problem- "always at you," suggests relationship not a pleasant one. Unpleasant quality.	Room is possibly calming. Room gives her a break.
"I like Art it's the teachers though they're just always at you. If I could have a room by myself where I could do all my work, I probably would but it's, they are just so annoying." Researcher: what do they do when you say they nag you?	Believes she is blamed for everything.	
	Narrative script: **She likes some subjects but the relationship with some teachers is a problem. She believes she is blamed unfairly. This could mean the classroom is not a pleasant place. Yet she is able to 'chill out' in the (Th. Inc. Room).**	

Stage 3: collating initial codes into themes.

Having coded an entire data set and generated a few initial themes from the data set, the next stage involved collating codes into potential themes and gathering all data relevant to match each theme. As this was an early stage in the analysis, collating codes was limited to one data set. However, as analysis progressed, the researcher was able to search for codes and themes across data sets in relation to specific research questions. Having coded all data across the data set, an extensive list of multiple codes was produced. Work then progressed to refocusing the analysis to the level of themes by organising codes into themes. Analysis also focused on reviewing and analysing codes to consider how the extensive list could be collapsed into an overarching theme. The researcher also examined the relationships between codes, between themes to ensure they all matched with the research area/question and supported the idea of Th. Inc. and its impact on students. In some cases, initial codes went on to form themes and sub-themes, while those that did not belong were rejected. This stage resulted in a clear collection of themes, sub themes and extracts of data coded in relation to them.

At this stage, there is a need to clarify what constitutes a theme. Bruan and Clarke (2006) state that a theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set. It must capture something important in relation to the overall research question and not dependent on quantifiable measures. During this phase of analysis, the issue centred on how will prevalence be measured? The decision was taken to count this at the level of the data item, that is, to consider whether the theme appears anywhere in each individual interview, counting in terms of the number of different speakers who articulated the theme, across the entire data set, or each individual occurrence of the theme across the entire data set (Bruan and Clarke, 2006). This also raises questions about where an instance begins and ends within an extended sequence of talk (ibid). The convention that is therefore used for representing prevalence in this analysis is, "many students, a number of students; and the majority of students.”

Another decision regarding identification of themes include the level at which themes are identified within data sets. Again, Braun and Clarke (2006) state using a semantic approach allows us to identify themes within the explicit or surface meanings of the data. The analyst, in this case, does not look for anything beyond what the participant has said or what has been written. Ideally, the analytic process involves a progression from description, where the data have simply been organized to show patterns in semantic content, and summarized, to interpretation, where there is an attempt to theorize the significance of the patterns and their broader meanings and implications (Patton, 1990), often in relation to previous literature (for an excellent example of this, see Frith and Gleeson, 2004). An example of this stage in the analysis process can be seen in the table below:

Data extracts	**Initial ideas for coding linked to value of room.**	**Initial themes/semantic level.**
"All they do is just nag you …but like in lessons, they just they are always at you and it's like- shut up." "I like Art it's the teachers though they're just always at you. If I could have a room by myself where I could do all my work, I probably would but it's, they are just so annoying." "Because my mum keeps nagging me I think that's it anyway." Researcher: what do they do when you say they nag you? "They're just always like, if you forget to do something or if you don't understand something they are like on and on and I'm always the person who gets blamed for everything." Researcher: so miss doesn't give you a task to do in the Th. Inc. Room? She doesn't set you targets? "No because she asks me what I want to do. If she doesn't ask me then I won't do it and then the second time but she asks me what I want to do instead of I want you to do this and you have to do this and you have to do the lettering. I don't like stuff like that." "…And like when I'm, because in lessons I sometimes get nervous and stuff like last year I had History and I didn't really like it, so obviously I got took out and so instead of History I did (Th. Inc. Room)." Researcher: and you think you needed a lot of time out in school? "Yeah because it could be dead stressful all the time."	Teachers are nag. Liking for a subject Teachers seen as a problem- "always at you," suggests relationship not a pleasant one. Unpleasant quality. Perception that teachers attack her. Mother seen as a problem. (An example of a rejected theme as of little value to the research area/question). Believes she is blamed for everything. (Explore how student feels about being wrongfully blamed). What does this result in? Given a choice. Does not like orders (maybe student perceives this as contradictory to a healthy student/teacher relationship. Does not respect her rights as an individual). Likes to be given a choice. Lessons/learning makes him nervous. Taken out of a subject that generates stress.	Negative relationship with teachers. Negative teacher student/relationship. This is of little relevance to issue. Negative relationship with mother. Perception she is targeted by teacher. Th. Inc. promotes choice/independence. Does not appreciate autocratic behaviour. Treated with respect/democratic. Classroom relationship autocratic. Classrooms are seen to be highly stressful environment where relationships with teachers appear to be very antagonistic.

Data extract 2		
"But like when you're in the (Th. Inc. Room) you get to chill out and speak about whatever." Researcher: why do you think they asked you to go into the (Th. Inc. Room)? "Because for a bit of time out." Researcher: she gives you the choice and you decide. So you set the tone and pace and stuff like that. "And I like deciding. I don't like anyone deciding for me." "I get time out to like, relax from lessons." "It was just a place I could go to have time out and stuff."	He can chill out in the (Th. Inc. Room). He can speak about things. She gets time out/ time away from the stressful situations.	(Th. Inc. Room) provides opportunities for relaxation. Th. Inc. provides freedom to speak. (Th. Inc. Room) provides a time away. (Th. Inc. Room) provides time away, a break from stressful situations in school.
		Narrative scripts School and in particular, classrooms appear to produce stressful conditions. In particular, the nature of the relationship with some teachers appears to be more autocratic than democratic. The (Th. Inc. Room) appears to provide a form of time out or time away for most students. It also appears to be a place where they feel free to discuss anything.

Stage 4 and 5: Reviewing, defining and naming themes.

This stage included reviewing or refining themes as well as checking if themes work in relation to the coded extracts level 1 and the entire data set level 2. Insufficient data to support specific themes were discarded while others were collapsed into more relevant themes. Other themes were broken down into separate themes. Data within themes were matched to ensure they cohered together meaningfully as well as reviewing the coded extracts. All collated extracts used to support each theme were carefully reviewed to ensure they matched and formed a coherent pattern. Some data extracts fit nicely within themes and so analysis progressed to the second level, which involved working through a similar process but in relation to the entire data set. At this level, consideration was also given to the validity of individual themes in relation to the data set and also considering whether the thematic map accurately reflects the meanings evident in the data set as a whole. In other words, do the themes and data extracts accurately reflect what is being said by the candidate within the data set? To determine this, the researcher referred to the theoretical/analytical approach, this being an essentialist or realist approach aimed at reporting the experiences, meanings and the reality of participants. The researcher was also guided by two questions; do these themes reflect the data set? Do these themes reflect the experiences and reality of participants within the context under research? Any additional data that had been missed was also coded as well as attempts to re-read and re-code any missing data. Additional themes were identified at this stage, coded and matched to determine whether they fit into the data set. There was also a better understanding of different themes, how they fit together and the story they tell about the data.

Stage 5 involved ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, (adding and taking out data items that did not match within a particular data set and/or theme); and refining the overall story the analysis tells. Clearer definitions were also generated and names for each theme. Refining and defining includes identifying the essence of what the theme is about, determining what it said about the impact of Th. Inc. and attempts to determine what aspect of the data each theme captures. This was done by revisiting collated data extracts and organising them into a coherent and internally consistent account with accompanying narrative to identify what is of particular interest and why. For each theme, a detailed analysis was written as well as a story that it tells and considers how it fits into the broader overall story that the data is telling in relation to the Research Question. Sub themes were also identified which demonstrated the hierarchy of meaning within the data as well as gave structure to a large and complex theme. An example of the analysis at this stage can be seen in the table provided below:

Data extracts	**Initial ideas for coding linked to value of room.**	**Initial themes/semantic level.**	**Re-defined themes**
“All they do is just nag you …like in lessons, they just they are always at you and it’s like- shut up.” “I like Art it’s the teachers though they’re just always at you.” “If I could have a room by myself where I could do all my work, I probably would but it’s, they are just so annoying.” Researcher: what do they do when you say they nag you? “They’re just always like, if you forget to do something or if you don’t understand something they are like on and on and I’m always the person who gets blamed for everything.” “Like the teachers tell me what to do like you need to get on with your work right I’m getting really angry now; and I feel like hitting them.” Researcher: so miss doesn’t give you a task to do in the Th. Inc. Room? She doesn’t set you targets? “No because she asks me what I want to do. If she doesn’t ask me then I won’t do it and then the second time but she asks me what I want to do instead of I want you to do this and you have to do this and you have to do the lettering. I don’t like stuff like that.” “And like when I’m, because in lessons I sometimes get nervous and stuff.” “Yeah because it could be dead stressful all the time.” “When you are in lessons, you’re always dead noisy and stressed.”	Teachers are nag. Liking for a subject Teachers seen as a problem- “always at you,” suggests relationship not a pleasant one. Unpleasant quality. Perception that teachers attack her. Don’t want to be there. Believes she is blamed for everything. Given a choice. Does not like orders. Likes to be given a choice. Lessons/learning makes him nervous. Classrooms are stressful.	Initial themes/semantic level. Negative relationship with teachers. Negative teacher student/relationship. Feeling to be removed/does not belong. Targeted by teacher. Th. Inc. promotes choice/independence. Does not appreciate autocratic behaviour. Treated with respect/democratic. Classroom relationship autocratic. Child led learning versus the autocratic style in classrooms. Classrooms are seen to be highly stressful environment where relationships with teachers appear to be very antagonistic.	Teacher/student relationship is characterised by antagonism. Alienation Singled out- possibly victimised. Within classrooms, some students perceive they are unfairly targeted. Th. Inc. promotes independence. The relationship is one of mutual respect.

Stage 6: producing the report.

The final stage of the analysis involved producing the report, the story of the data in a way that convinces the reader of the merit and validity of the analysis; with a concise, coherent logical non repetitive and interesting account of the story the data tells across my themes written. Sufficient evidence of the themes within data and sufficient extracts are provided to demonstrate the prevalence of the theme. Extracts within the analytic narrative also compellingly illustrate the story being told about the data and the analytic narrative goes beyond description of the data and makes an argument in relation to the Research Questions (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Questions that guided analysis include:

- What does this theme mean?
- What are the assumptions underpinning it?
- What are the implications of this theme?
- What conditions are likely to give rise to it?
- Why do students talk about Th. Inc. in this way?
- What overall story do different themes reveal about the topic?

Data extract 2			
Data extract 2 “But like when you’re in the (Th. Inc. Room), you get to chill out and speak about whatever.” “I just feel like I don’t really have to restrain on being myself and I can just do what I want to.” “Because for a bit of time out.” “Well it gives me a time out because it’s so hectic and sloven, you know school.” “And I like deciding. I don’t like anyone deciding for me.” “I get time out to like, relax from lessons.” “It was just a place I could go to have time out and stuff.” “I hate it, I just want to leave.”	He can chill out in the (Th. Inc. Room). He can speak about things. She gets time out/ time away from the stressful situations. Wants to be given some measure of choice. Need for a place to get away.	(Th. Inc. Room) provides opportunities for relaxation and freedom to speak. (Th. Inc. Room) provides a time away/ haven. (Th. Inc. Room) provides time away, a break from stressful situations in school. Sense of independence develops. Time out or a space to relax needed.	Th. Inc. provides opportunities to relax. Th. Inc. provides students with a measure of respite Personal freedom Individuality. Student has developed a sense of independence/responsibility.
			Narrative script: School and in particular, classrooms appear to produce stressful conditions. In particular, the nature of the relationship with some teachers appears to be more autocratic than democratic. The Th. Inc. Room appears to provide a form of time out or time away for most students. It also appears to be a place where they feel free to discuss anything.

Appendix P

Notes on Cooley's Concept of the Looking Glass Self
Nathan Rousseau, Self, Symbols & Society, Rowman & Littlefield, 2002.
Charles Horton Cooley: Concept of the Looking Glass Self

Introduction

Cooley was influenced by approaches such as Pragmatism and Darwinism. Even though Cooley was influenced by Weber, Cooley's examination was more psychological than Weber's. Cooley's most significant contribution was his idea of the "looking-glass-self." The concept of the looking glass self demonstrates that self-relation, or how one views oneself is not a solitary phenomenon, but rather includes others. Cooley states that society and individuals do not denote separable phenomena, but are simply collective and distributive aspects of the same thing. Developmentally, Cooley theorizes that human beings possess an inherent tendency to reach out, interact, or socialize with those people and objects that surround them.

From the beginning and throughout one's life, the differentiated self is always in reference to a common ground. Whether it is in terms of defining oneself as distinct from others, noting differences of opinions, or whether one is harbouring a secret place or project, all of these significant instances of differentiation include a shared foundation. Cooley observes that this bond is so strong that only the imaginative student, in his best hours, can really free himself – and that only in some respects – from the limitations of his time…. We can scarcely rid ourselves of the impression that the way of life we are used to is the normal. From this, Cooley suggests that self-feeling and social feeling must be harmonized and made to go abreast. Since self-feeling and social feeling are two sides of the same phenomenon, then personal freedom is tied to the relations that comprise society. Cooley's comment about harmonizing self-feeling with social feeling is not intended to suggest that people should lose themselves in society, but rather that they should examine responsibly the effects of their actions on others.

Human Nature and Social Order

A separate individual is an abstraction unknown to experience, and so likewise is society when regarded as something apart from individuals. The real human life, which may be considered either in an individual aspect or in a social aspect, is always both individual and general. In other words, society and individuals do not denote separable phenomena, but are simply collective and distributive aspects of the same thing.

According to Cooley, the idea that persons make society would be generally admitted as a matter of course, but that society makes persons would strike many as a startling notion, though I know of no good reason for looking upon the distributive aspect of life as more primary or causative than the collective aspect. The view that Cooley regards as sound is that individuality is neither prior in time nor lower in rank than sociality; but that the two have always existed side by side as complementary aspects of the same thing, and that the line of progress is from a lower to a higher type of both, not from one to the other.

The question often asked is whether the individual is free or a mere piece of society. For Cooley, he is free, but it is an organic freedom, which he works out in cooperation with others, not a freedom to do things independently of society. It is teamwork. He has the freedom to function in his own way, like the quarterback, but, in one way or another, he has to play the game as life brings him into it. There appears to be a general impression that children are far more subject to control through suggestion or mechanical imitation that grown-up people. However, on the other hand, they have less of the mechanical subjection to habit that goes with a settled character.

The fact is, for Cooley, that the main current of our thought is made up of impulses absorbed without deliberate choice from the life about us, or else arising from hereditary instinct, or from habit; while the function of higher thought and of will is to organize and apply these impulses.

The chief reason why popular attention should fix itself upon voluntary thought and action, and tend to overlook the involuntary, is that choice is acutely conscious and so must from its very nature, be the focus of introspective thought. Because he is an individual, a specialized, contending bit of psychical force, a man very naturally holds his will in its individual aspect to be of supreme moment.

Our particular minds or wills are members of a slowly growing whole, and at any given moment are limited in scope by the state of the whole, and especially of those parts of the whole with which they are in most active contact. Our thought is never isolated, but always some sort of a response to the influences around us so that we can hardly have thoughts that are not in some way aroused by communication.

National habits and sentiments so completely envelop us that we are for the most part unaware of them. The more thoroughly American a man is the less he can perceive Americanism. He will embody it, all he does, or writes, will be full of it; but he can never truly see it, simply because he has no exterior point of view from which to look at it. Once again, only the imaginative student, in his best hours, can really free himself and that only in some respects from the limitations of his time and see things from a height. We can scarcely rid ourselves of the impression that the way of life we are used to is the normal, and that other ways are eccentric.

It is by intercourse with others that we expand our inner experience. In other words, the personal idea consists at first and in all later development, of a sensuous element or symbol with which is connected a more or less complex body of thought and sentiment; the whole social in genesis, formed by a series of communication.

Opposition between one's self and someone else is also a very real thing; but this opposition, instead of coming from a separateness like that of material bodies, is, on the contrary, dependent upon a measure of community between one's self and the disturbing other, so that the hostility between one's self and a social person may always be described as hostile sympathy. The main thing here is to note that personal opposition does not involve mechanical separateness, but arises from the emphasis of inconsistent elements in ideas having much in common.

The emotion or feeling of self may be regarded as instinctive, and was doubtless evolved in connection with its important function in stimulating and unifying the special activities of individuals. It seems to exist in a vague though vigorous form at the birth of each individual, and like other instinctive ideas or germs of ideas, to be defined and developed by experience, becoming associated, or rather incorporated, with muscular, visual, and other sensations, with perceptions, apperceptions, and conceptions of every degree of complexity and of infinite variety of content, and especially with personal ideas.

The first definite thought that a child associates with self-feeling are probably those of his earliest endeavours to control visible objects – his limbs, his playthings, his bottle, and the like. Then, he attempts to control the actions of the persons about him and so his circle of power and of self-feeling widens without interruption to the most complex of objects of mature ambition. An important statement from Cooley is that where there is no communication there can be no nomenclature and no developed thought.

In a very large and interesting class of cases the social reference takes the form of a somewhat definite imagination of how one's self – that is any idea he appropriates – appears in a particular mind, and the kind of self-feeling one has is determined by the attitude toward this attributed to that other mind. A social self of this sort might be called the reflected or looking glass self:

1) Each to each a looking glass – Reflects the other that doth pass.

As we see our face, figure, and dress in the glass, and are interested in them because they are ours, and pleased or otherwise with them according as they do or do not answer to what we should like them to be; so in imagination we perceive in another's mind some thought of our appearance, manners, aims, deeds, character, friends, and so on, and are variously affected by it.

A self-idea of this sort seems to have three principle elements:

1) The imagination of our appearance to the other person
2) The imagination of his judgment of that appearance
3) Some sort of self-feeling such as pride or mortification.

The comparison with a looking glass hardly suggests the second element, the imagined judgment, which is quite essential. The thing that moves us to pride or shame is not the mere mechanical reflection of ourselves, but an imputed sentiment, the imagined effect of this reflection upon another's mind. For example, we are ashamed to seem evasive in the presence of a straightforward man, cowardly in the presence of a brave one, gross in the eyes of a refined one, and so on. We always imagine and in imagining share the judgments of the other man.

The process by which self-feeling of the looking glass sort develops in children may be followed without much difficulty. Studying the movements of others as closely as they do they soon see a connection between their own acts and changes in those movements; that is, they perceive their own influence or power over persons. The young performer soon learns to be different things to different people, showing that he begins to apprehend personality and to foresee its operation.

According to Cooley, persons of great ambitions, or of peculiar aims of any sort, lie open to disorders of self-feeling because they necessarily build up in their minds a self-image which no ordinary social environment can understand or corroborate, and which must be maintained by hardening themselves against immediate influences, enduring or repressing the pains of present depreciation, and cultivating in imagination the approval of some higher tribunal. If the man succeeds in becoming indifferent to the opinions of his neighbours he runs into another danger, that of a distorted and extravagant self of the pride sort, since by the very process of gaining independence and immunity from the stings of depreciation and misunderstanding, he has perhaps lost that wholesome deference to some social tribunal.

The trouble with our industrial relations is not the mere extent of competition, but the partial lack of established laws, rules, and customs, to determine what is right and fair in it. This partial lack of standards is connected with the rapid changes in industry and industrial relations among men, with which the development of law and moral criteria has by no means kept pace. Hence, there arises great uncertainty as to what some persons and classes may rightly and fairly require of other persons and classes, and this uncertainty lets loose angry imaginations. An ideal social system would be on in which the work of individuals in each occupation, the work of occupations in relation to one another, that of class in relation to class and of nation in relation to nation, should be motivated by a desire to excel, this desire being controlled and subordinated by allegiance to common social ideals.

This idea of freedom is quite in accord with a general, though vague, sentiment among us: it is an idea of fair play, of giving everyone a chance; and nothing arouses more general and active indignation among us people than the belief that someone or some class is not getting a fair chance. There seems, however, to be too great complacency in the way in which the present state of things is interpreted, a tendency to assume that freedom has been achieved once and for all by the Declaration of Independence and popular suffrage, and that little remains by to let each person realize the general blessing to the best of his ability. It is well to recognize that the freedom which we nominally worship is never more than partly achieved, and is everyday threatened by new encroachments, that the right to vote is only one phase of it, and possibly, under present conditions, not the most important phase, and that we can maintain and increase it only by a sober and determined application of our best thought and endeavour.

(Rousseau, 2002)

Appendix Q

Notes on George Herbert Mead's Theory of the social self.

Social Self Theory

George Herbert Mead, a sociologist from the late 1800s, is well known for his **theory of the social self**, which includes the concepts of 'self,' 'me,' and 'I.' In this lesson, we will explore Mead's theory and gain a better understanding of what is meant by the terms 'me' and 'I.' We will also discuss the concept, derived out of Mead's work, of the looking-glass self.

Mead's work focuses on the way in which the self is developed. Mead's **theory of the social self** is based on the perspective that the self emerges from social interactions, such as observing and interacting with others, responding to others' opinions about oneself, and internalizing external opinions and internal feelings about oneself. The social aspect of self is an important distinction because other sociologists and psychologists of Mead's time felt that the self was based on biological factors and inherited traits. According to Mead, the self is not there from birth, but it is developed over time from social experiences and activities.

Development of Self

According to Mead, three activities develop the self: language, play, and games.

Language develops self by allowing individuals to respond to each other through symbols, gestures, words, and sounds. Language conveys others' attitudes and opinions toward a subject or the person. Emotions, such as anger, happiness, and confusion, are conveyed through language.

Play develops self by allowing individuals to take on different roles, pretend, and express expectation of others. Play develops one's self-consciousness through role-playing. During role-play, a person is able to internalize the perspective of others and develop an understanding of how others feel about themselves and others in a variety of social situations.

Games develop self by allowing individuals to understand and adhere to the rules of the activity. Self is developed by understanding that there are rules in which one must abide by in order to win the game or be successful at an activity.

Two Sides of Self: Me & I

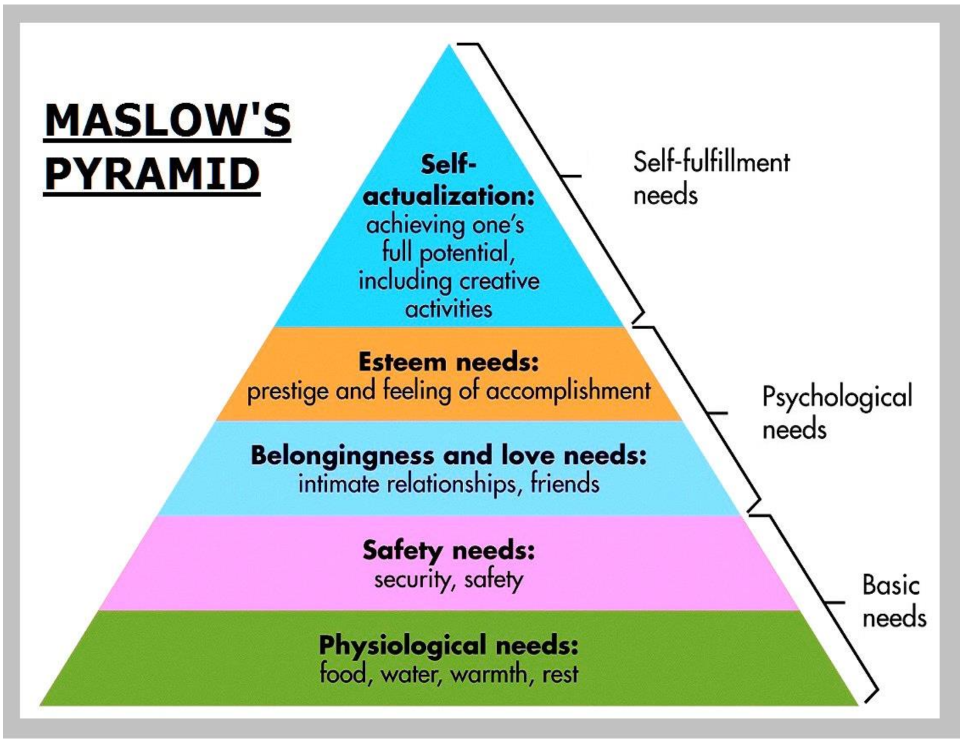
According to Mead's theory, the self has two sides or phases: 'me' and 'I.' The **'me'** is considered the socialized aspect of the individual. The 'me' represents learned behaviors, attitudes, and expectations of others and of society. This is sometimes referred to as the generalized other. The 'me' is considered a phase of the self that is in the past. The 'me' has been developed by the knowledge of society and social interactions that the individual has gained.

The **'I'**, therefore, can be considered the present and future phase of the self. The 'I' represents the individual's identity based on response to the 'me.' The 'I' says, 'Okay. Society says I should behave and socially interact one way, and I think I should act the same (or perhaps different),' and that notion becomes self.

The 'me' and the 'I' have a didactic relationship, like a system of checks and balances. The 'me' exercises societal control over one's self. The 'me' is what prevents someone from breaking the rules or boundaries of societal expectations. The 'I' allows the individual to still express creativity and individualism and understand when to possibly bend and stretch the rules that govern social interactions. The 'I' and the 'me' make up the self.

Appendix R
Notes and image on Maslow's Theory of motivation.

Maslow's (1943, 1954) *hierarchy of needs* is a motivational theory in psychology comprising a five tier model of human needs, often depicted as hierarchical levels within a pyramid. Maslow stated that people are motivated to achieve certain needs and that some needs take precedence over others. Our most basic need is for physical survival, and this will be the first thing that motivates our behavior. Once that level is fulfilled the next level up is what motivates us, and so on.


MASLOW'S PYRAMID
Self-actualization: achieving one's full potential, including creative activities
Esteem needs: prestige and feeling of accomplishment
Belongingness and love needs: intimate relationships, friends
Safety needs: security, safety
Physiological needs: food, water, warmth, rest
Self-fulfillment needs
Psychological needs
Basic needs

(Maslow, 1943)

This five stage model can be divided into deficiency needs and growth needs. The first four levels are often referred to as deficiency needs (*D-needs*), and the top level is known as growth or being needs (*B-needs*).

The deficiency needs are said to motivate people when they are unmet. Also, the need to fulfil such needs will become stronger the longer the duration they are denied. For example, the longer a person goes without food, the hungrier they will become.

One must satisfy lower level deficit needs before progressing on to meet higher level growth needs. When a deficit need has been satisfied it will go away, and our activities become habitually directed towards meeting the next set of needs that we have yet to satisfy. These then become our salient needs. However, growth needs continue to be felt and may even become stronger once they have been engaged. Once these growth needs have been reasonably satisfied, one may be able to reach the highest level called self-actualization.

Every person is capable and has the desire to move up the hierarchy toward a level of self-actualization. Unfortunately, progress is often disrupted by a failure to meet lower level needs. Life experiences, including divorce and loss of a job may cause an individual to fluctuate between levels of the hierarchy. Therefore, not everyone will move through the hierarchy in a uni-directional manner but may move back and forth between the different types of needs.

Maslow noted only one in a hundred people become fully self-actualized because our society rewards motivation primarily based on esteem, love and other social needs.

The original hierarchy of needs five-stage model includes:

1. Biological and Physiological needs - air, food, drink, shelter, warmth, sex, sleep.

2. Safety needs - protection from elements, security, order, law, stability, freedom from fear.

3. Love and belongingness needs - friendship, intimacy, trust and acceptance, receiving and giving affection and love. Affiliating, being part of a group (family, friends, work).

4. Esteem needs - achievement, mastery, independence, status, dominance, prestige, self-respect, respect from others.

5. Self-Actualization needs - realizing personal potential, self-fulfillment, seeking personal growth and peak experiences.

List of Tables

Table 1- number of EBD special schools and PRUs and numbers on roll in January 1998. Source: Visser, J. (2003). A study of children and young people who present challenging behaviour. Birmingham: The University of Birmingham.

Table 2- Estimates of prevalence of serious EBD mental health problems. Source: Visser, J. (2003). A study of children and young people who present challenging behaviour. Birmingham: The University of Birmingham.

Table 3- Number of students on the school’s SEN register for the academic year 2011-2012 with areas of SEN. Source- schools Learning Support Department.