STORIES GIRLS TELL: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY ABOUT GIRLS IN ALTERNATIVE PROVISION

by

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Abstract

Successive governments in England have sought to reduce the number of young people who are being educated in alternative provision settings. This has had limited success, as numbers have continued to rise, particularly among secondary school aged pupils. Government data and some research has presented young people who attend alternative provision settings as if they are a homogenous group, with little consideration for their distinctive characteristics. Girls are less likely to attend alternative provision than boys, however, the number of girls attending alternative provision is rising, yet there is a lack of research that explores their experiences once they have left mainstream education. In this study, participants were recruited from two educational alternative provision settings and semi-structured interviews were used to explore the girls' stories. Narrative inquiry was used to analyse the meaning-making that the girls made about their experiences of being in alternative provision. The analysis of their stories found that the reasons for the girls being moved to alternative provision, was related to a set of complex factors, which remained unexplored by staff in their schools. This was due to lack of resources and school policies that were inflexible, contributing to the vulnerability of the girls. Schools may not always be aware of the challenges that young people face, at school and home, but the findings in this research can be used to inform educationalists' practice and the systems in which they operate.

DEDICATION

The Lord is my Strength and My Song…

Isaiah 12:2

To my foster parents who were the ‘nurture’ for my ‘nature’

To Stewart, who believed in me and has been a constant source of encouragement.

To my children.

To the ‘Crew’ at Saltley – who believed that I could do it (and so can you).

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Abbreviations

AP	Alternative Provision
DBS	Disclosure Barring Service
DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead
EPS	Educational Psychology Services
LA	Local Authority
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
PEX	Permanent Exclusion
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
SEMH	Social, Emotional and Mental Health
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
YP	Young People

Stories Girls Tell: A Narrative Inquiry about Girls in Alternative Provision

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1 Introduction

1.1 Research Background

This research was completed during my final year as a trainee educational psychologist, while on placement at an Educational Psychology Service (EPS) in the West Midlands. My interest in this area of research is rooted in my feminine identity and professional experiences of working in an inner-city secondary school. My previous roles included learning mentor, pastoral manager, and designated safeguarding lead (DSL) for mental health. The DSL for Mental Health role was introduced by the Department Of Health and Department For Education (2017) to address poor mental health among young people (YP) and its associated impact on their education and social development. My roles in education have given me insight into school disciplinary procedures that were applied inconsistently to girls, resulting in an observable increase over time of girls being moved to other mainstream or alternative school settings. Furthermore, my personal experience of exclusionary practise, is that a family member is a proprietor of an independent school and over time, I have noticed increasing numbers of girls being educated at the setting.

1.2 Managing Behaviour in Schools

Despite many initiatives the behaviour of students in English schools continues to be of interest to educationalists, policymakers, and the media, with disruptive behaviours being the focus (Adams, 2021; Bennett, 2017; Bryant et al., 2018; De Friend et al., 2020; DfE, 2018a;

The Independent, 2010). This enduring interest has led to schools coming under increased pressures, to manage the disruptive behaviours of students in the classroom (Russell & Thomson, 2011). Schools have many tools at their disposal to manage poor student behaviour, ranging from a temporary removal from the classroom, suspension or what many view as more harmful to YPs' outcomes, being educated away from a mainstream school setting or permanent exclusion (De Friend et al., 2020). The Department for Education (2017) states that the latter should only be used when "all other interventions have failed" and must be "lawful, reasonable and fair". However, government statistics suggest that school exclusions in its many forms has been rising incrementally in English schools since 2013/14 (Timpson, 2019).

One strategy used by schools to help manage behaviour that they find difficult, is the use of alternative provision (AP). However, research about the impact on YP who attend AP is limited and most has been government commissioned (Ofsted, 2016). Furthermore, the existing literature tends to assume that pupils in AP are a homogenous group and is mainly focused upon boys, as they are the majority in AP. This raises the question as to how policymakers educationalists can make strategically-informed decisions without having a holistic view of the challenges that different types of pupils face (Carlile, 2009). This suggests that consideration also needs to be given to the experiences of girls who are placed in AP.

1.3 Alternative Provision

Alternative provision (AP) was introduced in 1994, in response to concerns about the outcomes of YP who were out of mainstream education (Jalali & Morgan, 2018). A House of

Commons Education Committee (2018) report stated that AP is a forgotten strand of education that is often stigmatized and is defined as:

"…education arranged by local authorities for pupils who, because of exclusion, illness, or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education; education arranged by schools for pupils on a fixed period exclusion; and pupils being directed by schools to off-site provision to improve their behaviour"

(DfE, 2013a, p. 3)

AP meets the needs of a diverse, wide-ranging student group (House of Commons Education Committee, 2018), and provision is made for these YP in a wide range of settings, including colleges, independent schools, free schools, and pupil referral units (PRUs). There has been criticism about teaching standards and the breadth of curriculum that is offered in some AP settings (De Friend et al., 2020), which has led to many LAs quality assuring the providers that they use (Birmingham City Council, 2022; Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, 2022; Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, 2022). The Office for Standards in Education Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted, 2016), who have responsibility for inspecting education settings highlighted areas of concern and made recommendations regarding improving the safeguarding and educational provision for YP in all types of AP, which can be sees in Figure 1. These recommendations are pertinent, because some YP will complete their statutory education in an AP (Taylor, 2012), following a failed reintegration strategy (Cole et al., 2019a).

Ofsted (2016) identified that a narrower curriculum was offered in most APs, compared to what would be offered in a mainstream setting. Osler and Vincent (2003) argue that because of the limited curriculum options in AP, the curricula tended to be skewed to accommodate boys' interests.

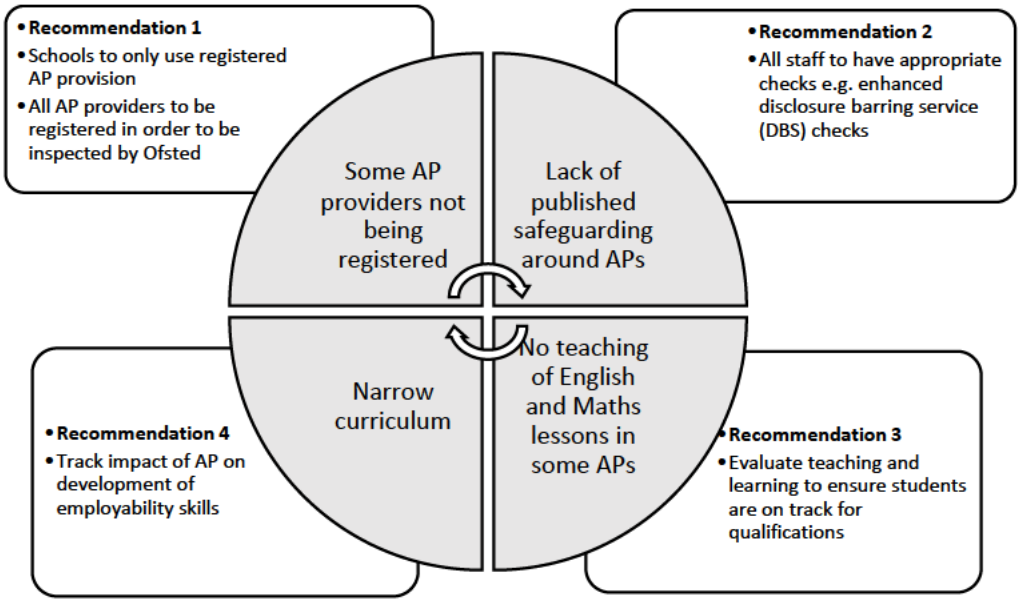

Figure 1: 3-year survey of AP recommendations adapted from Ofsted (2016)

This potentially excludes girls, who do not want to learn traditionally male-dominated subjects, and may prefer more gender-normed subjects, such as hairdressing, even if they have little interest in it (Russell & Thomson, 2011; Trotman et al., 2019).

There are many reasons why schools, predominantly, and LAs as intermediaries, negotiate placements for YP in AP, with the most common reason being a failed reintegration back to a mainstream school (Bryant et al., 2018). Direct referrals by schools to AP providers is usually to either prevent a permanent exclusion (PEX), or LAs make referrals once a young person has received a PEX (Craggs & Kelly, 2018). Placing YP in APs is seen as an

alternative way to engage YP in education, while protecting the 'rights' for others to learn (DfE, 2017a; Mills & Thomson, 2018; Unicef, 2020).

1.3.1 How do Young People become placed in Alternative Provision?

In this research, the participants have experienced some or all of the exclusionary practices in Figure 2 that can lead to a YP attending AP.

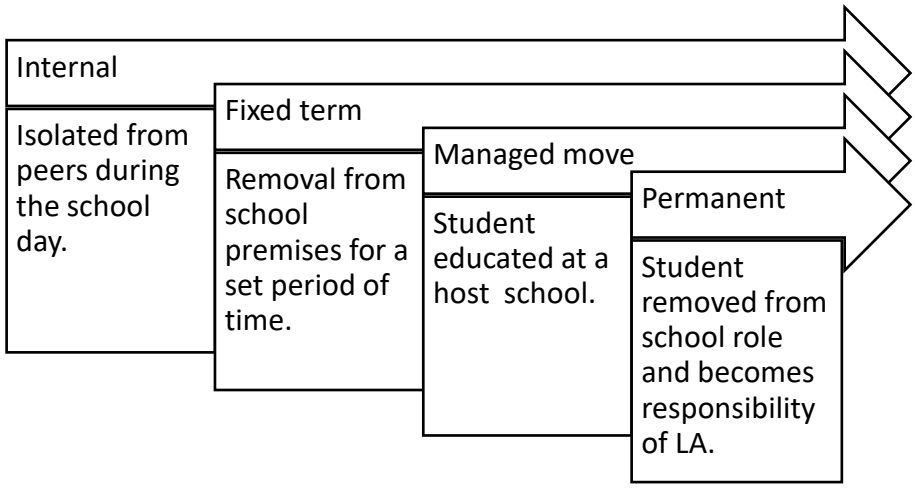

Figure 2: Different stages of exclusionary practices adapted from the DfE (2017a)

1.3.2 Internal Exclusion

Although data is collected about the number of school suspensions (fixed term exclusions) and permanent exclusions, other types of exclusion are also used for managing behaviour that are not recorded. This includes the removal of YP from the classroom to continue their learning in an internal isolation room. This is known as internal inclusion in some schools (Mills & Thomson, 2018; Tillson & Oxley, 2020), however, it is understood that it is a type of exclusion (Department for Children Schools and Families, 2009). This can be used as a punitive or supportive measure, depending on the school behavioural policy. Unlike suspensions, schools are not limited to how many times they can use internal exclusion as a

disciplinary measure, as it is not part of exclusion legislation and therefore, not recorded (Department for Children Schools and Families, 2009; Tillson & Oxley, 2020).

1.3.3 Suspensions (fixed term exclusion)

Government legislates for the two main forms of school exclusion, one is suspension – this term replaces the previous terminology of fixed-term exclusion (DfE, 2020, 2021a). A suspension can range from one to five days as a single episode, or 45 days in total over an academic year. By law, during a period of suspension, schools are required to set and mark work for the young person (DfE, 2017a). However, some studies have found that this does not always happen in practice (Gazeley, 2012; Munn et al., 2000), meaning that a young person can effectively lose up to 45 days of education due to suspensions.

1.3.4 Managed Moves

Another common type of exclusionary practice is a Managed Move. This is when a young person is educated at a host school, while remaining on their original school roll. Managed Moves are normally used for YP who are at risk of permanent exclusion and is often seen as their last chance, before the process of permanent exclusion is initiated (Cole et al., 2019a; Mills & Thomson, 2018). Managed Moves are regulated by Fair Access Panels to minimize disruption to YPs' education and to ensure that their access to education is 'lawful, reasonable and fair' (DfE, 2017a; Timpson, 2019). The Fair Access Panels does not have to consider parental/carer preferences regarding schools but it ensures that schools cannot refuse to offer a place to a child, because of previous behaviour (House of Commons Education Committee, 2018).

1.3.5 Permanent Exclusions

The second type of exclusion mentioned in legislation is a PEX (DfE, 2017a). This is when YP are removed from the school roll, meaning that the school no longer has responsibility to provide an education for them. The LA then becomes responsible for identifying an alternative education setting for them. The use of PEX is perhaps the most damaging for YP because if an alternative placement cannot be secured, studies have shown that the impact of being out of school can affect YPs' relationships, mental health, and future prospects (Ford et al., 2018; Madia et al., 2022; Power & Taylor, 2020).

Suspensions and PEX are the only legal definitions of exclusions and the DfE (2022) defines them as a temporary or permanent removal from school. However, throughout this research, the term 'exclusion' will be used interchangeably to refer to the formal and informal stages of exclusion that are shown in Figure 2. It will also refer to the psychological impact of being excluded, which relate to feelings of rejection, ostracization and deterioration of Mental Health (House of Commons Education Committee, 2018; Tejerina-Arreal et al., 2020; Thesaurus.com, 2022).

1.4 Rationale for this Research

Although previous research has established many of the challenges that some girls experience in education (Archer et al., 2007; Francis, 2005; Francis et al., 2017; Stanforth & Rose, 2020), there are very few studies that explore the experiences of girls who are educated in AP settings and those that do, do so through the lens of professionals (Bennett, 2017; Graham, White, Edwards, Potter, & Stree, 2019; Ofsted, 2016; Russell & Thomson, 2011; Taylor, 2012; Timpson, 2019; Trotman et al., 2019). The lack of scrutiny around the incremental

rises of girls being out of mainstream education and the "policing" (Carlile, 2009) of girls in the classroom, by boys and teachers, has resulted in their stories being excluded from the political and social narrative (Lloyd, 2005b).

The exclusion of YPs' voices from decision-making processes, are incompatible with Article 12 in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which states that:

"Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. This right applies at all times, for example during immigration proceedings, housing decisions or the child's day-to-day home life"

Article 12 of the UNCRC (Unicef, 2020 Article 12 Section)

The right to have their views considered has meant that children have constantly sought to find ways of participating in society (Hart, 1992), and in 1980 Roger Hart developed a model of child participation, based on an earlier model of adult participation (Arnstein, 1969). Hart's 1980 ladder of participation model has informed how YP can be included in projects/programmes (Hart, 2008), and can be seen in Figure 3. This research draws upon the conceptual framework of Hart (1980), to ensure that the YP in this research could participate. This is achieved by adhering to the ethical process of this research and is described in the methodology in Chapter 3.

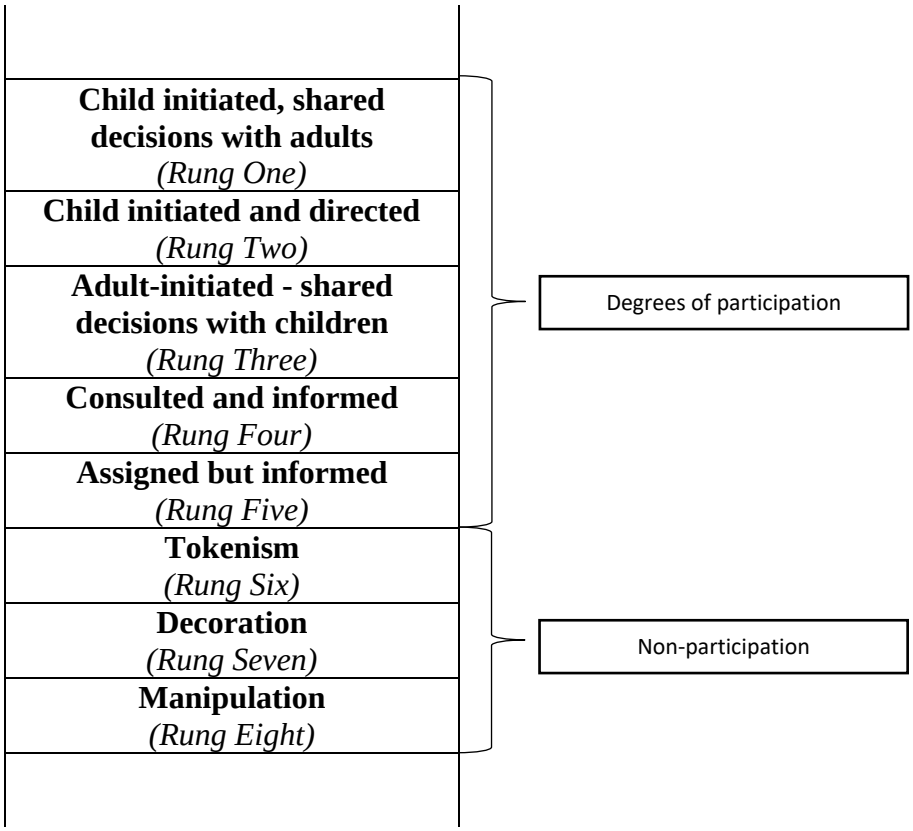

Figure 3: Hart's (1980) Ladder of Participation – Adapted from Arnstein (1969)

The aim of this research was to increase educationalists' understanding of Key Stage Four girls' experience of alternative provision, through the stories that they tell. Narrative inquiry was used to explore four case studies about the girls' stories of their journeys to AP, which are presented as "life as told" (Eastmond, 2007). Semi-structured interviews were conducted at their respective AP settings to stimulate conversations about the stories about their past, present and future. While other groups nationally and internationally, experience challenges in education (Smith, 2002), it is beyond the scope of this research. This research will focus on girls in English AP settings, to broaden the understanding of educationalists and policymakers within the English school system.

Firstly, the existing literature relating to how behaviour is managed in educational settings will be explored, before moving onto a more focused analysis of research of the impact and/or meanings that the girls ascribe to the behaviour management strategies. The methodology section will be used to outline the philosophical assumptions that underpin the research design. This will be followed by a presentation of the research findings and discussion. In the conclusion, recommendations will be made to broaden and inform educationalists' preventative and interventive responses, to girls who are at risk of being moved to an AP or who already attend one.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2 Literature Review

2.1 Background

In recent years there has been a push to understand the drivers behind the increasing numbers of YP who have, and continue to be excluded from mainstream education (Bennett, 2017; Timpson, 2019). This is because despite government guidance and school behaviour policies to respond to this, they appear to be having little effect as the numbers of YP who are being educated in AP, continue to rise (Tillson & Oxley, 2020). There are specific groups of YP which the grey literature refers to, whom policy makers are concerned about in terms of outcomes and vulnerabilities. The identified groups include those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), poor social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) and boys (House of Commons Education Committee, 2018; Thompson et al., 2021; Tillson & Oxley, 2020). This literature review focused mainly on peer-reviewed journal research, however, some of the grey literature, such as a thesis by Thacker (2017), whose research explores the stories of permanently excluded girls, does provide additional insight into the storied worlds of girls in AP.

The labelling of YP as being vulnerable raises issues around the conceptualisation of this word. Many studies are explicit in labelling YP who are being educated outside the mainstream classroom as being vulnerable (Ofsted, 2011; Taylor, 2012; Timpson, 2019). The word vulnerable is often used when ‘disadvantaged’ would perhaps better represent these YPs’ circumstances (Wakefield District Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, 2022). Vulnerability is always about the harm that is inflicted by one person onto another (Collins

Dictionary, 2022; Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2022). Therefore, the labelling of some YP as 'vulnerable' is an acknowledgment that something is being 'done to' them. It would be appropriate that thought should be given about the systems that perpetuate this, rather than situating challenges as a 'within-child' problem (House of Commons Education Committee, 2018; Pennacchia et al., 2016).

Previous studies have sought to understand the contextual behaviours that can lead to a young person being moved to an AP setting (Bennett, 2017; Caslin, 2021; DfE, 2012, 2018a; Hatton, 2018). However, a government commissioned report by Timpson (2019), found that within the groups who were disproportionately excluded, subgroups could not be extrapolated from the statistical data (DfE, 2018b). The aforementioned list of 'vulnerable' groups includes girls as part of the homogenous groups, rather than a group in their own right. Narratives concerning girls' stories of education have largely been ignored by the statisticians whose own narratives inform the data collection (Douglas, 1967; The Childrens Commissioner, 2019) and is reflected in the dearth of exploration into what happens when girls leave mainstream education.

The use of Hart's (1980) Ladder of Participation, is a useful model for critical reflection by policymakers and educationalists (Hart, 2008), to support the development of strategic policies that are informed by YPs' views. An example of how using the Ladder of Participation to inform policies can be found in a Canadian study by Funk et al. (2012), who engaged a small group (10) of marginalised YP to provide solution focused results. The outcome of the research was the successful reintegration of the YP and the development of skills that would benefit them in employment and the wider society. As it stands, the current

lack of research about girls within the social context of education, means that policy development in this area will remain incomplete (Monkman & Hoffman, 2013).

While factors that relate primarily to girls is difficult to extract from existing research, other research does highlight factors that may be relevant to girls. To date, several studies have explored some of the factors that can lead to YP being placed in AP (Malcolm, 2018; Martin-Denham, 2022; Ofsted, 2016; Tejerina-Arreal et al., 2020; Trotman et al., 2019). Although the most recorded reason is 'persistent disruptive behaviour' (DfE, 2021a) this does not explain the nuances around this reductionist narrative. One of the underlying reasons for behaviour being labelled as disruptive has been shown to be linked to difficulties with SEMH. YP with unidentified needs can often express these through their behaviour and little consideration is given to the contextual factors that influence this (DfE, 2018a). This may result in withdrawal from lesson engagement, school absence or non-compliance (Clarke et al., 2011; Rayment, 2006).

2.2 Mental Health

Difficulties with SEMH is one of many reasons why YP are excluded from school (Graham, White, Edwards, Potter, & Street, 2019) and the psychological distress that some YP experience as a result of exclusion, is contrary to the safeguarding guidance in the Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) document. The guidance states that to 'safeguard' means "…preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development" (DfE, 2021c, p. 7). Furthermore, SEMH is listed in the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice as one of the main areas of need (Department For Education & Department Of Health, 2014, p. 85). This legislation states that any plans to

support YP with SEMH difficulties must be done with whole family involvement. However, some YP have never truly given consent to being educated in AP (Gazeley, 2010; Thomson & Pennacchia, 2016) and their voices are often excluded from the discussions around planned changes to their education (Craggs & Kelly, 2018).

There is evidence of a link between poor mental health and low educational attainment (Cornaglia et al., 2015; Rothon et al., 2011) where mental health difficulties may be linked to the 'persistent disruptive behaviour' that is observed and cited as the most common reason for YP being educated in AP (DfE, 2021a). However, the figures are likely to be higher than the available data, according to a House of Commons report (House of Commons Education Committee, 2018). The view that YP are solely responsible for poor behavioural choices, that should be met with a punitive response, is embedded in policy and legislation (Bennett, 2017; Hayden, 2008; Hayden et al., 2007; Stanforth & Rose, 2020; The Childrens Commissioner, 2019). This view takes no account of the interplay between the young person and the systems around them (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This is problematic as change for YP will be slow, if policymakers ignore the environmental factors that influence individual behaviour.

YP who exhibit poor SEMH can experience all forms of exclusionary practices in schools, including being left out of friendship groups (Besag, 2007). Difficulties with SEMH are further exacerbated by being forced to leave school, leading to feelings of being ostracized (Ford et al., 2018; Tillson & Oxley, 2020). In a longitudinal Australian study, Tejerina-Arreal et al. (2020) found that girls in particular, were at risk of deteriorating mental health following exclusion, although there is a debate about the 'direction of causality' here (Tejerina-Arreal et al., 2020).

2.3 Friendships and Belonging

The limited research about girls in AP has meant that exploration about the importance of friendships for girls in male dominated environments such as AP, is missing (Russell & Thomson, 2011). Girls are expected to have closer friendships than boys and typically accommodate each other's 'shortcomings', sometimes at the expense of self (Boyd & Bee, 2013; Shaffer & Kipp, 2014). However, when relationships deteriorate this can lead to heightened tensions and muted responses between the girls (Russell & Thomson, 2011). Girls' experiences of friendships can be complex and can also include being excluded from their group of friends. The overdependence of girls on one another means that the impact of a broken relationship, through personal choice or if it is out of their control, such as being moved to AP, can have a lasting impact (McLaughlin, 2005; Osler, 2006).

Multiple factors have been identified that relate to not only girls, but all YP who have been removed from the mainstream classroom and the adverse effects that this has on them (Craggs & Kelly, 2018). Some examples are that when YP are moved to an AP setting often they not only lose their place at school but also friendship groups and with that, their sense of identity and access to positive student-teacher relationships (Allen & Bowles, 2013). Although Goodenow and Grady (1993) used American cohort, they found that a sense of belonging with an education environment could be defined as "…personally accepted, respected, included and supported" (p.61), especially by those with authority. This definition can be applied universally to YP despite the culturally different systems that they are in (Bretherton, 2016; Karcher & Lee, 2002). Where YP do not experience a sense of school belonging, a disengagement process can begin. A sense of belonging has also been identified in

government guidance as a protective factor, with an expectation that schools should create an environment to promote this (DfE, 2018a).

Peers and a sense of belonging have been found to be a factor in positive mental health (Roffey-Barentsen, 2014) and this view is supported by Erikson's (1963) psychosocial theory about the interplay between an individual and their social interactions (Marcia & Josselson, 2013). According to government data, a high number of suspensions take place at around 14 years of age (DfE, 2021a), which according to psychosocial theory is when YP are at a vulnerable stage, developmentally. It should be noted that the development of YPs' identities are being formed in social contexts where adults are also experiencing their own stages of change (Marcia & Josselson, 2013). Peers become increasingly more important for YP at this age and stage (Hogg & Vaughan, 2018; Shaffer & Kipp, 2014), which can be problematic if a young person's peer group is deemed to be what Phelan et al. (1991) refer to as "antiacademic".

If YP become part of a peer group who are viewed as 'antiacademic' and experience rejection in the context of exclusion, then they are more likely to experience emotional difficulties in later life (Dodge & Pettit, 2003). Furthermore, Ford et al. (2018) found that poor mental health and school exclusion was associated with "high levels of psychological distress" amongst excluded YP.

2.4 Views on Alternative Provision

2.4.1 Perceived Advantages of Alternative Provision

The lack of information about how girls navigate their time in AP, sits within a wider context of limited data relating to YP's experiences of AP. Research that does exist presents a mixed picture (Apland et al., 2017; House of Commons Education Committee, 2018; Mills et al., 2013; Ofsted, 2016; Taylor, 2012). The views of YP in AP, has mainly been excluded from the research or presented as second-hand information, through an adult lens (Carlile, 2009; Malcolm, 2020; Michael & Frederickson, 2013; Putwain et al., 2016; Trotman et al., 2019) or it only relates to YP's views on school exclusion. Where research has endeavoured to capture YP's narratives about being educated in AP, it gives insight into some of the positive and more challenging aspects.

Some YP in AP felt more comfortable in the smaller AP setting and reduced class sizes (Mills & Thomson, 2018; Ofsted, 2016). While not all YP wanted to be in AP, for others they began to feel positive about their experience, once they had had time to settle down (House of Commons Education Committee, 2018; McCluskey et al., 2015; Ofsted, 2016). The importance of relationships appears to be central in the YP developing a positive sense of self and feelings of successful learners (Hill, 1997). Many cited the time that staff in the AP setting had and how they felt respected by them and this was reflected in going on reward trips, which had been denied to them while in mainstream education (Michael & Frederickson, 2013).

Wellbeing was found to be a priority for the parents/carers of YP, who attended AP (Mills & Thomson, 2018) and with that, improved relationships with the adults in the setting (Malcolm,

2020). As mentioned in the introduction to AP, multiple reasons exist for why YP find themselves in AP and some are there because they have been bullied or struggled with the busyness of a mainstream school, and for them, the AP was a welcome relief (Mills & Thomson, 2018). Furthermore, Pennacchia and Thomson (2016) found that girls in one of their case studies had developed confidence, made friends and had begun to make academic progress.

2.4.2 Perceived Disadvantages of Alternative Provision

Although the breadth of the national curriculum was not taught in all settings, the YP enjoyed having a flexible curriculum that offered creative and SEMH programmes (Michael & Frederickson, 2013). However, the views of some YP was that this might impact their future prospects (House of Commons Education Committee, 2018). Some of the challenges around accessing the curriculum was still relevant as some YP thought that the lessons were not differentiated enough to enable them to complete the work or that there was not enough challenge (Michael & Frederickson, 2013). Other difficulties that were raised by the YP were missing friends, limited resources and too many other YP with behavioural difficulties, which meant that there could be tension or a lack of motivation to work (Michael & Frederickson, 2013).

Although much of the research around APs is about the gaps in their provision, schools also come in for some criticism, with Taylor (2012) and Ofsted (2011) highlighting the unethical practice of schools not assessing whether a particular AP is suitable for the YP; and not collaborating with the new setting to produce meaningful targets, using school data. This inevitably means that the AP waste valuable time in conducting their own baseline

assessments and if the statistics are correct, then the smaller number of qualified staff in AP, compared to the higher numbers of qualified teachers in mainstream school, would surely benefit from their expertise. The reluctance to engage with YP, once they attend AP may well be to do with teachers' attitudes towards them. In a study by Stanforth and Rose (2020) on school inclusion/exclusion, they found that teachers were often relieved when a disruptive YP started to attend AP. It is highly possible that some of the teachers in the research had been involved in the exclusionary practice that preceded this, which perhaps was a contributing factor towards their lack of empathy for the YP.

When parents/carers apply for secondary school places, there is an element of choice in what school they want their children to attend but when YP are placed in AP, both parents/carers and YP felt disempowered and left with no choice but to go the AP that they were allocated to them and labelling the AP as "the naughty school, did little to quell any fears that they held (Mills & Thomson, 2018).

2.4.3 Educational Attainment and Outcomes

There is a paucity of research about the long-term outcomes of YP who leave AP (Thomson & Pennacchia, 2016), which may be linked to difficulties in tracking down the YP once they leave AP (Pirrie & Macleod, 2009). The available data typically only records information for the first two terms after leaving formal education (Malcolm, 2018) and government data only records YP who are on roll in mainstream settings. The data suggests that 94% of Key Stage Four students, remained in sustained education, employment or training, while 5% of YP did not record a sustained destination and 1% had an unknown destination (DfE, 2021d). These statistics could be viewed as being reasonably good outcomes, however, they do not include

the data for some YP who were in AP. They may have been taken off the school roll and are therefore unaccounted for. This is problematic as the missing data does little to ensure that policies reflect any worrying trends for this population.

The Taylor (2012) report on improving AP, concluded that the educational outcomes for YP who are educated in AP was poor, however, this is arguably a reductionist viewpoint, as one of the positive outcomes that has been mentioned by parents/carers was increased wellbeing (Mills & Thomson, 2018). As positive wellbeing is one of Ofsted's (2019) desired outcomes, this is a worrying omission. This study was not alone in drawing conclusions about the limitations of curriculum delivery, for example, the House of Commons Education Committee (2018) and Ofsted (2016) also expressed concern regarding the narrower curriculum offer that some of the APs offered. These perspectives were supported by some parents/carers who were "essentially grieving" for the education that their child might have had (Mills & Thomson, 2018). However, other parent/carer's views were that the exclusionary practises that led to their children moving to AP, had put their children at a disadvantage regarding academic attainment (Mills & Thomson, 2018).

One longitudinal piece of research was only able to evaluate the impact of exclusion on YP who had been permanently excluded as data for suspensions was incomplete (Madia et al., 2022). The findings from the research suggests that the poor outcomes are not unexpected, as the YP will possibly have missed chunks of learning, which in turn will impact their attainment. The missed opportunities for social learning and cultural competency can mean that the YP in this study would find it difficult to confidently navigate the world of work

(Madia et al., 2022). For the YP in this study though, they are in an educational setting, albeit not the typical one, so these outcomes may not apply to them.

2.5 Girls and Alternative Provision

Much of the literature around attending AP relates to YP being presented as an homogeneous group (Russell & Thomson, 2011). The lack of research around the narratives of girls in AP may be due to the comparatively small numbers, which translate into statistically insignificant data from the perspective of policymakers. While the number of boys attending AP is higher, due to the numbers who are excluded from mainstream education (DfE, 2021a; Michael & Frederickson, 2013), there is a paucity of research, which captures the narratives of the small, but increasing number of girls in AP (Mohdin, 2021; Russell & Thomson, 2011).

Girls' exclusions from the classroom are further complicated by other social factors such as ethnicity and social class (Gillborn, 2015), especially when they are labeled as being 'deviant', which can create additional layers of 'problematizing' girls (Lloyd, 2005b). An example of this included in exclusion data by ethnicity, reveals that Black and Gypsy Roma girls are more likely to be excluded from the classroom, than White girls (Mohdin, 2021). The lack of research about girls in general mean that these nuances remain unexplored and therefore exacerbate the inequitable and unethical treatment of girls (The Childrens Commissioner, 2019).

Table 1 shows the number of secondary school aged girls (11-16 years old) who received suspensions between 2011 and the 2017/2018 academic year. Statistical data after this timeline presents suspensions as one dataset, meaning that the numbers relating to gender

cannot be extracted. This supports the earlier point that data about the female exclusion is presented as part of a homogenous group.

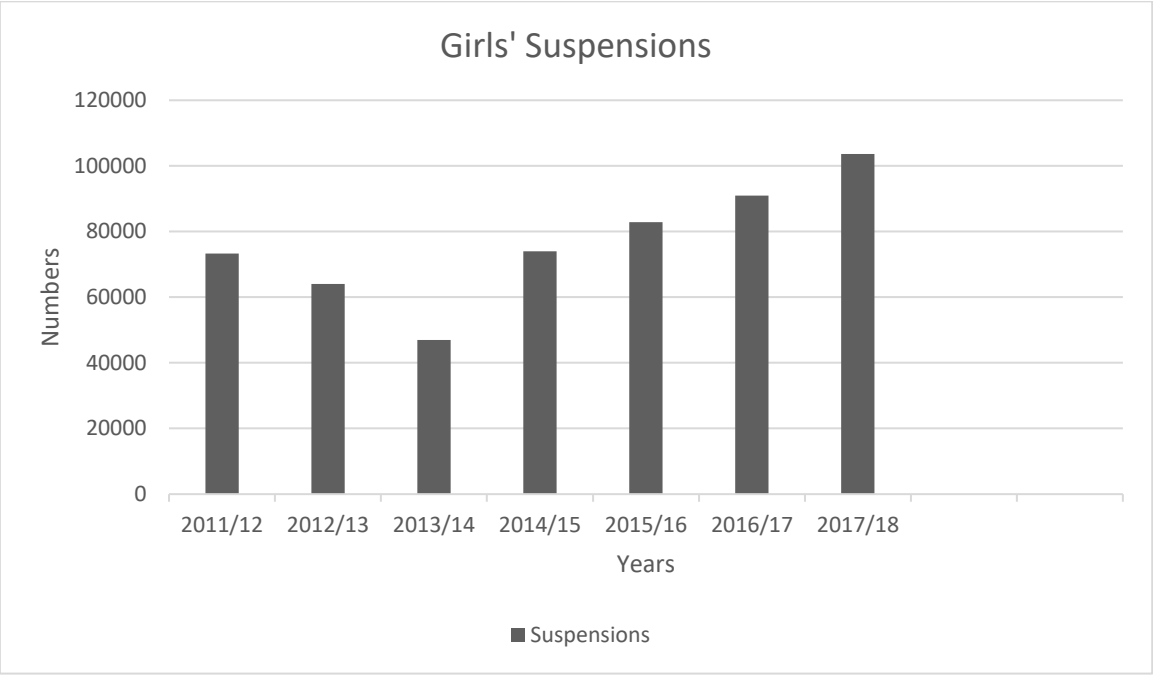

Table 1: Girls' suspensions adapted from DfE (2013b, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017b, 2019).

2.6 Research Questions

The rationale of this research was to explore the social, affective and educational narratives of Key Stage Four girls who are in AP. The lack of studies about girls in the context of exclusion means that there is little understanding about whether their stories differ to boys. The homogenous presentation of excluded groups means that there is a gap in how we understand these groups and subsequently provide appropriate preventative and interventive strategies to support them. The following research questions aim to explore girls' stories, thereby contributing to this under-researched area. The questions are as follows:

1. What stories do girls have about their experiences of mainstream education?

2. How do girls describe the differences between AP and mainstream schools in their stories?

3. Have the girls' perceptions changed about their futures, since moving to AP?

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This research aims to contribute to the small body of published research about girls who attend AP and to broaden professionals' knowledge using the stories that the girls tell. This chapter sets out the philosophical assumptions of the research, the methodological approach that was employed in this exploratory study, research design and ethical considerations for this research. Finally, there is an overview of the data collection and analysis of the data.

3.1.1 Philosophical Approach

Philosophy relates to the worldview or set of beliefs (Guba, 1990). This set of beliefs are also referred to as paradigms or ontology and epistemology (Crotty, 1998; Mertens, 1998). Ontology relates to knowledge and ***what*** can be known, while epistemology tells us ***how*** we can know. Philosophical assumptions underpin all research designs as these beliefs govern how research is conducted. In this research, the interpretivist position is assumed, to explore the sense that the girls make about being in AP. Interpretivism is the view that participants hold multiple meaning about events which are contextually and historically bound (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Thomas, 2016; Walliman, 2018). In the interpretivist paradigm, knowledge is constructed by the social actors or the individuals who tell their stories (Crotty, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 2013; Thomas, 2016).

Interpretivism posits that researchers are not separate from their object of study but that they are inseparably linked, as the researcher attempts to interpret the meaning-making of the

participants (Crotty, 1998; Walliman, 2018). This paradigm is suited for the exploration of individual constructs because of the complexity of human nature (Thomas, 2016). The research subject and the research design are all borne out of the researcher's specialist interest or curiosity, which have been addressed in the introduction.

3.1.2 Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry was chosen for this research because it is an exploratory tool that captures the meaning that individuals make about events in their lives. Since meaning can only be explained by the individual who is being asked about an event, narrative inquiry is the framework by which one discovers that meaning (Bruner, 1996; Thomas, 2016; Webster & Mertova, 2020).

Narrative inquiry ensures that the participants determine which events they deem to be significant and is participant-led (Thomas, 2016). Stories are told that help the narrator make sense of theirs and others' behaviours, within a particular context. Narratives are stories that convey meaning for the narrator, guiding the hearers on a journey that is scaffolded by the interpretations that they make about their experiences. Events that are told are not always in sequential order, but place events in the past, present and future (Squire et al., 2014).

Stories are not new and exist in everyday life, from fables to media outlets and as children, we are exposed to adult narratives which teach us about acceptable re-telling of events (Miller & Sperry, 1988). However, 'acceptability' may be construed differently by individuals, resulting in some narratives that can be disturbing for the hearers (Gair & Moloney, 2013).

Miller and Sperry (1988) found in their study of children's conversational stories, that children as young as two years old were able to recount a coherent narrative of past events. They were able to do this with adult support, and their recall was more likely where the event had elicited strong emotional connotations. The study found that the children were able to evaluate events and that most of their stories related to more adverse experiences than positive ones.

The collaborative element of recall in the Miller and Sperry (1988) study has also been identified in other narrative research; for example, with adults who had diminished memories or Alzheimer's Disease (Hydén, 2011). In both studies, memory recall and the telling of stories was scaffolded by supportive adults. In this research, the semi-structured interview questions were developed as a framework to support the YPs' recollections and telling their stories. As in the Hydén (2011) study, the collaborative nature of this research meant that the participants were able to share rich accounts of their lives.

3.1.3 Critique of Narrative Inquiry

As with any research, methodologies are open to critique and one criticism of narrative inquiry is its perceived reliance on the 'trustworthiness' of the stories being told (Webster & Mertova, 2020). Another critique is the use of interview schedules, notably, one that was developed by McAdams and McLean (2013). Alea (2018) is of the opinion that the questions in the schedule were structured in such a way, that they encourage participants to share their stories through an affective lens. However, clarifying questioning and prompts were a feature of the Miller and Sperry (1988) and Hydén (2011) studies, which enabled the participants to narrate a 'rich tapestry' of inherently emotionally situated stories. Some of these criticisms

may explain why Connelly and Clandinin (1990) caution against presenting stories as what they refer to as a "Hollywood Plot", where everything turns out well in the end and is also referred to as "narrative smoothing" (Spence, 1986). The purpose of this research was to explore the participants' stories, to understand the sense that they make about *their* lived experiences (Polkinghorne, 2007; Riessman, 2008). Therefore, narrative inquiry was the most appropriate for answering the questions in this research, and these criticisms have been addressed. More information about the advantages and disadvantages of this type of interpretivist research can be found in Appendix A.

3.2 Research Design

This study utilised narrative inquiry with a non-comparative case study design, with four participants who were the objects of study (Gorard, 2013). The girls' narratives were re-storied into a coherent structure and presented as a collaborative narrative, between the participant and the researcher (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The participants' stories were collected through single events for analysis using semi-structured interviews to explore the meaning that the girls ascribed to their education.

During the analysis, the interviews were transcribed and individually coded by hand, to retain the unique insight gained from the stories. This was important as narrative approaches place an emphasis on the individual story rather than a collective, despite some circumstantial similarities existing (Gorard, 2013). The similarities that may occur in the individual stories are often found in case study methodologies and can be used to focus on relationships and processes, which are central to the participants' storytelling (Gus et al., 2017). Non-comparative similarities will be used to inform educationalists' preventative intervention measures and will be discussed in the final chapter.

3.2.1 Participant Recruitment

Five AP settings were contacted to obtain permission to present the research to the YP who met the inclusion criteria that is shown in Table 2. Gatekeepers from the three settings gave permission to present the research. The potential participants had been given a brief overview of the research by the gatekeepers at the settings, prior to my arrival and then attended the more in-depth session about the research. Purposeful sampling was used to identify the critical cases. A critical case refers to cases that can be logically generalized, without in-between comparison, for instance, if something happens in one context, then the logical conclusion is that it is likely to occur in another (Patton, 2014). The use of critical cases is typically utilized within the social sciences interpretivist paradigm, four out of seven girls returned their consent forms to participate in the research.

Inclusion criteria	**Exclusion criteria**
Female	Male
Good command of the English Language	English as a second language
Aged between 14 and 16 years old.	Students under 14 years old/over 16 years old
All students will live in the West Midlands region and educated within the designated LA area	If they attend schools outside the LA area
All students will attend their respective AP settings on a full-time basis i.e., not attend any type of mainstream provision.	Attending two settings - mainstream and AP
Students will not be returning to mainstream provision.	If students are in a pupil referral unit, there should not be any plans for them to return to mainstream schooling.
Students with or without special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) except for those with an intellectual disability.	Students with intellectual disability

Table 2: Inclusion/Exclusion criteria

3.2.2 Pen Portraits

Table 3 shows the pen portraits with key information about the participants who took part in the study. The names have all been changed and the pseudonyms were chosen by the individual girls.

Pen portrait
Chloe is in Year 10 and lives with her mum and her older brother. She describes her early family life as being unstable and at school. Chloe was competitive at school and some of this stemmed from home. Relationships with other children at primary school were not particularly good and she was bullied by some of the boys for part of primary school into secondary school. Chloe was the only one out of her group of friends to not be offered a place at her local secondary school and experienced anxiety about this. Chloe's difficulties began in Year 7, and she had a particularly poor relationships with male authority. Chloe received numerous detentions, which escalated to internal exclusions before being managed moved to another school in Year 8. Chloe attended three mainstream schools as part of being managed moved before attending her current AP setting.
Ava is in Year 10 and lives at home with her mum, dad, and sister and has spent some time in the Care system. Although she does not recall any issues regarding her learning, Ava had difficult relationships with some of the girls in her primary school and this persisted when she moved to secondary school. At secondary school, Ava struggled to follow the rules and the number of students at the school. Ava's first suspension was in Year 8 and was finally permanently excluded following a physical altercation with another student. She did have an opportunity to attend a different mainstream school but did not like it, so attended a PRU before attending her current AP.
Amelia is in year 10 and lives at home with her dad. Her mother left when she was younger, and she has sporadic contact with her and her younger siblings.

Amelia's social network was made up of people who experienced difficult circumstances and engaged in harmful behaviours. Amelia recalls her time at primary school education as being uneventful but recalls that adults told her that she was academically behind similar aged children. During her time at secondary school, Amelia experienced detentions, internal exclusion, and managed moves before attending her current AP.
Kyra is in Year 10. She was a child in care while at primary school and has since returned to the care system. Kyra was bullied at primary school because of the neglect that she suffered. Kyra recalls that she was not academic at primary school, and this impacted her self-esteem. Kyra has experienced bereavement of a sibling and has sometimes had fights with other children because of the taunts that she received about this. Kyra attended a single sex secondary school but was excluded as she had a fight with a group of girls who were bullying her. Following a brief period of time at a different mainstream school, Kyra was placed in her current AP setting.

Table 3: Pen Portraits

3.3 Ethical Considerations

3.3.1 Ethics

Ethical approval was obtained from the ethics committee at the University of Birmingham and the application for ethical approval can be found in the appendices (Appendix B). The ethics in this research are informed by the BPS Code of Human Research Ethics (Oates, 2021) and The University of Birmingham Code of Ethics (University of Birmingham, 2022) and are woven throughout the research process.

3.3.2 Recruitment

Ethical consideration was given around the recruitment of the target participant group, as they are labelled as being vulnerable by the policymakers, however, the opportunities that exist for

raising the profile of this group outweighed not conducting the research. When conducting collaborative research with the YP, reflexivity was central during my initial presentation of the research. This related to the use of language and checking that the prospective participants were clear on what was being asked of them, as well as explaining how they could use the participant sheets to remind themselves.

3.3.3 Interview Considerations

Consideration was given regarding the logistics of interviewing the YP at their respective settings. While inevitably there would be some disruption to the girls' school day, plans were made to minimize this by not arriving first thing in the morning. This was so that the girls were able to have a settling down period. Furthermore, prior to the interviews, the girls were asked about whether the timings were convenient for them. One of the participants asked to be released before the end of their lesson to finish their food technology task.

3.3.4 Data Presentation

As the girls were being asked to tell stories that could potentially elicit painful memories, this informed how the interview schedule was constructed and the framing of the questions. This was to try and reduce any perceptions of being too intrusive or insensitive. Pseudonyms were chosen by the participants to protect their identities and afford anonymity. Furthermore, because there were sensitive elements in the girls' stories, some of the generated data was withheld to protect others.

3.3.5 Gatekeepers

Following ethical approval, an email (see Appendix C) was sent to the gatekeepers (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Laine, 2000) in five identified AP settings, using the layout suggested by

Bogdan and Biklen (1998). The email outlined rationale for the research and the commitment that would be required from the potential participants and setting.

3.3.6 Informed Consent

Gaining informed consent is the bedrock of ethical research and when conducting research with YP, multiple factors need to be considered; including the competency of the YP to give consent. The ethics of consent is not only applicable to face-to-face interactions but also in the form of text (Hornstein, 1996) and as such, the transcriptions and write up of this research has been within the context of maintaining ethical awareness throughout (The British Psychological Society, 2021). Oates (2021) sums up one of the challenges around consent, which was relevant in this research; that YP may not appreciate that they have the power to withhold consent. This was pertinent as the girls' stories suggest that reveal times when they have felt powerless.

It was made clear that participation was voluntary and that the YP were under no obligation to give consent. Prospective participants were also advised that if parental/carer consent (see Appendix D) was not given, they would be unable to participate in the research because of their age. Participant information sheets (see Appendix E) and consent forms for the YP (see Appendix F) were also shared with the YP to take home and discuss with their parents/carers regarding whether they wanted to take part in the research. Finally, participants were advised that any safeguarding concerns would take precedent over issues of confidentiality, and that the setting's safeguarding procedures would be followed.

While it was not intended to include Children in Care/Looked after Children in this research, checks were made to ensure that Kyra's consent form was signed by somebody, who had special guardianship. This was confirmed by the headteacher at Kyra's AP setting.

3.3.7 Member Checking

Member checking in qualitative research is conducted once data has been generated. This involves allowing participants to look at the data and analysis, to ensure that it is a true representation of what has been recorded (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Miller, 2000). Once the interviews had been transcribed, the participants were invited to read them to check the accuracy of them and make any necessary amendments. The girls at this stage were also able to identify any data that they wanted to be excluded from the final write up.

After the data had been analysed it was presented individually, in text form to each participant, however, it became apparent that the analysis in written form was overwhelming for some of the girls. The findings were therefore incorporated into a storyboard to make it more accessible to the participants. Explanations were given around each of the main findings and the girls were asked for their feedback. Member checking lends itself to Hart's (1980) ladder of participation, as shown in Figure 3 in chapter two, as the girls were consulted at the different participatory stages in this research.

3.3.8 Power Imbalance

Research with YP can create a power imbalance and potentially lead participants to feel pressured into taking part in the research. To minimise this risk, the staff at the educational setting had responsibility to collect consent forms from the participants to create distance

between the researched and the researcher. Reminders were given throughout the initial research process, interviews, and member-checking (Creswell & Miller, 2000), repeating the participants' rights to withdraw consent to take part in the research. Attention was also paid to participants' body language as this could indicate an unwillingness to continue with the research (The British Psychological Society, 2021). To further reduce any power imbalance, participants were told about my role as a trainee educational psychologist and student researcher, clearly differentiating my identity as a full-time post graduate researcher of the University of Birmingham with other professional roles.

3.4 Interviews

3.4.1 Narrative Interviews

There are different ways of conducting narrative interviews and autobiographical narrative interviewing is one method that can be used to explore the psychosocial elements of an individual's storied world (Maruška & Domecka, 2020), and was adapted to use in this research. Some features of the autobiographical interview are conducive to narrative inquiry and include, rigorous analysis of the interview transcripts, the extrapolation of subjective reflection about performativity and affect (Maruška & Domecka, 2020). This interview style also reveals the interplay between the individual and their environment(s).

The analysis used for this type of interview incorporates a "processual approach" (Maruška & Domecka, 2020, p. 107) to the self's account of their meaning-making and others', while considering what might be in the future (Maruška & Domecka, 2020; Schütze, 2007). The vulnerability of participants often means that this type of storytelling is not used within professional spaces, such as education. Firstly, this is because once a young person has shared

their story, this requires the adult to respond to YPs' subjective concerns. This then puts a responsibility on the adult to address the young person's concerns, potentially creating tension for them and the behaviour management processes (Schütze, 2007). Secondly, Schütze (2007) suggests that unless the young person trusts the adult, they may be reluctant to share their stories, for fear of whether this information may be used against them or shared with others. To address this, I reiterated that unless there was a safeguarding concern, the girls would retain their anonymity through the use of pseudonyms.

3.4.2 Interview Guides

An interview guide was adapted to use as a framework for the autobiographical narrative interview, using general descriptive questions, such as "tell me about your family' and "what was primary school like for you?" (See Appendix G). This allows the participants to determine what they consider which significant events they want to talk about. The interview guide should only be used to act as an 'aide memoire' for the interviewer (Hennink et al., 2011) and is usually structured like the flow chart in Figure 3.

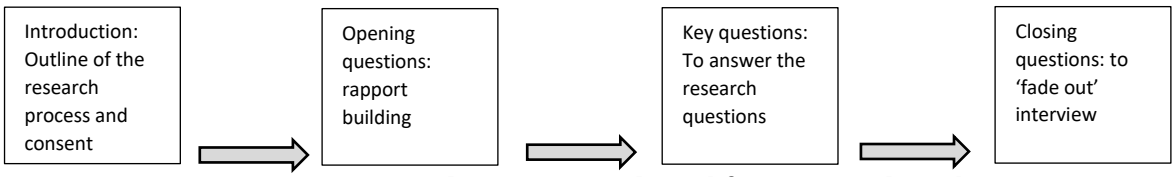

Figure 4: Interview guide structure: adapted from Hennink et al. (2011)

In this research, check-ins were done with each of the participants, and they were reminded about their right to withdraw consent at any point. The girls were advised that while a set of questions had been created, they were only there as an aide-memoire for me. One of the participants requested that asked the questions to help her structure her thoughts, but the other

three girls needed little prompting to tell their stories. Any questions that were asked, were for the use of clarifying what had been said by the participants.

The length of the interview was dependent on the participants, who were told that they could talk for as long as they wanted to. The participants would indicate when they had finished telling a part of their story by tailing off from the conversation. Skilled interviewers have to assess whether more prompts are needed or if the story told has come to a natural conclusion (Hennink et al., 2011; Maruška & Domecka, 2020) and this is something that I was able to do.

3.4.3 Narrative Analysis

Ollerenshaw and Creswell (2016) describe two strands of narrative analysis; one has a problem-solving element and the other is a three-dimensional space approach, which is based on 'Dewey's philosophy of experience' (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2016, p. 11). As this research is exploratory in nature, it would be inappropriate to view it within a problem-solving context. Therefore, the three-dimensional space approach that make up narrative inquiry: interaction, situation and continuity was used and is further explained in Table 4 below.

The Three Dimensions of Experience	Description
Interaction	This refers to the individual experiences (thoughts and feelings) and the meaning-making of social interactions with others
Continuity	This relates to the temporality or continuity of a situation. This determines where each part of the story fits i.e., past, present, or future
Situation	This can refer to a physical place or where the storyteller places parts of their story within the

	narrative. It also relates to time and context of the situation.

Table 4: Three-dimensional narrative approach - Adapted from Clandinin and Connelly (2000)

This study utilised re-storying, the writing up of participants' stories in a coherent, chronological order, while allowing for links to be established between the three aspects of this narrative approach. The questions in the semi-structured interviews (see Appendix G) were to support the girls' participation in the research, which Ochs and Capps (2001) argue can only be completed by the interactions of the storyteller and the researcher. Transcripts were written up from each interview and coded by hand, using the following overarching subjects: past, present, and future and then in terms of education, primary, secondary and AP (see an example in Appendix H).

A constant comparative method was used to analyse the data, revisiting narratives that fit into the subject areas that are listed above and making comparisons about what had been told (Thomas, 2016). Each interview was explored from a holistic perspective to retain the essence of the girls' storied worlds and for contextualizing the events (Hennink et al., 2011). The process of re-storying was used to present the girls' stories. Re-storying involves the following steps as suggested by Ollerenshaw and Creswell (2016); Riessman (1993).

- Listening to the recorded interviews
- Transcribing the interviews
- Coding and analysing the transcripts

- Presenting the stories in a sequential, chronological structure - this was achieved by using a storyboard (Greenberg et al., 2012)

3.4.4 Validity and Trust

Researcher reflexivity relates to how transparent a researcher is about their values and beliefs which relate to the object of study. This critical reflection allows the researcher to reflect on the social, cultural and historical experiences that have shaped their belief systems (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Member checking, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985) is one of the purest forms for establishing validity for social science research and is seen as good practice. In this research the participants were invited to view the transcribed interviews to ensure that there was an accurate representation of their stories. The thick descriptions that were elicited from the girls' narratives provide verisimilitude for the audience, thereby, broadening their understanding of the girls' stories. Finally, the rich descriptions will enable educationalists to logically generalize the participants' stories to similar contexts (Creswell & Miller, 2000)

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

4 Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the girls' narratives, which are represented on a storyboard that has been adapted from the work of Greenberg et al. (2012). Storyboards in narrative research are typically created using sketches or photographs to represent contextual interactions. The first scene introduces the audience to the story and typically has an end, but in this research, the continuity of events means that the last scene is a representation of where the individual is now (Greenberg et al., 2012; Webster & Mertova, 2020). In this research, text and pictorial representations have been used, giving an overarching quote from each girls' stories that relate to the different stages of their education. A word is used at each stage of the girls' storied worlds, to highlight the predominant emotion at that time and can be seen in Figure 3 (Chloe), Figure 4 (Ava), Figure 5 (Amelia) and Figure 6 (Kyra). The findings and discussion of the research questions are presented as single case studies, to preserve the uniqueness of each girl's story.

4.2 Discussion of the Research Questions

The analysis of the girls' stories to answer the research questions, uses the three-dimensional space approach, as discussed in the paper by Ollerenshaw and Creswell (2016). Therefore, references will be made to the personal (thoughts) and social interactions of the girls, as well as whether there are any identifiable threads in their narratives. This approach will also explore whether the interactions and events are linked to specific places (environments).

4.3 Chloe's Background Story

Chloe appeared to be of a cheerful disposition when we met for her interview. Chloe described her family as being "dysfunctional", and the first relationship that she spoke about was with her father, who she says was, and still continues to be emotionally absent. The impact of this was woven into her story. The absence of a paternal relationship appeared to invoke a sense of loss and set the blueprint for Chloe's future relationships with male teachers and boys, saying that "…I just didn't like men because of the persona my dad put forward for 'em…" and "…in relationships I've had, I've got used to them treating me like my dad…". In terms of other familial relationships, Chloe positioned herself as the "black sheep of the family".

4.4 Primary School

Chloe's earliest recollections of primary school was that "…Primary school was like you turn up, you've got your friends…", who, she found to be emotionally supportive for most of the time. When Chloe was upset because of her home life, she said that her friends would "…just like gather round me and like they were good friends…". However, tensions at home, often spilled over into Chloe's friendships and she was "…constantly falling out with quite a lot of friends …". Chloe recalled trying to please her mum and nan by excelling in school because if she did not meet their expectations, they were likely to make statements such as "…I'm not angry, I'm disappointed…", which Chloe recalls, "…would really upset you". These self-imposed high levels of performativity led to Chloe experiencing feelings of overwhelming anxiety.

In Year Four, Chloe recalled being treated in a way that she says made her realise that "…I'm being bullied…". This was also her first experience of school intervening to remove her from an 'undesirable' situation, with Chloe assuming that "…the teachers thought, oh, something needs to happen… and I used to sit with them…". This was the school's response for keeping Chloe 'safe'. Chloe had a positive relationship with one of the teachers, who also attended the same extracurricular activity in the community as she did. Chloe recalls that in this teacher, she found somebody that she could trust, and would talk to her on a daily basis. However, when the teacher left the school, Chloe struggled to find another adult that she could talk to.

4.5 Secondary School

Chloe's first day at secondary school appeared to be, what might be considered typical for most new Year Seven students. Chloe recalled wearing an oversized school blazer and having new equipment, as well as feeling anxious about starting a new school. These worries were exacerbated by being the only person to transition to the same out-of-area school that her older sibling attended. However, their fractured relationship meant that he wanted little to do with her, and on her first day, Chloe travelled to the new school on her own.

Chloe's view of being the 'black sheep' of the family was at the forefront of her mind when she started secondary school, referring to her mum saying that she "…didn't want me in his school …didn't want me to ruin his education…". This was because her brother was already on roll at the school. Chloe appeared to make her own comparisons between her and wider family members, stating that "…all my cousins before that, they'd went there had no trouble…". Academically, Chloe considered herself to be an able student with the exception

of maths, and she was put into a lower set for this subject, which she said "…put my confidence right down…".

Chloe says that at the start of Year Seven, she had "… really good behaviour …" before feeling like something was not 'clicking' and said that she "…started getting detentions…and I was sent to the isolation room a lot". Chloe would be in isolation for up to six hours a day, doing what she viewed as academically inappropriate work, because it was not differentiated and that she was "…bored, depressed…". However, it was during this time that Chloe was able to talk to an adult about her feelings, which "…helped me a lot…". Chloe's reflections about her externalising behaviours was that she "…struggled with male authority…" and felt like she "…didn't fit in properly…", which led to her truanting lessons.

Chloe's experiences with males had not always been positive, and she recalled being called a "slag" and harassed by a boy who "…just kept on grab, groping me, slapped my arse…" and her feeling of being "powerless". Around this time, Chloe was feeling "depressed", as well as trying to make sense of a close relative's untimely death. Although Chloe had tenuous relationships with males, when they did not present with an air of "masculinity", Chloe felt safe with them.

One such person was her former Head of Year, who she recalled "…was calm and didn't shout…he was a gentleman…he approached me like I was a human, not just a girl…". Chloe's perception of how she wanted men to treat her was evident in her use of the word 'gentlemen', which she would use to describe some of the boys in her AP setting.

Chloe's emotional health was deteriorating during this time, and she remembers that although she appeared to be confident, she "…struggled with that the most, because inside I was like beating myself up…". Chloe says that some of this was related to pressures from family, but also from the school, who "…wanted to figure out what was going on with me…" and suggested that SEND might be a factor. In Chloe's view, her mum had no choice but to pursue this as "…they're like if they don't find out what's going on, they will move me schools".

Chloe's experiences set the scene for what would become a period of upheaval for her learning, and friendships. There were lots of managed move placements, which broke down, meaning that she would intermittently have to return to her school, until a new placement was agreed.

4.6 Managed Move(s)

It was "…halfway through Year Eight…" that Chloe experienced her first managed move. Chloe pretended that she was not concerned, recalling that "I was bragging about it…I'm that bad". However, she remembers that inside she was on a downward spiral saying "…I don't know what's gonna happen…I was like this could end up in no GCSEs". As well as feeling that she was letting her family down, Chloe's fears about losing her school place were intensified, when she says that the school told her that she would become "…school-less…", if she did not agree to a change of placement. It was only later that Chloe realised that "…you've gotta have a school. You've gotta have an education".

The schools where Chloe was sent to, were often far away from her home and she found adjusting to a new school culture and arriving on time, difficult. Chloe attributed the breakdown of the placements to the fact that everyone knew that she was on a managed move, and therefore set higher expectations for her, because of it. Chloe said that she "…didn't want them to know". She also mentioned the abrupt nature by which the placements ended, and that they tended to be near to the end of her probation period, which was six weeks. Chloe reflected that the reason why she was given opportunity to attend so many different placements, having attended "…five different mainstreams…", was because she was academically able and had good attendance.

Chloe's final managed move placement was the feeder school for her primary school. She was reunited with her primary school friends and felt that she "…fit in…I got on great there". When her placement was terminated, she recalls being "distraught" because she could not understand why, as she had been getting lots of achievement points. Chloe also said that she had been praised for consistently meeting the uniform standards, which had boosted her confidence and gave her the "...will, to do good". This decision had far-reaching consequences, as her extracurricular activities were stopped and Chloe remembers that she had "…everything took off me, my PlayStation, my TV, my phone…" for a lengthy period of time.

4.7 Alternative Provision

At the end of Year Nine Chloe was placed in AP, and her view was that only "…bad kids, criminals…" went there, as this was what she had heard from other people. She remembers her first thoughts were that the building did not resemble a typical school, and that it was not aesthetically pleasing. Chloe recalls being highly anxious, saying that she told her mum "…If

I've got a choice, I'm not coming…". She also remembers some of the physiological responses that she experienced, such as her legs shaking. Chloe received comforting words from a member of staff at the AP, who had recognised that she was feeling anxious and told her that she wanted Chloe to come to the setting and "…to thrive…".

Not long after starting, Chloe observed a frightening incident, explaining that she had gone from a "…mainstream school where it's all mainly friendships, to somebody getting battered right in front of me…", which "…really set me back". The term 'battered' in this context, denotes a violent altercation. Chloe said that her new peers were "…from gangs" but that she "…adapted…" in order to be accepted. Chloe noticed that class sizes were smaller, meaning that she received more targeted support from the teacher and began to make progress. Chloe's attitude to learning changed and she realised that she was "…way more capable…", despite the curriculum having "…a lot more sports than I would like…".

Chloe said her relationship with staff at the AP were more positive than the ones that she had with teachers in her mainstream school. Her observation was that "…they'd do anything for these students…". This may have supported the development of Chloe's sense of agency around her learning and increase of her intrinsic motivation. Chloe is very aware that she is a minority in her AP setting, both culturally and because she is a girl. Referring to the boys in her AP, Chloe says that as a group "…they can be rude and boyish…" but "…on their own, some of them are gentlemen and it's nice… 'cause they can be themselves…".

As in most schools, there is some name calling, which she labels as "banter" and "jokes". She explains that they are expressions of the sense of comradery that the YP have. Chloe goes on

to clarify the perceived closeness of the group as being because "…everybody's in this school for a reason…it's us against the world".

4.8 Future

Chloe did not previously have any specific career aspirations but says "…I'm focused…I've figured out what GCSEs I need…". She is considering pursuing law or teaching, as a way of helping others and as an opportunity to change the trajectory of children's lives, that are on a downward spiral. Most of Chloe's family relationships have also improved since being in AP, and she has reflected on how her and her sibling "…get along better now…". Chloe says that her relationship with her nan, who had stopped her extracurricular activities, has improved, with her nan constantly affirming Chloe and telling her that she is "…proud of the woman I've become…".

4.8.1 Chloe's Reflections

Chloe had expressed that she struggled with being labelled as somebody that she was not, by former teachers and peers, but says that she "…knew deep down that I wasn't a horrible person…now I've learned to love myself and like not care".

The one relationship that continues to evade Chloe is with her father, who also has experience of attending AP. Chloe worries about whether she might fall prey to some of the influences that he did, saying "…he became addicted ... that's the main worry with this school, I'm open to more things…", but also recognises that she can be "…so proud of myself…I'm way more confident than, I ever was. I am myself now".

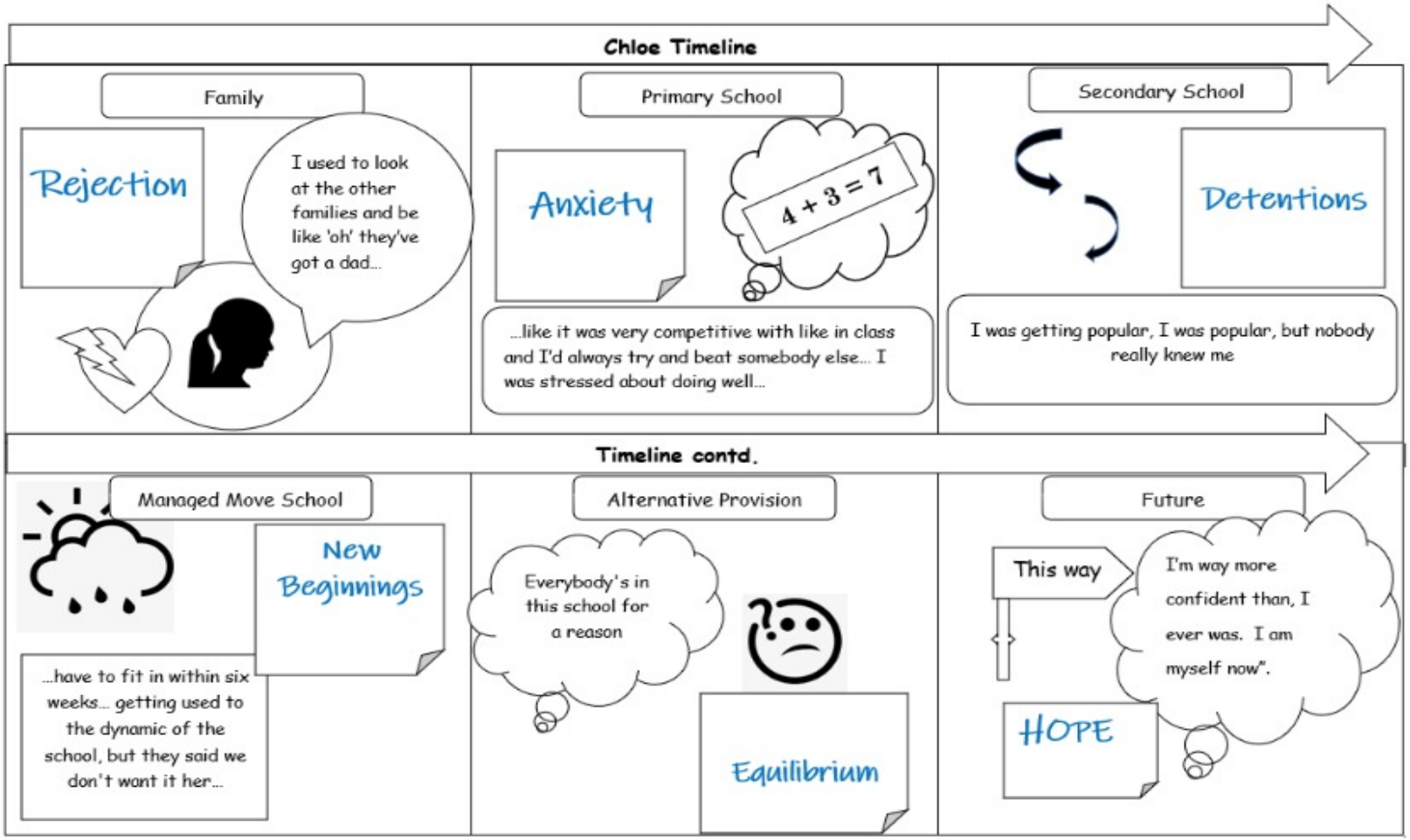

Figure 5: Storyboard representation of Chloe's Story - adapted from Greenberg et al. (2012)

4.9 Findings for Chloe

4.9.1 Research Question One – What stories do girls have about their experiences of mainstream education?

4.9.2 Interactions

The social interactions in Chloe's educational journey appeared to be regulated by the internal tensions that Chloe was experiencing. An example of this is her first recollection of using performativity to gain her family's praise and how she began to be competitive with her peers because of it. During primary school, her desire to succeed, in order to satisfy her family's expectations of her, is likely to have caused internal tensions between her feeling celebrated when she achieved, versus when she was being 'bullied' and the associated feelings of worthlessness. Cornaglia et al. (2015) and Rothon et al. (2011) both report that the presence of difficulties with SEMH makes it more likely that YP will underachieve, academically, however, in Chloe's case, it was poor SEMH that was a catalyst for her to overachieve at primary school. The impact on Chloe's friendships that can be attributed to poor mental health perhaps revealed the fragility of them and were exacerbated by the nature of girls' relationships, as mentioned by Craggs and Kelly (2018) and McLaughlin (2005).

The one person who she felt a connection to at school, left without telling her, perhaps reinforcing feelings of abandonment, which were deeply embedded because of her broken relationship with her father. Avoiding relationships with males, continued throughout Chloe's story, however, her encounter with one male, who was her Head of Year, did challenge the deeply held views that Chloe had about men. Chloe felt that the interactions that she had with her Head of Year were ones of kindness and respect, and him not giving up on her may have signalled to Chloe that she was valued. This same positive regard was also a factor in Chloe's relationships with adults in AP, and was one of the advantages mentioned by

parents/carers and YP (Mills & Thomson, 2018). On the other hand, social interactions with her peers and the abusive name-calling that she received from some of the boys, and feelings of being looked down on by the girls, may have reinforced the feelings of low self-esteem that Chloe felt. This would have been occurring during, what has been identified as a crucial stage of development and is when YP are developing a sense of self, during the period that Erikson (1963) refers to, as an identity crisis.

As a girl, Chloe's identity, and value, appears to further be grounded in her social interactions, recalling how older men on the buses would ogle and say things about her anatomy. At school, one of the boys groped her in front of her form group, who became an audience for this sexual harassment. The Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) guidance (DfE, 2021c, p. 103) which schools refer to, in order to safeguard YP in their care, had clearly not been used to address the 'peer-on-peer abuse' that Chloe experienced. Furthermore, steps to prevent the deterioration of Chloe's mental health appears to have been overlooked (DfE, 2021c). This and Chloe's description of being bullied, while in primary school, is likely to have further deepened any feelings of 'powerlessness' that Chloe mentioned. In this aspect, Chloe was failed by the school.

Chloe's recollection of her academic achievement is that she was making progress, largely due to the expectations that she placed upon herself. Her absence from lessons at secondary school means that it is highly probable that Chloe's academic progress stalled, making it likely that gaps in her learning became a demotivating factor in her education. The impact of missing lessons on progress was something that Madia et al. (2022) mentioned in their research.

4.9.3 Continuity/Temporality

There are two things that appear to be continuous in Chloe's life, and they are her internal struggles with anxiety and "depression", which as a child and then young person, she would have been psychologically, ill-equipped to manage, without adult support. This observation is supported by the literature, that mental health can continue to be a challenge for YP (Tejerina-Arreal et al., 2020). Although this statement was in relation to its correlation with exclusion, it is applicable to Chloe, who had experienced feelings of exclusion in many forms. The other is the ongoing breakdown in her relationship with her father, which has, and continues to preoccupy Chloe's thoughts.

4.9.4 Place

Chloe's main narrative was about her time in secondary school, and this was the place where it appears most things were 'done to' her, rather than 'with her'. Although Chloe talks about home life being stressful, she does not mention it to the same degree as her time in school, which she associates with a lot of pain and distress. This is supported by the literature that highlights YPs' sense of a lack of belonging, because of being separated from their social groups (Allen & Bowles, 2013). Chloe's perception of not belonging at school was evidenced in her stories of the numerous managed moves that she experienced. This was further compounded by feelings of being 'othered' in the managed move school settings. It was only when she moved to AP, that Chloe felt that she finally has a sense of school belonging and as Mills and Thomson (2018) mention, possibly a sense of relief. However, this has also come at some cost, as Chloe has had to try to resolve the incongruencies between who she thinks she is, and the person that she has had to become.

4.10 Research Question Two – How do girls describe the differences between AP and mainstream schools in their stories?

The initial difference that Chloe noticed between AP and mainstream school was the building, as she thought that it did not resemble a typical school and that it needed rejuvenating. Chloe's observations may also have been because she was comparing it to her school, which was a new build. Other noticeable differences related to the type of relationships that Chloe had with staff in the AP setting, which is reflected in the research (Malcolm, 2018). They had more time for her, not only in relation to her academic work but also emotionally. The adults had more time to scaffold Chloe's learning, which would be needed because of the gaps in her learning. Furthermore, a narrower curriculum, which was not always mentioned in a positive light by the research (House of Commons Education Committee, 2018; Ofsted, 2016), but this meant that staff had more time to spend, supporting Chloe with specific areas of difficulty, which is consistent with the study by Hill (1997). It should be noted that staff availability may be related to the higher staff to student ratios in AP, whereas in a mainstream class it is usually one teacher to 30 YP.

Another difference that Chloe highlighted was that the YP at the AP seemed to be more dysregulated than the YP at her school, which may be linked to feelings of disadvantage that might make the YP more susceptible to SEMH difficulties (Thompson et al., 2021; Tillson & Oxley, 2020; Wakefield District Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, 2022). The lack of self-regulation meant that altercations which would normally be quite low level in a mainstream setting, spiralled out of control and escalated very quickly. Chloe did acknowledge that while access to prohibited items and substances seemed to be more readily available in AP, than in a mainstream setting; this did not mean to say that they were not accessible in mainstream

settings. Chloe's reference to non-compliant behaviours by YP with unmet needs, has been reported by Clarke et al. (2011). However, a note of caution is that while YP in mainstream schools have reasons to hide any prohibited items, YP in AP may already have feelings of being 'rule-breakers' and therefore, do not try to hide this.

4.11 Research Question Three – Have the girls' perceptions changed about their futures, since moving to AP?

It appears from Chloe's story that she believes that her future has been impacted for the positive, by her time in AP, and that she has been able to identify a clear career path, since being there. It is unclear whether this is because she would have missed accessing the statutory independent careers advice (DfE, 2021b), while at her school. This would have been because of the many managed moves, where she was essentially, 'out of sight and out of mind'. Therefore, Chloe may not have ever had a clear idea of what she wanted to do with her life.

Chloe's thoughts are that she has a positive future and would like to continue in education to gain qualifications and become a teacher. She sees her role as being instrumental in changing the trajectory of children who experience similar situations to her. Chloe's view is that had she had teachers who were able to identify some of her struggles as the SEND Code of Practice states (DfE & DoH, 2014) during her trial period, then an early intervention could have been put in place and she may not have ended up in AP.

4.12 Ava's Background Story

Ava appeared to be nervous when we met for the interview but had insisted to her mother that she wanted to tell her story. When I introduced myself and asked her to tell me about her family, she said that she preferred "…questions". This may have been to help her to structure her thinking or perhaps she was unsure what to expect during the telling of her story. During Ava's interview, I had to ask more clarifying questions and deliver prompts, than for any of the other girls. Ava stated the facts about who she lived with in the family home but found it difficult to articulate what she thought she was good at. When prompted, Ava said "I used to not like school but now I really like it". Ava's response reflects previous findings of girls' difficulties in verbalising positive aspects about themselves (Gordon, 2006).

4.13 Primary School

Ava said that she was "well behaved" while at primary school and "…didn't get into trouble". Ava defined being well behaved as "…doing your work, not distracting - like people, making comments …". She did recall numerous "petty" disagreements that she had with other girls, and when asked about her friendship group, said "I can't even remember their names now", suggesting that her relationships were not close ones.

Ava liked most of the teachers at her primary school, except for the "…shouty ones…I don't really like people who shout". Ava's dislike of teachers shouting, was because her "…mom doesn't really like shout", unless she was annoyed. Ava found it difficult to understand why teachers shouted to get their "…point across" and felt that it was unnecessary. Ava's sharing of her recollection of her time at primary school was limited, but she did recall that she enjoyed writing.

4.14 Secondary School

When I asked Ava about how she felt about only her and another girl from her primary school transitioning to the same secondary school, she replied that she "…didn't really want to, 'cause…you can meet new people". Ava was "…looking forward…" to going to secondary school but soon realised that it was different to life in primary school, reflecting that, she did not "…really get told off…you go to secondary school…you're expected to behave really well". Ava was unsure of the 'rules' of secondary school and found it difficult to see the purpose of many of them, which may be why one of the reasons why she found herself in conflict with the school behaviour policy. One example of the rules that she gave, was around girls having to wear their hair tied back and no makeup, which she thought were "…really strict". Breaking these 'rules' were some of the reasons why Ava felt that she got into trouble at school.

Moving from a small primary school to a busy mainstream secondary school was a challenge for Ava, "…the hallways…there's year 7, year, 8, year 9, year 10, year 11…". In order to avoid the crowds Ava used to leave her lesson early without asking for permission, which is likely to have been a source of tension, resulting in her being given detentions. Ava never told the teachers why she had walked out and said that they assumed that "…I was bored…". Ava told me that "…I like learning…" and was in the top sets for her lessons, but the barrier to remain motivated to learn for her, was that "…I'm not in an environment I like…". When I asked what type of environment she preferred, she replied "like here".

During Year 7, Ava had a number of sanctions, but it was in Year 8 that she received her first, what she remembered as being, a 5-day suspension. At the time, Ava and her sibling were

living with foster carers, who told Ava during her suspension, that she had been permanently excluded from school. Ava was surprised by the decision, but felt that the school's rationale for doing so, was not the real reason. Ava believed that it was because her older sibling had been previously permanently excluded. Reflecting on her own exclusion, Ava thought that "…they wanted me gone…'cause if I'm still there…she's a problem - my sister…I think they should have done a managed move instead".

Ava had hit another pupil because they had been making comments about her being in care, and she says that she did try to ignore the hurtful comments, recalling that "…it wasn't a fight, it was just one…", tailing off.

The decision to permanently exclude Ava was made while she was in care, living with foster parents. Ava's recollection of the events that led her and her sibling to being placed in the care system, was that it was supposed to have been for "…literally like a two-week break…" at her mother's request. Ava told me that "…my mom didn't ask for me to go too…" but reasoned that Children's Services did not want to split up siblings. Ava had told her friends about being in care but says that other students and teachers soon found out. Ava found an ally in the form of her Head of Year, who was "…literally the only nice teacher, he was really nice". Ava's view of him being a nice teacher, may have been because when he saw that she was wearing makeup, "…he would just let it go…".

4.15 Permanent Exclusion

Ava's preference for a managed move instead of a PEX, was because she felt that "…it's better to be written…managed move rather than permanently excluded…". Ava did not

return immediately to education following her PEX, and for the duration of her time at the carer's home, she would "…literally just sit in my room all day…didn't have a phone, so I couldn't speak to anyone". It was not until Ava was returned to her mother, that her mother "…sorted out a school for me within a week".

Ava said of the new school that "…I literally loved it there …". However, Ava struggled to fit in at the new school saying that "…it's like, very like posh...wouldn't call myself chavvy, but obviously my voice compared to theirs is a lot different…". Ava was supposed to go for a week as a trial period, but her place was terminated before she had completed it. The breakdown of that placement was a source of some regret for Ava, and she reflected that she "… did get another chance…which this is my biggest regret…". However, she also thought that if this had not happened, then "…I wouldn't be here…", talking about her current placement.

4.16 Alternative Provision

Ava's first experience of AP was at a PRU, before she had her trial period at a mainstream school, following her PEX. While on their roll, Ava's attendance was poor, and she preferred to complete her work at home. Ava's opinion of the PRU was "…I don't think it should be a school… people being loud in lessons…the teachers I think they're overly nice, but not in a good way". Ava further explained that she felt that the staff at the PRU were patronising, because they spoke to her as if she was in "…like year 2…".

Following the breakdown of her new school placement, Ava had to return to the PRU, while she waited for another placement and "…hated having to go back there…". Ava was offered

a place at another AP, where YP are required to wear uniforms, so she turned down the place there. However, the LA and her previous school managed to arrange an early start date at another AP, which is where she is now. Ava recalls feeling anxious about starting at the new setting, with thoughts of "…are they gonna like me?". Ava also says that relationships with staff at the AP are different to the ones at mainstream and finds that "…they can take the joke and say something back and I'll take it as a joke".

While Ava likes the AP, she recognises that her mother would have preferred a different outcome, "… but I think that she would rather me be in a smaller school, not wearing uniform and stuff, be happy…". Ava was not too concerned about the reduced choice of curriculum as she did not "…really like them lessons… the ones I like, is like the ones we do, like maths, English…".

Ava is aware that she is one of a few girls in the AP and prefers it that way, "…I think with this amount of girls, it's kinda nice…". Ava did not think that the reasons for girls being placed in AP, were very different to why boys were placed there, saying "…everyone's here for different reasons…girls are seen…if you don't behave in school, you're gobby… supposed to just sit there and do the work". Ava may have been referring to herself, as she thought that her being loud, could "…come across quite rude…" but that she was "actually a nice person".

4.17 Future

Ava was concerned about how future employers might view her time in AP and says that she is a different person than she used to be. Ava was considering becoming a makeup artist but

thought that this was because she liked wearing makeup. Now, she wants to be an accountant, because “I like maths” but also wanted something “practical” to get her out of the house.

4.17.1 Ava’s Reflections

When I asked Ava about the most significant thing that had happened, there was a sense of regret about being permanently excluded, “…coming here…it’s reminded me that it’s not worth, doing stupid things…, I kinda just blew it…”, which was why she was “…tryin’ not to just be stupid”. Ava felt that being at the AP had made it “easier” to achieve her goals because she was able to concentrate. Her final thoughts were that, although she was academically able, she “…used to find being good at work embarrassing…I realised that it’s not embarrassing to be good at work…”.

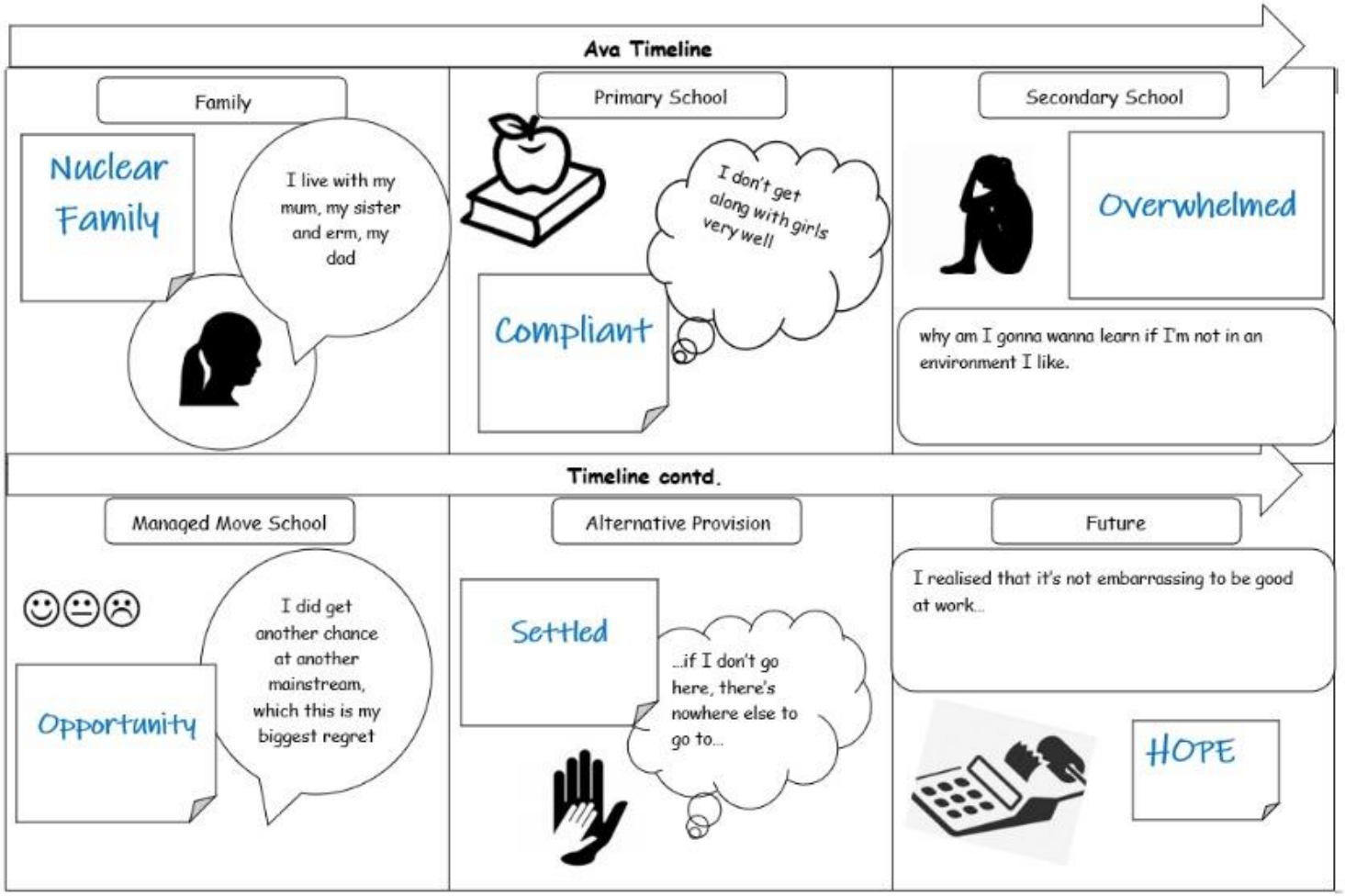

Figure 6: Storyboard representation of Ava's Story - adapted from Greenberg et al. (2012)

4.18 Findings for Ava

4.19 Research Question One – What stories do girls have about their experiences of mainstream education?

4.19.1 Interactions

Ava's time in mainstream education was framed by her take-it-or -leave it attitude, regarding friends, but this was not the case in terms of her education, which she appeared to engage positively with when she could. This appears to contradict the research of Tejerina-Arreal et al. (2020), that SEMH affects levels of attainment.

Ava did not speak much about her thoughts or feelings, instead focusing on others' actions, but did engage in some social interactions, that appeared to be grounded in a relationship of trust, for example, she mentioned sharing with friends that she had gone into care. At the same time, Ava also actively avoided other social interactions and for the most part, socialising was not central to Ava's story. It appears that Ava was not overly concerned about having or making friends, and her references to 'drama' was always used in the context of speaking about girls. The current literature around YP having a sense of school belonging (Craggs & Kelly, 2018), does not appear to be applicable to Ava, however, this might be related to possible social communication difficulties. Furthermore, Ava did not report that she had positive student-teacher relationships, so therefore would not have missed these, as the research suggests (Allen & Bowles, 2013).

4.19.2 Continuity/Temporality

The subject of friendships was never a feature of Ava's story, and her nonchalant attitude towards having relationships with peers and teachers, continued throughout secondary school

and to some extent, in AP. Ava has strong opinions about rules and fairness, which do not appear to have changed over time, and it is these two things that were the reasons for her spending much of her time in detentions or internal inclusion. It is possible that Ava's externalising behaviours that were presented as 'disruptive' might be an indication of an unmet need, which is suggested as a possible factor in the 'Transforming children and Young People's Mental Health' and 'Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools' guidance (Department Of Health & Department For Education, 2017; DfE, 2018a)

Ava was and continues to be supported by her family, which perhaps explains why she was so anxious to return to her mother when she was in care. It is clear that having the continued support from family and the temporary assistance from the external professional at the LA, who had advocated for her, was central to Ava quickly acquiring a place at the AP setting that she is in now. This is a good example of how involving families in the decision-making process, as outlined in the SEND Code of Practice, can help with a smooth transition (DfE & DoH, 2014).

4.19.3 Place

Ava says that she has always enjoyed learning and does not remember experiencing any difficulties with this. Her challenges were centred around the secondary school environment, as Ava did not mention the primary school setting. It seems that apart from the busyness of secondary school, which was recognised as a challenge for some YP (Mills & Thomson, 2018), Ava neither liked nor disliked her time in mainstream and she likes being in the AP setting, because of the small environment, which is reflected in Ofsted's (2016) research about APs.

Ava's time in care was punctuated with thoughts about leaving the foster carer's home. While she liked the family, Ava did not have any positive memories about being there. These feelings might have been exacerbated by the 'unofficial' extension to the time that she was in the foster carer's home, mentioning how confined she had felt in her room, and the uncertainty around when she would return home, which worried her.

4.20 Research Question Two – How do girls describe the differences between AP and mainstream schools in their stories?

Ava's view of teachers in her mainstream setting differed to those about the staff in AP. The affirming staff interactions with the YP in AP, was a positive difference, which Hill (1997) reports. Ava noted that the adults seemed to reduce any power imbalances in the relationship, by 'joking' with the YP. Ava felt that this would not have been tolerated in a mainstream setting. The size of the setting was an important factor for Ava and this is supported by research around what works for YP in AP (House of Commons Education Committee, 2018; McCluskey et al., 2019). Ava prefers to work in a quiet environment, so being in AP suits her. Concerning the curriculum offer, Ava is satisfied with the reduced offer and likes the core subjects that she continues to be taught. This may be because, as Michael and Frederickson (2013) assert, that there are perceived benefits to having a flexible curriculum.

Statistical data and other studies highlight the difference in the number of boys who are in AP, compared to the amount of girls (DfE, 2021a; Russell & Thomson, 2011), and this has not gone unnoticed by Ava. However, Ava's fragile relationships with girls means that this is not a problem for her. In terms of behaviour, Ava thinks that it is similar to what she had observed in school but recognises that all of the YP in the setting have challenges, that have

prevented them from remaining in a mainstream school. These YP are typically found within the groups, whose data has been extracted from government statistics about education (House of Commons Education Committee, 2018).

4.21 Research Question Three – Have the girls' perceptions changed about their futures, since moving to AP?

Ava's initial fear about being in AP was that it would impact her future because she thought that employers would not want to employ somebody who has a PEX recorded on their files. However, she now realises that this is not the case. Ava's fears of rejection may be linked to previous experiences of teachers' negative attitude towards her. This was documented in the research by Stanforth and Rose (2020), exploring the concept of inclusion versus exclusion.

Ava had previously wanted to become a makeup artist but now wants to be an accountant. She did mention that she would like to do something else as well, to provide some sort of relief from the structured accountancy role. There is a sense that Ava is undecided and this is one reason why it is important that destinations are recorded for children who are in AP, as well as in mainstream schools (DfE, 2021d). It is not clear whether that decision was as a result of being in AP but having a sense of achievement has probably enabled Ava to re-focus and see that she has a good chance of succeeding in this career.

4.22 Amelia's Background Story

When I arrived at the AP setting, Amelia had a stomach-ache but had asked her dad to collect her when she had finished talking to me. Amelia has been living with her dad since she was a toddler and has siblings, who she rarely sees. Growing up, Amelia described being around

people whose lifestyles included substance misuse and Amelia says that this was a contributing factor of a violent physical act against her, by her dad's friend.

A poignant event during Amelia's childhood, which was a constant feature of her story, was her mum leaving her at a young age. This was expressed by comments such as "…my mum's never cared about me …" and feeling confused when her mum treated her "…like I was her best friend …you never wanted anything to do with me…". Amelia has struggled to make sense of what her relationship is with her mum or what is should look like and expressed feeling "…a lot of stress…" about it. This event may explain Amelia's need for her dad to talk to her, "…I don't know what's going on…I'd prefer if he was telling me what's going on, so it wouldn't just hit me all at once".

4.23 Primary School

At primary school, Amelia mentioned that in Year 3 or 4, there was an adult that she felt she could talk to when she needed to, and that "…she'd sit me down…". Amelia remembers being "popular" in school but thinks that it was in Year 5, that she began to "misbehave" and had punched a teacher. Amelia does not mention whether her relationship with the adult that she could talk to, continued after this happened. Amelia was subsequently diagnosed with Attentive Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and said that the medication "…calmed me down a lot…". Amelia's view is that she was good at reading and writing but school said, that academically, she "…was two years behind…".

4.24 Secondary School

Amelia looked forward to starting secondary school, but soon realised that "…it was a lot different…" to primary school, with the size of the school and number of students being the most noticeable thing. She was one of only two students to go to her secondary school, as she lived outside the school catchment area that the other children from her primary school went to. Although she was partly glad, as some of them were "…sassy girls…". This may be why Amelia felt that she always got on with boys, "…a lot better…", attributing this to being around her dad and neighbour's children who were boys.

Despite Amelia's constant truanting and being placed in the internal isolation room, Amelia says that her attendance was good, because her dad would make her go, even when she was reluctant. On some occasions, she was being taught "…Maths, English and Science…" for two hours a day as part of a small group. It was in these lessons that Amelia felt that you could "…basically be yourself…".

Amelia "…never really trusted any of the teachers…" and because she was finding it difficult to manage pressures that were related to her home life, she would find ways to cope with this, by truanting lessons and detentions and drawing on the walls in the toilet blocks. Amelia's feelings of mistrust in teachers was because she felt that they did not listen to her. Amelia felt that this was because they thought that she was lying, recalling a time when she had told a teacher that she was having a panic attack and was told to "…sit down, do your work…". Amelia's emotional state was expressed through her crying "…a lot in school…" and she recalls "…cutting myself…" to avoid the pain of what was going on around her. Although

Amelia thought that everything was getting to her, it seems that at the root was her trying to make sense of why her mum had left her.

The school's response to Amelia's deteriorating behaviour was to plan a manage move for her, but because of Covid-19, she was allowed to participate in the online lessons, which she avoided. When schools did a gradual reintegration following the re-opening of schools. Amelia's school reintegration was much slower than other YPs', starting with two hours a day before increasing to three hours and then fulltime. However, she "…was there for maybe two…" before being "…kicked out again". After a failed managed move, Amelia anxiously returned to her school and was surprised that she was "…really popular…". The other students' attention towards her, following this episode, probably made the managed move feel like a badge of honour.

Amelia's continued lack of compliance meant that despite being warned about the possibility of losing her school place, her mistrust of adults meant that she was not sure whether they were "…being truthful…". Ultimately the warning came true, and plans were made for Amelia to attend a different school. A deliberate decision was taken not to put her into a mainstream setting, because the school felt that it would not be a successful placement. During her last week at school, Amelia said that the teachers started to stop "…caring…" and she withdrew emotionally.

4.25 Managed Move(s)

Amelia's story reveals that she only had one managed move, which was at the end of Year 7. The breakdown in relationships with other YP at the new school over the 6–12-week

placement, meant that she had to return to her school. The school then identified an AP, where she was unlikely to meet other YP that she knew.

4.26 Alternative Provision

Amelia's first impressions of AP was that it felt more like a "…youth group…it's a bit weird…it's a bit different" than a school setting. Amelia's interview for the AP place was on a Friday and she started on the Monday, admitting that she was "…very, very scared…" of starting at a new place and planned to "…keep myself to myself".

Some of Amelia's previous difficulties have continued in AP, with some "…drama with the girls…" and falling out with a boy, who she went out for a couple of weeks with. Amelia was conflicted about how she felt in a smaller group compared to being in a mainstream setting where "…everyone liked me…I wasn't friends with them, but I used to speak to them…". This was in contrast to the day that we spoke, and she had fallen out with some of the YP in the AP setting and was feeling marginalised. Amelia reflected on her time at mainstream, saying that she missed seeing her friends, which is what Allen and Bowles (2013) assert. However, this might have been because she was not allowed to go out, once she had returned home from school and school was the "…only time I'd see them…" and so may have missed them at times, even when she was attending mainstream school.

There were some positives about being in AP. Amelia says that she gets the support for her academic and emotional needs. She felt that at mainstream school, teachers would not take her request for help seriously. One example that she gave was that she would be going home when she had finished talking to me and remarked that "…in a mainstream school they'd be

like, you're staying here until the end of the day". Amelia felt that staff at the AP were more likely to notice when there was something wrong and would "…be like, what's going on?". Academically, Amelia said that the work (GCSEs) was easier, but after clarifying, she thought that it might be because she received support when she needed it. Amelia said that her dad is pleased that she is "…putting her head down…" and she enjoys telling him about her day, which she never used to. In her opinion, "…mainstream was fun, and it was, I wouldn't say it was better than being here, it's better in ways but it's not better".

4.27 Future

Amelia has several ideas about what she wants to do when she leaves AP. When Amelia was younger, she wanted to be a video games designer and then when she was at secondary school, she changed her mind, instead, wanting to become a mechanic like her dad. However, while she has been in AP, she has been given the opportunity to have work experience at a garage and this has made her re-evaluate her options. Amelias says that she was "…really bored…" and has now made tentative enquiries into working in childcare, but is not fully committed, saying "…if I don't like childcare then I've got really nowhere where I'd really like to go…". Amelia thinks her indecisiveness is linked to her ADHD diagnosis, explaining that "…if I've got a plan A, I'll always have a plan B...".

4.27.1 Amelia's Reflections

Amelia thought that others might say that she had a "…really nice personality…" and that she was "funny". She concluded that if people did not like her, then she was fine with that but wanted others to hear her stories with the same attention, that she gave to theirs. Amelia said that she has been most affected by her mum leaving, and not being present at key times, such

as Mother's Day celebrations while at primary school. She has become acutely aware of having an absent mother, as this was highlighted by other YP at secondary school.

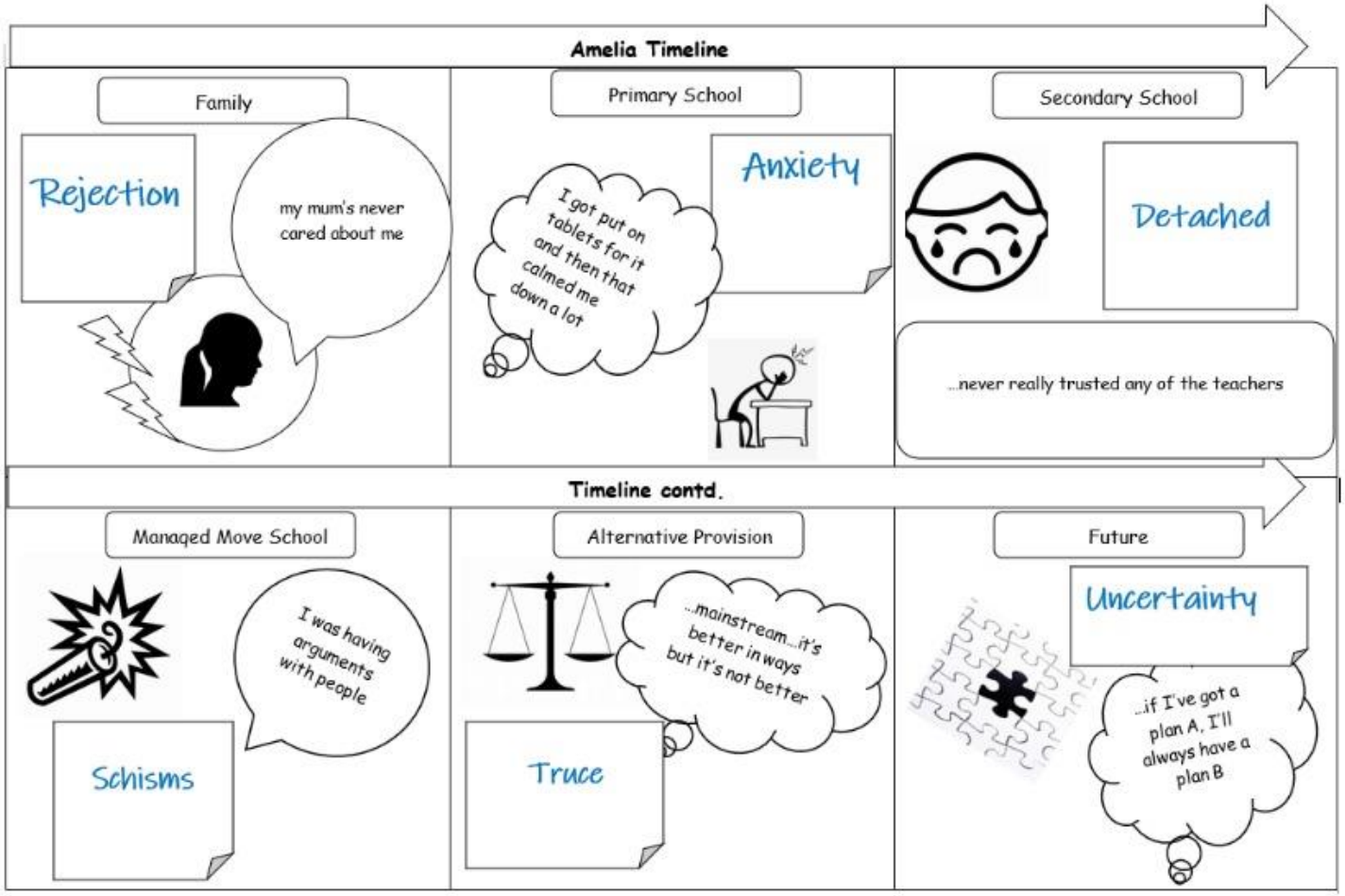

Figure 7: Storyboard representation of Amelia's Story - adapted from Greenberg et al. (2012)

4.28 Findings for Amelia

4.29 Research Question One – What stories do girls have about their experiences of mainstream education?

4.29.1 Interactions

Amelia had much to say in her narrative account, which included her personal and social interactions that were woven into the fabric of her story. The link between Amelias' diagnosis and change in behaviour shows why schools have to consider the DfE (2018a) guidance on whether poor behaviour is linked to any unidentified needs. The emotive language that Amelia used throughout her narrative, is not unusual according to Gordon (2006), who highlighted that girls typically used more descriptive vocabulary to describe distressing events, than boys.

Amelia was one of two YP to go to her secondary school and by all accounts, this did not cause her any concern as she had not wanted to be with the "sassy girls", which supports the idea that girls often have complicated relationships with other girls (McLaughlin, 2005; Osler, 2006). During primary school, there were instances of Amelia using poor externalising behaviour to express her emotions and becoming physical with an adult. The fact that Amelia felt unheard, is something that is reflected in research and also presents possible reasons for the abrupt manner in which some girls tried to communicate (Clarke et al., 2011); Amelia's account of her distress suggests that her presentation may have been misinterpreted as being overly intensive.

Amelia's story reveals that she had low self-esteem about her academic capabilities, based on what adults had said about her academic ability. Amelia seems to have internalised this and

does not appear to see herself as a successful learner. This supports the literature, which has highlighted how poor behaviour can be linked to academic underachievement by some YP (House of Commons Education Committee, 2018; Tejerina-Arreal et al., 2020; Timpson, 2019). Underachievement in the classroom could also be attributed to Amelia's failed Managed Move, removal from the classroom and self-exclusion, which is supported by the literature (De Friend et al., 2020; Power & Taylor, 2020). Amelia's comparisons with others are not only related to academia but also around body image.

Amelia remembered at least two occasions where she was acutely aware that her mother was absent from her life. The first time was at primary school during Mother's Day celebrations and when she went to secondary school, when this information was used as an emotional weapon against her. The feelings of rejection meant that Amelia resisted forming relationships with adults who might have been able to support her, although she has rejected this as a possibility. Fears of abandonment has made Amelia uneasy about not knowing whether everything is going well in her dad's life. It is possible that both of them find it difficult to communicate with each other about their emotions, as Amelia never mentioned whether her and her dad had been able to resolve the circumstances around her mum leaving her and her dad.

4.29.2 Continuity/ Temporality

The main thread in Amelia's story is one of feeling unloved, which can ultimately be traced back to her broken maternal relationship. This continuous pain, appears to be a barrier for Amelia trusting and building meaningful relationships with others, often sabotaging them, to protect herself. One example of this is when Amelia had one short-lived managed move

placement, which ended abruptly. It seems that Amelia is constantly in a flight or fight mode and more often than not, Amelia goes into fight mode, so that she will not have to confront and deal with situations that she has little control over. Amelia's responses are likely to be what Ford et al. (2018) describe as, "high levels of psychological distress".

4.29.3 Place

Secondary school was the most frequently mentioned place and there appeared to be a dichotomy between Amelia's struggles with learning in school and her need to be around her friends in a place that offered familiarity and relative safety. It was here that Amelia felt a surface-level acceptance from her peers and had developed a few close relationships, which were not always reciprocated. Although most YP get used to being in AP, the literature suggests that this is not the case for all YP, who, like Amelia, would have preferred to remain in mainstream education (House of Commons Education Committee, 2018).

Amelia's sense of her homelife was that she found it difficult to accept her dad's protectiveness, feeling that she did not have enough freedom. This meant that there were tensions around her wanting to go out and feeling trapped.

4.30 Research Question Two – How do girls describe the differences between AP and mainstream schools in their stories?

Amelia missed her friends from mainstream school and had felt more accepted there, supporting the view of Hogg and Vaughan (2018), about the importance of friendships. Although Amelia has struggled to find acceptance at her AP setting, because of the demographic of the YP who attend AP. The difficulties that Amelia experienced with

building relationships with the other YP, this may be because they are more likely to have their own challenges and not as accommodating as some YP in mainstream, who may be more emotionally grounded. However, Amelia did say that she has started to make friends with the other YP, which supports the findings from the Pennacchia et al. (2016) study.

The staff in the setting were singled out for being the most obvious difference between AP and mainstream schooling (Russell & Thomson, 2011). The positive difference of staff interaction with the YP in AP was featured throughout the research in the literature review (Hill, 1997; House of Commons Education Committee, 2018; Michael & Frederickson, 2013; Ofsted, 2016) and Amelia appeared to value the support that they gave to her.

4.31 Research Question Three – Have the girls' perceptions changed about their futures, since moving to AP?

Amelia's relationships have been a frequently occurring preoccupation, of stories of broken friendships and partially restoring them. Amelia's narrative suggests that at secondary school, she had difficult relationships with the teachers, and had relatively stable relationships with the YP. In AP, this has changed, with Amelia having improved relationships with staff but the smaller environment of the AP has meant that her peer relationships, seem to be less stable. Ford et al. (2018) found that the "high levels of psychological distress" was caused by poor mental health and school exclusion. However, it appears that their concept of exclusion was only seen as being one directional, i.e., the school. In Amelia's case, it seems to be bi-directional, and that psychological distress that she seems to have experienced are evidenced by poor mental health ***and*** self-exclusion.

Amelia has had the opportunity to attend a work experience placement, that was organised by staff at the AP setting as she had expressed an interest in becoming a mechanic. Amelia's work experience at a garage has made her reconsider what she wants to do. She has some loose plans but acknowledges that these are likely to change, and this may happen before she leaves AP. The absence of her mother seems to be the primary factor that is stopping Amelia from moving forward in life, and until this is resolved, it is possible that she may find it difficult to move on. Amelia's time at the AP has meant that she is likely to obtain some qualifications, which she might not otherwise have achieved. This might also be related to the research of Hill (1997) suggesting that she may be experiencing feelings of being a successful learner. Although she is unsure about her academic future at this time, these will give her a foundation to move forward when she chooses to do so.

4.32 Kyra's Background Story

When Kyra came into the room for our conversation, she appeared to be quite self-confident. When I asked her to tell me about her background, she thought that her family "…wasn't a great family…" and that she had to take on a caring role for her younger siblings. Kyra attributes feelings of anger to her upbringing and time that she spent in the care system, before returning to the family home. She reflected that anger was modelled in the family home and that it was acceptable behaviour.

4.33 Primary School

In Reception, Kyra recalls that she was a "…very shy child…", who did not get along with the other children. Over time, she developed confidence but found that the other children had formed their friendship groups, and her feelings were that "…I don't fit in here, I don't fit in

there…", which she says made her a target for bullies. She remembers that because she was angry, she had lots of fights and was labelled as the perpetrator. As a result of Kyra's externalising behaviours, she was put into "… anger management classes which I never have liked the idea of". Kyra's view of this intervention was that the school was trying to "fix" her, and she felt trapped between trying to balance the expectations of being emotionally regulated at school, which was in contrast to the dysregulation that was a feature of her home life.

Home life continued to dominate and impact Kyra at school, when she says other children began to spread rumours "…of how I killed him…", referring to the death of her new baby brother. Kyra's mother was struggling to come to terms with his death and "…everyone was so depressed…" in her family. Kyra was trying to cope with this, an abusive home life, which meant that she became more dysregulated at school.

Kyra developed a fear of learning after her mum's method of teaching at home left her "…scared of learning…" and admitted that this was a barrier to future learning. She remembered being less academically able than her peers. Kyra's academic underperformance is likely to be linked to the fact that she "…had dyslexia…", which had not been diagnosed at the time. Kyra says that she failed spelling and maths tests but despite this, enjoyed reading "…smaller books, like numbered books…".

4.34 Secondary School

Kyra attended a girls' school, which was problematic for her, as most of her siblings were boys and not having any female friends made it difficult to interact with the girls at school.

She made attempts to join a group of girls who had attended her primary school, but "…they literally kicked me out as soon as they saw me,". Kyra felt betrayed as she recalled that the girls were the "…the same girls who I protected from the boys…", explaining that she had taken on a similar role in school, as the one that she used to manage disputes between her younger siblings at home.

Kyra cannot remember having genuine friendships at school, with many ending with "…some kind of argument…". This was usually linked to Kyra's feelings of injustice, and she gave an example of when another girl pushed into the lunch queue and she "…pushed her back out…she bought her friends in and I flipped…". Kyra's recollection of the event is that she ended up in a "…brawl…" and "…being suspended…". Following her suspension, Kyra was placed in a lunchtime intervention club, called Sparkle Time. This was clearly unexpected, and Kyra remembers thinking, "…sparkle time? sparkle time?" … I felt like they were saying you need to find somewhere to place me to keep me backed up…I thought I was back in nursery".

Around the same time as this was happening, a teacher had noticed that Kyra struggled with words and arranged for her to be tested for dyslexia. Kyra said that she "…had that diagnosis in Year 8…". Throughout Year 8, Kyra increasingly got into fights with other YP, and the school's response to her, reminded her of how she felt when she was in primary school, and was seen as the instigator. Kyra response to the sanctions that she received was, "…you know what, I'm done…" and this was the catalyst for a series of suspensions before being managed moved. Kyra says that the school's explanation of what would be happening was unclear, leaving her unsure about whether she had been permanently excluded or managed

moved. She said that "…they made it sound like a permanent exclusion…" but then dropped hints that it was not, which Kyra assumed was to make the school look "…nice…".

4.35 Managed Move(s)

At the time of being managed moved, Kyra was in Year 8 and had recently returned to the care system and had a tenuous relationship with her new carer and family. This left Kyra feeling unwanted and said that comments were made about her hygiene and the way that she dressed. Kyra says that this meant that "… I spent two years of pure torture being told off, being bullied…". Kyra used her behaviour to communicate the anger that she felt and would become highly dysregulated as she tried to find an "…escape". Kyra's distress was further exacerbated by the new school that she had been moved to, saying that it was "…a horrendous school…".

Kyra's time at the school was punctuated by feelings of being "…completely outcasted…", name calling and being labelled as "difficult". Kyra mentioned the differences in the way that boys were treated to girls at the school, telling me that "…the boys…they had more chances than us…". Kyra says that she was stopped from joining in some activities, such as boxing and believed that this was because she was a girl. Kyra also experienced boys opening the toilet door, while she was inside. Kyra's dysregulation meant that she continued to have fights that often revolved around YP speaking disparagingly about her family, for example, "…talking about my family saying how my sister should be dead …I fought on this one…". Kyra was sent to the internal exclusion room and lost her place at the school, following this incident.

4.36 Alternative Provision

In Kyra's setting she says that "…there are more boys than girls…" and she feels that girls are treated "…more harshly…" than the boys. Kyra has been subjected to name calling by the boys, relating to perceived masculine traits, such as her features and deep tone of voice, when she becomes angry. She also recalls some of the boys unlocking the bathroom door, while she was getting changed. Her reaction to their one-day suspension was that she "…didn't know why they only got suspended for a day...", as she had been suspended for two days after fighting with one of the boys. Kyra's observation is that most of the girls have experienced verbal abuse from the boys and says that "… some of the girls here just thought I'm not dealing with this…these boys here are way different to the ones you get in normal schools".

Kyra seems to be enjoying learning in the AP setting and says that the curriculum there appears to be relatively diverse, with core subjects of Maths, English and Science being offered, alongside drama and art, which Kyra is studying. She says that she works better in small groups as lots of noise "…brings back things…". This means that she can "…get work done quicker, I absorb the knowledge more…" because the teacher goes into greater depth about the subject.

Kyra told me that throughout primary and secondary school, she found it difficult to make friends, and that whenever she did make a friend it was not reciprocal. In AP, she thinks that she has "…found a kind of friendship group…" but is still uncertain about the genuineness of the relationships and has assigned herself the role of protector, saying, "…I won't allow anybody to hurt them…".

4.37 Future

Kyra's thoughts about her future include being either a nurse or fireman, which she says are "all kind of really positive roles". She has considered other careers such as being a dress designer or going into the police force. However, she now thinks that she would like to be "…a therapist…" for children, explaining that she wanted to help them so that they did not have to deal with their problems without support. Although Kyra is in what should be a temporary stay PRU, she says that she wants to "…stay here permanently…" as she refers to the centre as being her "…calm space…". She hopes to become more settled and thinks that she will remain in the care system "…until I'm in college…".

4.37.1 Kyra's Reflections

Kyra contemplated that she had been emotionally impacted by events in her life, stating that "…I'm a very near-death child 'cause of my family life…" and spoke about the "depression" that is a contributory factor to her thoughts of suicide. Kyra's experiences with males means that she "…can't act normal in front of men…they scare me 'cause of what's happened". However, she knows that some of the boys in the AP setting have been subjected to similar things as she has.

Kyra has positive feelings about who she is but also describes herself as being "…very loud…". Kyra feels that she is in a place now, where she can exercise some agency in her life. One of Kyra's newly identified positive attribute, is that she has been able to use de-escalation skills with other YP in the setting. She has been able to reflect on this, saying that "…I can actually help without getting violent…". Kyra recognises that her external behaviour is contextually dependent in order to manage her environment, and that she has two

personas. Although this might appear to be problematic to the adults around her, she concludes that "…I'm both of these people, neither one can't live without the other", which suggests that this is a coping mechanism for her.

Kyra's final thoughts about her AP setting was that "…they've given us opportunity for better lives, and this isn't the same opportunity I would get back at normal school, they wouldn't give us this opportunity".

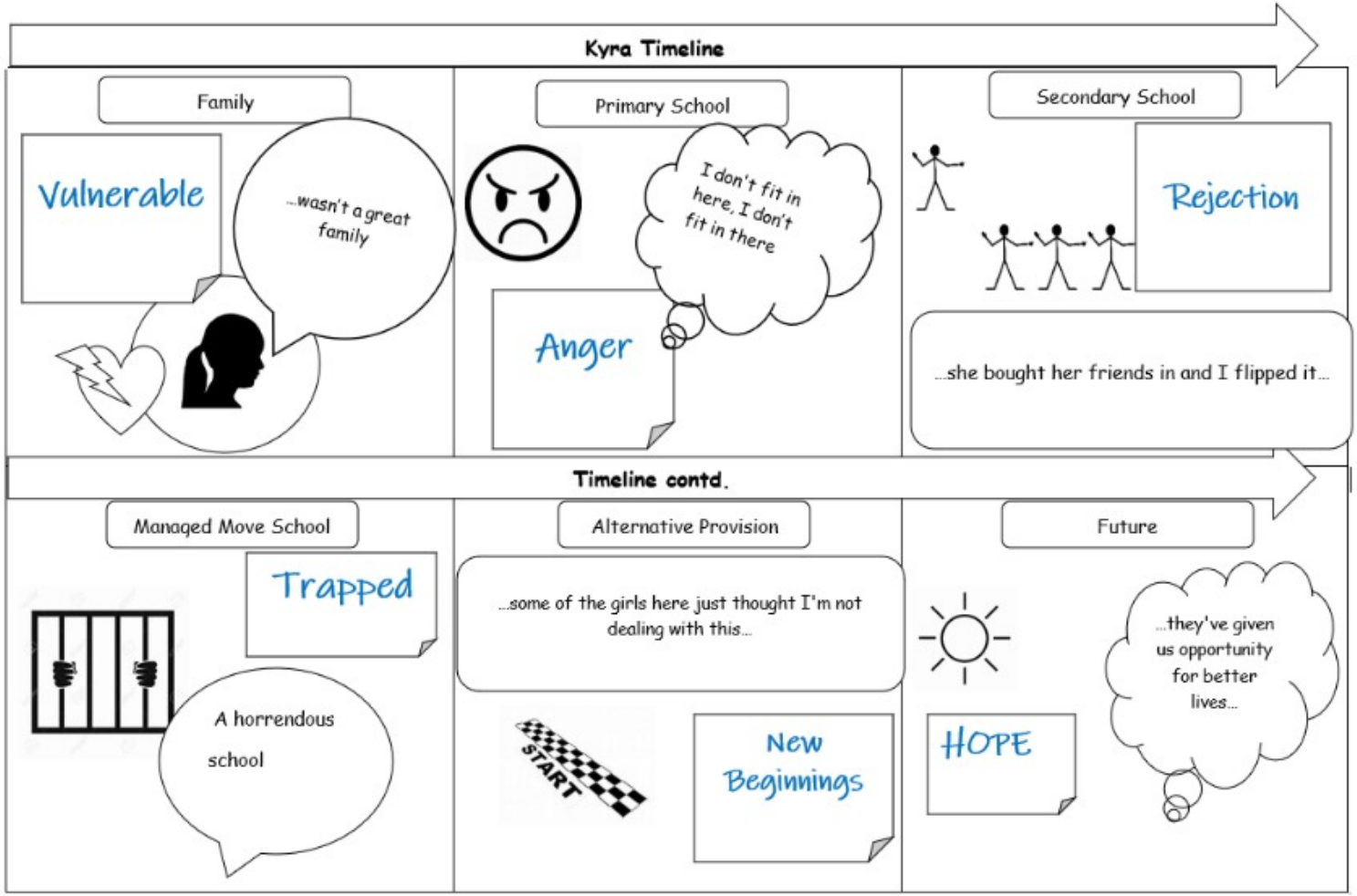

Figure 8: Storyboard representation of Kyra's Story - adapted from Greenberg et al. (2012)

4.38 Findings for Kyra

4.39 Research Question One – What stories do girls have about their experiences of mainstream education?

4.39.1 Interactions

Kyra's story revealed the feelings of isolation and loneliness that she felt, not only at school but also at home, suggesting that her sense of not belonging was not only limited to school, which the research fails to consider (Allen & Bowles, 2013). The DfE (2018a) guidance around creating a culture of school belonging, also holds a narrow view of what it means to belong. Kyra did not make any direct references to having a relationship with any of her teachers and told me that because her and her siblings had been taken into care, as a result of a disclosure that she had made to a teacher, she had felt betrayed. Kyra recalls that her interactions with her peers were fraught, and again, there was no mention of any positive friendships.

The early identification of SEND needs is one of the responsibilities of the school SENDCo, which is outlined in the SEND Code of Practice (DfE & DoH, 2014). However, the fact that Kyra's educational need was overlooked may be because the school deemed her home life and ensuing SEMH needs to be more of a priority. If Kyra had received early intervention to support her learning, this may have had a positive impact on her self-esteem as a learner, which appears to have occurred once she arrived in AP, as the literature suggests (Hill, 1997).

4.39.2 Continuity/Temporality

One emotion that was woven into Kyra's story was her feelings of increasing anger. This appears to be the root cause for Kyra's many interventions and suspensions at school. It

would appear that nobody attempted to investigate and address the root causes for Kyra's dysregulated behaviour, instead placing her in an intervention to 'manage' it. The misdirected response to Kyra's externalising behaviours are addressed in the research by Tillson and Oxley (2020) and are clearly at odds with government guidance around the identification and management of YPs' SEMH difficulties (DfE, 2018a). Kyra seems to be doing well in AP and is beginning to learn how to self-regulate, by adapting some of her skills, which she had developed during the difficult circumstances that she experienced, while at home. It is not clear at this stage, whether she has finally found ways to completely manage her anger, but she is having counselling sessions in AP, which is a positive thing and was identified as being part of a 'creative' curriculum (Michael & Frederickson, 2013). These types of curriculum may also explain the sense of increased wellbeing that YP experienced when the attended AP (Mills & Thomson, 2018).

Although Kyra and her primary school had been unaware that she had dyslexia, this had clearly had an impact on her learning at the time, and the early stages of her secondary education. There were likely to be indicators that Kyra had an unmet need, that schools are expected to identify and put appropriate support in place for (DfE & DoH, 2014). Although these difficulties are still present and it cannot be known what progress Kyra may have made if her needs were picked up sooner; the small group sizes and staff support at the AP setting, have been one of the reasons that Kyra now views herself as a successful learner. Engaging small group teaching, and measurable progress are some of the hallmarks of a successful AP setting (Ofsted, 2016), although this is relative, when looking at the progress of YP in mainstream settings (Parsons, 2018; Taylor, 2012). However, the gaps in YPs' progress cannot be solely be attributed to APs, as lack of communication, transition information and a

perceive lack of empathy were highlighted by Ofsted (2011), Stanforth and Rose (2020) and Taylor (2012).

4.39.3 Place

Kyra's home life was a place, where Kyra did not always feel safe. As the oldest, it was here that she took on the role of a caregiver for her younger siblings. Kyra's story suggests that many of her needs were not being met, and because of this she and her siblings were taken into care. The carer's home is presented in Kyra's story as being a place where she suffered verbal abuse, low self-esteem and was constantly 'othered'. Her memories of being there are that it was a place where she was constantly angry, but powerless to do anything about what was happening.

In a similar way, primary and secondary school were also places where Kyra felt unjustly treated and misunderstood. Although Kyra did not have a strong sense of belonging at her school, this was made worse when she was moved to the managed move placement. Kyra's situation is one where Tejerina-Arreal et al. (2020) rightly conclude, that the "direction of causality" (p. 217) is unknown, regarding the deterioration of mental health and exclusion. It is only now, in AP where Kyra says that she feels 'safe' and has a sense of belonging, and because of this feeling of safety, she is resisting being moved back to a mainstream setting.

4.40 Research Question Two – How do girls describe the differences between AP and mainstream schools in their stories?

The curriculum offer in Kyra's AP appears to have slightly more subject options than is suggested in the literature, which presents the curriculum in AP as being too narrow (Ofsted,

2016). In Kyra's case, the amount of subjects on offer were more suited to her pace of learning, as the fewer subject areas meant that she was not overwhelmed with as much information as she would have been in a mainstream school. Flexible curriculums in APs are mentioned in the literature review, and were not always viewed positively by some YP, due to the perceived lack of challenge and opportunities (House of Commons Education Committee, 2018; Ofsted, 2016). However, other research showed that the demands of a narrower curriculum was more suited to some of the YP, who found learning difficult (Michael & Frederickson, 2013).

Kyra's desire to remain, in what should be a short stay setting, reveals her feelings of safety with the staff. The small class sizes also act as a protective factor for Kyra, who describes the triggering events that occur when she is in a noisy environment. In terms of her physical safety, Kyra's background means that she has become accustomed to unpredictable behaviours, meaning that some of the volatility that occur in her AP, may offer some predictability for her. It seems that Kyra has finally found some stability in her peer relationships, but she is still guarded because of past hurtful experiences.

4.41 Research Question Three – Have the girls' perceptions changed about their futures, since moving to AP?

Kyra has a positive outlook regarding her future. Her new perspective appears to be attributable primarily to being in AP, the focused support that she is receiving and spending some time in respite care, instead of full time with her foster carer. It would be reasonable to suspect that moving out of what Kyra describes as a stressful environment, would have an impact on Kyra's emotional state. However, she appears to be truly grateful for the

opportunities afforded to her and perceived care from the staff in AP, which has in turn has led to increased self-esteem. Kyra has a new-found confidence which other girls in AP experienced (Pennacchia et al., 2016), because she feels that she is listened to, particularly when she has been asked to contribute to student voice panels. This is something that other girls experienced when they went to AP (Clarke et al., 2011).

Kyra had previously wanted to have a 'helping' career, which would benefit a wide range of people, liked going into the police force, but being in AP has made her re-think this, instead, choosing to focus on a career that will specifically advocate and support YP like herself.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

5 Discussion

5.1 Review of the Literature

The aim of this research was to increase educationalists' understanding of girls' experience of alternative provision through the stories that they tell. A review of the literature revealed that there is little research about girls who find themselves in AP, despite many of them being included in government statistics (DfE, 2021a). The available data suggests that YP are most vulnerable to being excluded from school when they are in Year 9, however, the girls' stories reveal that the processes that are linked to exclusion as shown in the introduction, can be much earlier. This means that schools should be using tools such as a strength and difficulties questionnaire (Ruby, 2021) when YP start at primary or secondary school, which should result in an earlier identification of any factors that could lead to an exclusion. Appropriate evidence-based interventions can then be used to address these and to change the upward trajectory.

Currently, the main recorded reason for a removal from school is for 'persistent disruptive behaviour' (DfE, 2021a). However, this reason cannot be applied to most of the girls in this research, for example, Chloe and Amelia were largely absent from the classroom due to truancy, and both Ava and Kyra did engage with learning when they were in the classroom. The girls' truancy from the classroom can be traced back to the deterioration of their SEMH and subsequent avoidance of pressurising environments. A link between poor SEMH and academic attainment has been documented by Cornaglia et al. (2015) and Rothon et al. (2011). However, this view can be challenged because despite two of the girls clearly struggling with their SEMH, they were still in some of the higher academic ability sets.

Furthermore, since being in AP with persistent challenging circumstances, the girls have, and continue to make progress in their learning, despite the presence of SEMH.

SEMH needs were a factor in all of the girls' narratives, and although there is an understanding around the potential impact of this on YP, from other research and government guidance (DfE, 2018a; Timpson, 2019); it remains largely overlooked when decisions around exclusionary practices are being made (Tillson & Oxley, 2020). While it is clear that some staff were willing to listen to the girls, they often did not have time to pay meaningful attention to what the girls were trying to communicate verbally, or through externalising behaviours. Furthermore, it should be noted that when the girls spoke to the staff, it was usually because they were the ones who were responsible for implementing the punitive response, that the school had put in place; and was therefore an unintentional interaction. The behaviour and mental health guidance (DfE, 2018a) is of little value if there is nothing to incentivise schools to embed the guidance into the school culture. One way of doing this would be for statutory bodies, such as Ofsted (2021) to make this a priority as part of their inspections, as suggested by Boddison (2019).

5.2 Implications of Managed Moves

Any tool that can be used to incentivise schools to take a strategic approach to understanding and addressing the unmet needs of girls, like those in this research, can only be a good thing. The isolation that the girls felt, challenges the argument of Dodge and Pettit (2003), that YP experience rejection ***following*** an exclusion. This reductionist view needs further exploration, since it is clear that the girls were already feeling excluded, prior to them losing their place at school. Furthermore, the association made by Ford et al. (2018, p. 633) between exclusion

and “psychological distress” cannot be applied broadly, as Chloe, Amelia and Kyra were all experiencing this due to the impact of their home lives.

Much of the literature relates to ‘exclusions’, however the lack of regulatory powers around managed moves appeared to have the most impact on the girls. This is because they were excluded from participating in the discussions around the move, and often the parental preferences were also ignored (House of Commons Education Committee, 2018). This is despite this being central to the managed move process (DfE, 2017a). Furthermore, all of the girls felt that they had experienced degrees of hostility from some staff and/or other YP. This is likely to have further contributed to the girls “psychological distress” (Ford et al., 2018, p. 633).

The girls’ reflections on the managed moves that they had experienced, places their level of participation firmly on the bottom rungs of the ladder of participation (Hart, 1992), ranging from manipulation to tokenism (see Figure 3). Although Hart’s (1980) model suggests that any degree of participation is acceptable, it could be argued that in the case of managed moves, anything less than rung three, ‘adult initiated – shared decision with children’, is unacceptable. However, if even this level of participation had occurred it would have given the girls a sense of self-efficacy.

5.3 Implications for Schools

A sense of belonging can be universally applied and is threaded through the narratives of the girls, when they talk about being in AP (Udah & Singh, 2019). A person-centred approach, of respect and acceptance (Rogers, 1980) by staff, has given the girls a place where they are able

to have the breadth of their needs met. However, the needs of other YP in AP can mean that although feelings of acceptance are readily found with the YP, respect can be missing. Chloe explained that she had been able to manage this, by adapting her behaviour, suggesting that the pattern of adjustment, continues to some extent for her. Others, like Amelia, interact with the YP, as she has always done, without too much investment in the relationships. The YP in the AP are in the truest sense, the girls' peers, as a 'peer' is equal in terms of academic and social development (Boyd & Bee, 2013; Shaffer & Kipp, 2014). In addition, the girls' sense of belonging is contributing towards a positive sense of self, and for three of the girls, this can be linked to the improvement in their mental health, as other studies have shown (Roffey-Barentsen, 2014).

5.4 Implications for Educational Psychologists

The girls' storied worlds suggest that in their narratives there was already a deterioration in their SEMH. Pre-existing challenges with SEMH were identified by Lloyd (2005b), who rightly identified that an array of social factors often blurred the lines for why the girls were excluded from school. Research around the impact of school exclusion often fails to address the nuances that relate to the exclusion of girls (Madia et al., 2022). The framing of 'nice' girls is the acceptable face of femininity, whereas girls who are excluded tend to display behaviours that are in conflict with this (Carlile, 2009). This was what appears to have occurred to the girls in this research, who were perceived as rude and loud, with little regard for other YP (Francis et al., 2017; Russell & Thomson, 2011). The backgrounds of similar girls to the ones in this research, are rarely interrogated to explore the multi-layered, complex reasons for their perceived, socially inacceptable behaviours; therefore, maintaining the belief that the girls are 'deviant' (Lloyd, 2005a). It was only when three of the girls (Chloe, Ava,

and Kyra) had moved from mainstream that they have been able to tell their stories as a way of making sense of why they were excluded.

The girls in this study are not vulnerable per se, as conceptualised by Ofsted (2011), Taylor (2012) and Timpson (2019), as all but one had a sense of agency about what they would and would not tolerate. This was problematic, as the hierarchical nature of education means that autonomy and individualism are not necessarily celebrated, and consequently, tensions inevitably arose between them and the school (Lynch & Lodge, 2002). The 'vulnerabilities' of the girls were rooted in events and environments that were outside of their control, which led to an educational vulnerability or disadvantage (Bruskas, 2008) because of missed lessons, suspensions and managed moves. This type of vulnerability is not discussed in the literature and consequently, the lack of recognition about this created difficult circumstances that the girls were unable to navigate without appropriate adult support. This adult support was missing while they were in their mainstream settings, and only became noticeably available to them once they were in AP. The lack of adult support is evidenced by the fact that none of the girls mentioned that their schools accessed external support services to work with them, even though guidance (DfE, 2018a) states that, where schools' identify that the same YP are consistently being sanctioned, then they should seek alternative methods to address this, such as external professionals.

In the geographical area where this piece of research was conducted there are numerous statutory and non-statutory agencies, whose support could be utilized for the girls, like Chloe, Ava, Amelia, and Kyra. However, this requires a joined-up approach which schools often find difficult to manage. External professionals such as EPs, have a holistic role that can

position them in a role that forms part of the early identification phase, with a view to supporting schools to identify the most appropriate professionals to involve.

5.5 Implications for Policymakers

Although, APs have been viewed as being the poor relative to mainstream education (Cole et al., 2019b; Ofsted, 2016; Taylor, 2012), many YP who attend, have positive things to report about them. This ranges from feelings of acceptance, having someone they can talk to and most importantly for the young people, someone who listens to them (Clarke et al., 2011; Ofsted, 2016; Timpson, 2019).

This study further extends the existing research base around girls and education (Power & Taylor, 2020) to include the AP setting. The limited studies that related specifically to girls AP were mainly drawn from the professional views of girls in AP, (Clarke et al., 2011; Parsons, 2018; Russell & Thomson, 2011; Thomson & Russell, 2009), rather than gaining their views directly which limits professionals' capacity to understand some of the nuanced behaviours that they may be observing in the classrooms. This is coupled with the fact that much of the government guidance that schools rely on, to formulate their responses to what they perceive to be poor behaviour, can seem contradictory with the need to manage behaviour while at the same time, considering the needs of the young person (Department For Education, 2016; DfE, 2018a, 2021c; Taylor, 2012).

5.6 Conclusion

The inclusion of and outcomes for YP in the English education system has been a cause of concern for policymakers (Munn et al., 2000; Parsons, 2018). The increasing numbers of YP

being educated outside mainstream education (DfE, 2021a), led to the introduction of APs in 1994 as a response to this (Jalali & Morgan, 2018). However, schools have found it increasingly difficult to manage the behaviour of some YP using official mechanisms, such as internal inclusion rooms or suspensions (DfE, 2017a). In an attempt to avoid permanently excluding YP, schools have used alternative measures, in the form of managed moves or AP. The girls' stories portray the schools' as neglecting to consider whether SEMH difficulties or SEND, underpinned their presenting behaviours (Department Of Health & Department For Education, 2017; DfE, 2018a; DfE & DoH, 2014).

While it appears that the schools have been unsuccessful in supporting the girls in this research to remain in mainstream education, the schools themselves are constrained by external systems, which they have little control over (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The perceived strength of mainstream education offering a broad curriculum (Ofsted, 2016), to prepare YP for adulthood, fails to consider the barriers to education that the girls were experiencing. They required a flexible curriculum that could holistically address their needs, which were not always related directly to academia. AP has been the place, albeit not perfect, where the girls have been able to become successful in their own way.

5.7 Limitations

This research was conducted within a limited period of time, meaning that I only had a snapshot of what life is like for the girls, in their respective AP settings. In addition, the APs that they were in, catered for Key Stage Four students meaning that three of the girls had only been there for about a year.

If there had been more time for the research, ethnography would have been a methodology that I could have chosen, as this type of research is suitable for in depth understanding and would have enhanced my understanding of the girls' storied worlds (Maruška & Domecka, 2020).

The nature of narrative research is that it describes experiences about specific times and spaces (Bruner, 1990; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Franzosi, 1998). Therefore, the girls' stories are likely to retract and expand as they encounter additional experiences and mature; enabling them to reflect and re-contextualize their stories (Adler et al., 2017). However, the current findings allow for a deeper understanding of girls' experiences in AP. It adds to the existing research and also provides future researchers in this area, something to build their research on.

5.8 My Reflections

Before I started this research, I expected to find that the literature review made references to adverse power dynamics between the girls and school staff, and the impact of these. However, the literature and narratives revealed that it was relationships that were portrayed as being the most impactful, in the girls' narratives. The girls spoke of relationships that offered protective factors, while other relationships exposed the girls' vulnerabilities, because of their experiences.

The girls' experiences meant that a challenge arose during member-checking, under the ethical principle of do no harm (BPS, 2017). For the girls in this research, their stories revealed difficult and for some, traumatising experiences. Painful memories were elicited as

they re-visited their stories in text form. Although member checking is part of sound ethical practice, to solve this dilemma, I made the decision to stop the process, knowing that this was the right thing to do (Hill et al., 1998). Instead I talked to them around their individual storyboards, which they responded positively to. Heath et al. (2007) suggests that these ethical dilemmas exist, because the current ones are outdated and do not consider the immersive nature of the researcher and the researched, as it was in this paper.

Finally, the girls' stories provided a narrative where the underlying reasons for their presenting behaviours remained largely unexplored by the adults around them and therefore, unrecognized. This has led me to reflect on how my knowledge of this can shape and inform my practice, especially through systemic work.

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Appendix A

Philosophical Position	Interpretivism	Advantages	Disadvantages
Purpose of Research	To reveal different constructs of phenomenon	Gives a broad perspective that can offer a range of starting points for	May not make a difference if legislation doesn't support multiple perspectives
Researcher Role	Embedded in research	Understand the object of study	Potential for bias and influencing object of study
Theoretical Approach	Subjective and value-laden	Understand the meaning making of participants	May not be 'factual'
Methods	Data analysis presented in words	Centralise participants' stories	Sample size will be small due to number of participants
Analysis of societal phenomenon	Multiple values interact within complex society. Societal equilibrium made possible by negotiation.	Offers opportunities to inform social policies	Analysis may not offer clear strategies to inform social policies

Table 3 Interpretivist philosophy – Adapted from Walliman (2018)

Appendix B

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

Application for Ethics Review Form

Guidance Notes:

What is the purpose of this form?

This form should be completed to seek ethics review for research projects to be undertaken by University of Birmingham staff, PGR students or visiting/emeritus researchers who will be carrying out research which will be attributed to the University.

Who should complete it?

For a staff project – the lead researcher/Principal Investigator on the project.
For a PGR student project – the student's academic supervisor, in discussion with the student.

Students undertaking undergraduate projects and taught postgraduate (PGT) students should refer to their Department/School for advice

When should it be completed?

After you have completed the University's online ethics self-assessment form (SAF), **IF** the SAF indicates that ethics review is required. You should apply in good time to ensure that you receive a favourable ethics opinion prior to the commencement of the project, and it is recommended that you allow at least 60 working days for the ethics process to be completed.

How should it be submitted?

An electronic version of the completed form should be submitted to the Research Ethics Officer, at the following email address: aer-ethics@contacts.bham.ac.uk.

What should be included with it?

Copies of any relevant supporting information and participant documentation, research tools (e.g., interview topic guides, questionnaires, etc) and where appropriate a health & safety risk assessment for the project (see section 10 of this form for further information about risk assessments).

What should applicants read before submitting this form?

Before submitting, you should ensure that you have read and understood the following information and guidance and that you have taken it into account when completing your application:

- The information and guidance provided on the University's ethics webpages (https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/finance/accounting/Research-Support-Group/Research-Ethics/Ethical-Review-of-Research.aspx)

- The University's Code of Practice for Research (https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/university/legal/research.pdf)

- The guidance on Data Protection for researchers provided by the University's Legal Services team at https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/legal-services/What-we-do/Data-Protection/resources.aspx.

Section 1: Basic Project Details

Project Title: Stories Girls Tell: A Narrative Inquiry about Girls in Alternative Provision

Is this project a:

University of Birmingham Staff Research project ☐
University of Birmingham Postgraduate Research (PGR) Student project ☒
Other (Please specify below) ☐
Click or tap here to enter text.

Details of the Principal Investigator or Lead Supervisor (for PGR student projects):

Title: Dr
First name: Julia
Last name: Howe

Position held: Educational Psychology Programme Director
School/Department School of Education: Department of Disability, Inclusion and Special Educational Needs

Telephone:
Email address:

Details of any Co-Investigators or Co-Supervisors (for PGR student projects):

Title: Dr
First name: Anita
Last name: Soni

Position held: Lecturer
School/Department School of Education: Department of Disability, Inclusion and Special Educational Needs

Telephone: Click or tap here to enter text.
Email address:

Details of the student for PGR student projects:

Title: Mrs
First name: Dawn
Last name: Dance

Course of study: Applied Educational and Child Psychology Doctorate
Email address: [redacted]

Project start and end dates:

Estimated start date of project: 04/05/2021
Estimated end date of project: 30/06/2022

Funding:

Sources of funding: N/A
Section 2: Summary of Project

Describe the purpose, background rationale for the proposed project, as well as the hypotheses/research questions to be examined and expected outcomes. This description should be in everyday language that is free from jargon - please explain any technical terms or discipline-specific phrases. Please do not provide extensive academic background material or references.

Purpose of research

To understand the stories of girls who are being educated outside mainstream education, in alternative provision (AP) settings.

Rationale

The right to exclude children and young people (CYP) from mainstream education, when schools feel unable to teach students because of their behaviour, is enshrined in legislation. Successive governments in England have sought to address the high number of school exclusions without much success, as numbers have continued to rise. One reason for this may be because policies and legislation relating to behaviour, discipline and school exclusions give individual headteachers the authority to determine the level of response and are therefore, subjective. These decisions are being made against a backdrop of external measurements of academic success, league tables, parental choice, and external stakeholders (in the case of academy trusts), which may be influencing the decisions for school exclusions.

However, in recent years the discourse has begun to shift about the appropriateness of removing children and young people from mainstream education, using what some perceive to be punitive measures against largely vulnerable groups, such as those with special educational needs (SEN), social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) needs and boys.

While there has historically been research about the exclusion of boys and CYP in general, the studies have not sought to understand or explore the educational experiences of girls who are excluded from mainstream provision, possibly due to the comparatively small numbers. Data from the Department for Education (2020) shows that although exclusions for boys are significantly higher than girls, in 2017/2018 the number of boys being excluded from school slightly reduced, while the number of girls being permanently excluded and receiving fixed term exclusions increased.

There are visible reminders that gender inequality and marginalisation of women still exist in our society. For example, legal action was recently taken against a West Midlands local authority for the

discriminatory practice of paying female employees less than their male counterparts, for doing similar jobs.

Qualifications remain one of the areas that girls can attempt to re-dress inequality, but if girls are being removed from mainstream schooling with little attention being paid to them, then his opportunity may prove to be detrimental.

Expected outcomes

This study will contribute towards broaden educationalists' understanding of how school systems can inadvertently miss some of the challenges that excluded girls' experience. In addition, it can be used to inform strategies that will support girls to navigate tensions around gender and behaviour and engender agency in their lives. Finally, I hope that this research will further contribute to educational psychologists' (EPs) understanding about current evidence-informed interventions and will encourage them to consider whether these strategies are suitable for girls. EPs will also be able to use their understanding of applied psychology, such as personal construct psychology to upskill school staff as part of their systemic work in schools.

Hypotheses

My hypotheses are:

That girls in APs have not previously conformed to the social construct of what it means to be female in British society and their non-compliance has resulted in them being removed from mainstream education.

Girls find a sense of belonging in an AP setting that they did not experience in mainstream schooling.

That girls feel listened to when they go to an AP setting.

My research questions are:

Based on my literature review, my research questions aim to find out whether there is a divergence of behaviour in schools that is unique to girls. My questions will address three areas:

4. *What stories do girls have to say about their experiences of mainstream education?*

What are their views on past experiences of education? Were there any barriers to them staying in mainstream education? Did they think that they were treated differently to boys?

5. *Is an AP setting different to mainstream school?*

Do they have a sense of belonging? What opportunities exist for them that might be different to when they were at school?

6. *Has being in AP changed how the girls see their futures?*

What, if any aspirations did the girls have when they were in a mainstream school? Has this changed? If not, why not? If yes, why? What would they like to do when they finish school? Has being in an AP made this easier or harder?

Section 3: Conduct and location of Project

Conduct of project

Please give a description of the research methodology that will be used. If more than one methodology or phase will be involved, please separate these out clearly and refer to them consistently throughout the rest of this form.

This will be an exploratory study, using qualitative methodology. An interpretivist/constructivist approach will be adopted to conduct the research using narrative inquiry. There are two ways of using narrative inquiry, analytical, which has a problem-solving element and Dewey's three-dimensional space approach that considers the personal, social and context that merge to form an individual's life story. A life story can be understood either as a timeline or as a series of key events from the individual's perspective, highlighting things that they consider to be important. In this study, the three-dimensional space approach will be used.

There are three aspects that make up narrative inquiry: situation, interaction, and continuity. These relate to the context of a situation, who was involved in the interaction(s) that took place and whether this was a temporal or continuous event. Although some life stories are edited by some researcher, this study will use re-storying to write up the participant's life story. Re-storying is when the researcher puts the participant's life story into a coherent, chronological order, allowing for links to be established between situations and interactions. The questions (see Appendix A) in the semi-structured interviews are to support the participant's recollection of past events and to talk about present circumstances. Resources, such as statement cards may be used to help the participant to think about what they want to say, during the interview.

Semi-structured interviews

A case study will be used in this study and the use of interviews is an effective tool that can be used as part of a qualitative methodological approach. Semi-structured interviews will reduce researcher influence and allow the participant to decide which theme or topic that they want to talk in-depth about.

The storytelling will guide the shape of the research. Narrative methodology has been chosen because it allows for flexibility within the research. This type of approach also puts power into the hand of the participant, as narrative inquiry focuses on what the researcher can learn from the participants in a particular setting and the overarching themes allows them to choose what they want to share.

Narrative research looks for meaning in stories and how it relates to individuality, which is why case studies are a useful way to generate data collection.

The interviews will last for approximately an hour, but as the participants 'own' the research, they can last for as long as the participants want to tell their story. This may be shorter or longer than the proposed hour.

A pilot will be conducted prior to the study being carried out and the same processes will be used to recruit participants.

Geographic location of project

State the geographic locations where the project and all associated fieldwork will be carried out. If the project will involve travel to areas which may be considered unsafe, either in the UK or overseas, please ensure that the risks of this (or any other non-trivial health and safety risks associated with the research) are addressed by a documented health and safety risk assessment, as described in section 10 of this form.

The research will take place in alternative provision settings that are in two local authorities in the West Midlands.

Section 4: Research Participants and Recruitment

Does the project involve human participants?

Note: 'Participation' includes both active participation (such as when participants take part in an interview) and cases where participants take part in the study without their knowledge and consent at the time (for example, in crowd behaviour research).

Yes ☒
No ☐

If you have answered NO please go on to Section 8 of this form. If you have answered YES please complete the rest of this section and then continue on to section 5.

Who will the participants be?

Describe the number of participants and important characteristics (such as age, gender, location, affiliation, level of fitness, intellectual ability etc.). Specify any inclusion/exclusion criteria to be used.

Participants will be five female students aged between 14 and 16 years old, who are no longer attending mainstream education due to exclusion or 'self-exclusion' but are being educated in an alternative provision setting. This includes independent schools, pupil referral units and excludes students in special schools. Special schools are those who cater for CYP with high needs, either behaviour or physical.

The participants must have a good command of the English language.

Inclusion:
Female
Key Stage Four – aged between 14 and 16 years old.
All students will live in the West Midlands region

All students will attend their respective AP settings on a full-time basis i.e., not attend any type of mainstream provision.
Students will not be returning to mainstream provision.
Students with or without special educational needs (SEN) except for those who have SEN that is listed in the exclusion list.
All ethnicities

Exclusion:
Males
Students under 14 years old
Attending two settings - mainstream and AP
If students are in a pupil referral unit, there should not be any plans for them to return to mainstream schooling.
Students with intellectual disability
If they have attended schools outside the West Midlands area

How will the participants be recruited?

- Following ethical approval, in the first instance an email (see Appendix B) will be sent to the lead person in five identified AP settings, outlining the research. Permission will be requested to attend the setting to speak to the girls about the nature and process/timeline of the research, consent, and confidentiality. This will also give the girls an opportunity to answer any questions that they might have.

- Participant information sheets (see Appendix C) and consent forms for the young person (see Appendix D) will be left at the setting for the lead person to distribute to those girls who are interested in participating. Participation will be voluntary and open to KS4 girls only.

- A follow up telephone call will be made to the contact at the AP setting, to find out whether there are any potential participants in the setting and if there are, arrangements will be made to collect the consent forms.

Please state clearly how the participants will be identified, approached, and recruited. Include any relationship between the investigator(s) and participant(s) (e.g. instructor-student). Please ensure that you attach a copy of any poster(s), advertisement(s) or letter(s) to be used for recruitment.

As stated above, in the first instance an email (see Appendix B) will be sent to the lead person in five identified AP settings, outlining the research. Permission will be requested to attend the setting to speak to the girls about the nature and process/timeline of the research, consent, and confidentiality. This will also give the girls an opportunity to answer any questions that they might have. Girls who give consent to take part and who meet the inclusion criteria will be recruited.

Section : Consent

What process will be used to obtain consent?

Describe the process that the investigator(s) will be using to obtain valid consent. If consent is not to be obtained explain why. If the participants are under the age of 16 it would usually be necessary to obtain parental consent and the process for this should be described in full, including whether parental consent will be opt-in or opt-out.

Consent will first be sought from the lead practitioner at the APs to approach the students to talk about the research. During the introduction to the research, it will be made clear that the students do not have to consent to taking part and that they should only consent if they want to. However, the prospective participants will be advised that if parental/carer consent (see Appendix E) is not received, they will be unable to take part in the research, even if they do give consent because of their age. Parental/carer consent will be opt-in and the adult should have parenting rights over the child for the consent to be valid. The participant sheet will outline what the research is about and how data will be generated i.e., through semi-structured interviews in a room away from other people. Parental consent will be sought at the same time as the participants to ensure that the participants do not feel coerced or pressured to take part in the study. A contact number will be given on the parent consent form for parents to contact me if they have any questions about the research.

Please be aware that if the project involves over 16s who lack capacity to consent, separate approval will be required from the Health Research Authority (HRA) in line with the Mental Capacity Act.

Please attach a copy of the Participant Information Sheet (if applicable), the Consent Form (if applicable), the content of any telephone script (if applicable) and any other material that will be used in the consent process.

Note: Guidance from Legal Services on wording relating to the Data Protection Act 2018 can be accessed at https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/legal-services/What-we-do/Data-Protection/resources.aspx.

Use of deception?

Will the participants be deceived in any way about the purpose of the study?

Yes ☐
No ☒

If yes, please describe the nature and extent of the deception involved. Include how and when the deception will be revealed, and the nature of any explanation/debrief will be provided to the participants after the study has taken place.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Section 6: Participant Compensation, withdrawal and feedback to participants

What, if any, feedback will be provided to participants?

Explain any feedback/ information that will be provided to the participants after participation in the research (e.g. a more complete description of the purpose of the research, or access to the results of the research).

Participants will receive a transcript of their interview, or I will share it with them, depending on their preference. This is so that if they are unhappy with parts of it, these parts can be deleted. My draft findings will also be made available to the participants before my thesis is submitted.

What arrangements will be in place for participant withdrawal?

Describe how the participants will be informed of their right to withdraw from the project, explain any consequences for the participant of withdrawing from the study and indicate what will be done with the participant's data if they withdraw.

Participants will be notified verbally in the initial information sharing meeting that they have the right to withdraw consent from taking part in the research at any point, up to 14 days following their individual interviews. This will also be explicitly stated in the participant information sheet (Appendix C) and on the consent form (Appendices D and E).

The contact details of the researcher will be included on the participant information sheet and consent form, so that participants can withdraw consent for their involvement in the study if they wish to do so. I will acknowledge receipt of the request and delete their data from my records.

Please confirm the specific date/timescale to be used as the deadline for participant withdrawal and ensure that this is consistently stated across all participant documentation. This is considered preferable to allowing participants to 'withdraw at any time' as presumably there will be a point beyond which it will not be possible to remove their data from the study (e.g. because analysis has started, the findings have been published, etc).

Participants will have the right to withdraw consent up to two weeks following their individual interviews.

What arrangements will be in place for participant compensation?

Will participants receive compensation for participation?

Yes ☐
No ☒

If yes, please provide further information about the nature and value of any compensation and clarify whether it will be financial or non-financial.
N/A

If participants choose to withdraw, how will you deal with compensation?

N/A

Section 7: Confidentiality/anonymity

Will the identity of the participants be known to the researcher?

Will participants be truly anonymous (i.e. their identity will not be known to the researcher)?

Yes ☐
No ☒

As this research involves face-to-face semi-structured interviews, participants will not be anonymous to the researcher. Participants will be made aware that the research is part of my doctorate and will be available for my supervisor to read and mark, university associates and any university students who are interested in my research. Participants will also be told that my research will be available via a university platform called 'eTheses', the University of Birmingham repository or 'Findit@bham' the university online library. However, anything that could be used to identify participants will not be included in the final research write up. I will give the participants examples of information that will be excluded, such as names, geographical areas, or the name of the AP setting.

In what format will data be stored?

Will participants' data be stored in identifiable format, or will it be anonymised or pseudo-anonymised (i.e. an assigned ID code or number will be used instead of the participant's name and a key will kept allowing the researcher to identify a participant's data)?

Individual data and names of the settings will be anonymised in the interview transcript and subsequent thesis write up, with no identifying features mentioned. Pseudonyms will be used to aid readability, but a key will be kept allowing me to identify participant's data. The key to identify participants will be kept on a portable password-protected hard drive, in a safe at the researcher's home.

Contextual information, such as Year group and reference to individuals within families, where relevant, will be referred to but information about family size or special educational needs will not be recorded. Participants will also be made aware that excerpts without identifiable information, from their interviews will be included in the final write-up of the research project.

Within the audio-recorded data, participant names will not be used and in the written transcripts, the AP settings will be coded numerically, while individual participants will be labelled with a pseudonym that only the researcher will know. A record of which code applies to which AP setting and participant will be stored separately from the data, in a password-protected file on the UoB BEAR DataShare to ensure that data are stored securely and can be withdrawn on request. As such, the data are confidential but not anonymous.

The only time that confidentiality may need to be breached is if a participant makes a disclosure during any communication, prior to, during or after the interview, which suggested that the participant or somebody else was a risk to themselves, to others or was involved in any illegal activity. In the first instance, I will be following the individual setting's safeguarding procedures, which will include informing the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) of the disclosure. Any personal risks will also be reported to my university supervisor.

Staff and parents/carers will be fully apprised of these measures and reference to school safeguarding procedures will be made.

Will participants' data be treated as confidential?

Will participants' data be treated as confidential (i.e. they will not be identified in any outputs from the study and their identity will not be disclosed to any third party)?

Yes ☒
No ☐

If you have answered no to the question above, meaning that participants' data will not be treated as confidential (i.e. their data and/or identities may be revealed in the research outputs or otherwise to third parties), please provide further information and justification for this:

N/A

Section 8: Storage, access and disposal of data

How and where will the data (both paper and electronic) be stored, what arrangements will be in place to keep it secure and who will have access to it?

Please note that for long-term storage, data should usually be held on a secure University of Birmingham IT system, for example BEAR (see https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/it/teams/infrastructure/research/bear/index.aspx).

All data will be stored electronically. Signed consent forms will be scanned and the paper copy will be shredded. The audio-recorded data and written transcripts will be labelled with a code (pseudonym) that only the researcher will know. The recordings will not be encrypted but will be uploaded to my university OneDrive account before being deleted from the audio recorder. Two passwords will be needed to access the data.

Records of which code applies to which participant will be stored separately from the data, in a password-protected file on UoB BEAR DataShare to ensure that data are stored securely and can be withdrawn on request.

Data retention and disposal

The University usually requires data to be held for a minimum of 10 years to allow for verification. Will you retain your data for at least 10 years?

Yes ☒
No ☐

If data will be held for less than 10 years, please provide further justification:

N/A

What arrangements will be in place for the secure disposal of data?

For this research project, a Data Management Plan (DMP) has been put in place.

Following each participant interview, the electronically audio-recorded data will be transferred from the Sony ICD-PX470 audio-recording Dictaphone to a password-protected folder on UoB's BEAR DataShare. The audio files will then be uploaded to my university OneDrive account before being deleted from the audio recorder. Two passwords will be needed to access the data.

The electronic transcripts and any accompanying notes will also be held in a password-protected folder on UoB BEAR DataShare.

Printed transcripts, written notes and consent forms will be electronically scanned into and stored in the UoB BEAR DataShare. Any paper copies of data and information will be shredded.

In accordance with university research policy, data will be stored on UoB BEAR DataShare for 10 years after completion of the project. A 10-year expiry date will be set for the electronic data stored on UOB BEAR DataShare.

Section 9: Other approvals required

Are you aware of any other national or local approvals required to carry out this research?

E.g. clearance from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), Local Authority approval for work involving Social Care, local ethics/governance approvals if the work will be carried out overseas, or approval from NOMS or HMPPS for work involving police or prisons? If so, please provide further details:

I have an enhanced up-to-date Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) and am not aware of any national or local approvals required to carry out this research

For projects involving NHS staff, is approval from the Health Research Authority (HRA) needed in addition to University ethics approval?

If your project will involve NHS staff, please go to the HRA decision tool at http://www.hra-decisiontools.org.uk/research/ to establish whether the NHS would consider your project to be research, thus requiring HRA approval in addition to University ethics approval. Is HRA approval required?

Yes ☐
No ☒

Please include a print out of the HRA decision tool outcome with your application.

N/A

Section 10: Risks and benefits/significance

Benefits/significance of the research

Outline the potential significance and/or benefits of the research

Research around school exclusion of girls is under-researched probably due to the lower numbers in comparison to boys. There appears to be no references made to the gender of excluded children and it appears that girls are analysed as part of a homogenous group. Therefore, the discourse of lower numbers of excluded girls may not be entirely correct but even if the data still shows relatively small numbers of excluded girls, this is an under researched area. Education is a right for all children and the lack of studies about this specific group reduces the opportunities to consider whether the curriculum in APs is sufficient to meet the aspirational goals of these young women.

The benefits of this research are that the girls will have the opportunity and time to tell their stories to somebody. The interviewer will also help the participants to practice reflective thinking. It will also contribute to a small but increasing area of studies around the challenges that girls can face in educational settings. Educational psychologists are best placed to understand the ecological systems that can become barriers to girls having agency and they can offer training at a systemic level to address expectations around gender behaviours.

Risks of the research

Outline any potential risks (including risks to research staff, research participants, other individuals not involved in the research, the environment and/or society and the measures that will be taken to minimise any risks and the procedures to be adopted in the event of mishap.) ***Please ensure that you include any risks relating to overseas travel and working in overseas locations as part of the study, particularly if the work will involve travel to/working in areas considered unsafe and/or subject to travel warnings from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (see*** https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice)***. Please also be aware that the University insurer, UMAL, offers access to RiskMonitor Traveller, a service which provides 24/7/365 security advice for all travellers and you are advised to make use of this service (see https://umal.co.uk/travel/pre-travel-advice/).***

The outlining of the risks in this section does not circumvent the need to carry out and document a detailed Health and Safety risk assessment where appropriate – see below.

Potential risks to the researcher, research participants and other individuals not involved in the research are outlined below. Both the British Psychological Society (2018) and British Educational Research Association (2018) ethical guidelines were consulted when considering potential risks associated with this project.

Power Imbalance

Research with children and young people can create a power imbalance and potentially lead to the participants feeling pressure or coerced into taking part in the research. To lessen this risk, I will only attend the setting to give further details if the participants express an interest in the study. This will put a distance between them and myself, as the researcher.

Furthermore, I will remind them of their right to withdraw consent to take part in the research at the beginning and end of the interview and remind them that they should only talk about what they feel comfortable discussing.

Consent and right to withdraw.

Due to a possible power imbalance, participants may not feel able to withdraw consent once they have given it. To mitigate this, I will ensure that they are reminded at the beginning of the interview and the end that they can withdraw consent. The right to withdraw consent is also in the participant information sheet that they will have received.

To further reduce any power imbalance, I will ensure that they understand my role as a student researcher, clearly differentiating my identity as a full-time post graduate researcher of the University of Birmingham.

Harm arising from participation in this research.

Researcher

The risk of physical harm to me is minimised due to interviews being conducted at the AP setting and other professionals will be in the vicinity. Although I will be in a room with the participant, I will sit near to the door and will request that any allocated room has a window in the door or a window. There is the possibility that the nature of the study and interviews may create a risk around my emotional and psychological health, however, supervision with my university supervisor will be used to reflect on the interviews and potential impact of them.

Participants

While there is a risk of distressing or stressful memories for the participants due to the personal narrative that they will be sharing during the interviews, I have put measures in place to mitigate these and are:

1. A warning will be given about the nature of the research and that there might be painful memories that participants may not have had a chance to reflect upon. Participants will be told at the beginning of the interview that they should only talk about things that they want to share.

2. During the interview, if a participant appears to be visibly upset or shows any non-verbal signs of distress, they will be asked whether they would like to take a short break or discontinue the interview.

3. Participants will be debriefed following their interview and given the opportunity to ask any questions or share any concerns that they may have. They will also be signposted to relevant external organisations who support children and young people, such as Young Minds and to their setting's safeguard lead (see Appendix F). In addition, participants will be reminded about mine and my supervisor's contact details, if they need to get in touch with any questions or to make a complaint.

I will also follow the guidance in the local authority safeguarding policies (https://www.XXXX.gov.uk/downloads/file/13434/model_safeguarding_and_child_protection_policy_for_education_2019_-_2020

Other

During the interviews, participants may cast their previous school(s) or local authority professionals in a negative light. I will ensure that any identifiable information that references an individual, school or organisation will be removed from the data prior to the final write up. If participants say anything that might incite damage to organisational reputation, advice will be sought through research supervision regarding the inclusion and communication of this data.

Confidentiality and Data Storage

There is a risk that the participant will make a disclosure which may raise safeguarding concerns. If this occurs the designated senior lead in the setting will be notified and the settings' procedures will be followed. Participants will be made aware of the limits to confidentiality via the participant information sheet (Appendices 2,3 and 4).

To ensure that others do not overhear the interview, a separate room where we can be seen but not heard, will be requested.

University Health & Safety (H&S) risk assessment

For projects of more than minimal H&S risk it is essential that a H&S risk assessment is carried out and signed off in accordance with the process in place within your School/College and you must provide a copy of this with your application. The risk may be non-trivial because of travel to, or working in, a potentially unsafe location, or because of the nature of research that will carried out there. It could also involve (irrespective of location) H&S risks to research participants, or other individuals not involved directly in the research. Further information about the risk assessment process for research can be found at https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/hr/wellbeing/worksafe/policy/Research-Risk-Assessment-and-Mitigation-Plans-RAMPs.aspx.

Please note that travel to (or through) 'FCO Red zones' requires approval by the University's Research Travel Approval Panel, and will only be approved in exceptional circumstances where sufficient mitigation of risk can be demonstrated.

A health and safety risk assessment (to include any COVID-related risks) will be carried out and signed off in line with the requirements of the College of Social Sciences (CoSS) prior to the study taking place.

Section 11: Any other issues

Does the research raise any ethical issues not dealt with elsewhere in this form?

If yes, please provide further information:

None that I am aware of.

Do you wish to provide any other information about this research not already provided, or to seek the opinion of the Ethics Committee on any particular issue?

If yes, please provide further information:

N/A

Section 12: Peer review

Has your project received scientific peer review?

Yes ☐
No ☒

If yes, please provide further details about the source of the review (e.g., independent peer review as part of the funding process or peer review from supervisors for PGR student projects):

Click or tap here to enter text.
Section 13: Nominate an expert reviewer

For certain types of project, including those of an interventional nature or those involving significant risks, it may be helpful (and you may be asked) to nominate an expert reviewer for your project. If you anticipate that this may apply to your work and you would like to nominate an expert reviewer at this stage, please provide details below.

Title: Click or tap here to enter text.
First name: Click or tap here to enter text.
Last name: Click or tap here to enter text.
Email address: Click or tap here to enter text.
Phone number: Click or tap here to enter text.

Brief explanation of reasons for nominating and/or nominee's suitability:

N/A
Section 14: Document checklist

Please check that the following documents, where applicable, are attached to your application:

Recruitment advertisement ☒
Participant information sheet ☒
Consent form ☒
Questionnaire ☐
Interview/focus group topic guide ☒

Please proof-read study documentation and ensure that it is appropriate for the intended audience before submission.
Section 15: Applicant declaration

Please read the statements below and tick the boxes to indicate your agreement:

I submit this application on the basis that the information it contains is confidential and will be used by the University of Birmingham for the purposes of ethical review and monitoring of the research project described herein, and to satisfy reporting requirements to regulatory bodies. The information will not be used for any other purpose without my prior consent. ☒

The information in this form together with any accompanying information is complete and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief and I take full responsibility for it. ☒

I undertake to abide by University Code of Practice for Research (https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/university/legal/research.pdf) alongside any other relevant professional bodies' codes of conduct and/or ethical guidelines. ☒

I will report any changes affecting the ethical aspects of the project to the University of Birmingham Research Ethics Officer. ☒

I will report any adverse or unforeseen events which occur to the relevant Ethics Committee via the University of Birmingham Research Ethics Officer. ☒

Please now save your completed form and email a copy to the Research Ethics Officer, at aer-ethics@contacts.bham.ac.uk. As noted above, please do not submit a paper copy.

Appendix C

From: Dawn Dance (Ap. Ed. and Child Psy. D. FT)
Sent: 19 July 2021 13:16
To: **********
Subject: September University of Birmingham Research

Dear Mrs ********,

I spoke to one of your staff today and they gave me your email address to contact you.

My name is Dawn Dance, and I am a trainee educational psychologist, studying at the University of Birmingham. I am currently on placement at Birmingham Educational Psychology Service.

I have been granted ethical permission from the University of Birmingham to conduct research as part of my thesis. The research will explore the stories that girls tell, in relation to their exclusion from mainstream education.

As an alternative provider (AP) of education, it is hoped that this study will enable me to feedback some ways to support girls within an AP setting. Existing research shows that excluded girls' social, emotional, and mental health tends to improve in AP settings as not only do they feel that they have a voice, but also, they begin to thrive in smaller group sizes. It is for this reason that I hope to interview some girls on a 1:1 basis.

While it is recognised that boys outnumber girls in terms of school exclusion, studies about the nature and experiences of girls are limited. The findings from this study will be shared with the Birmingham Educational Psychology Service and will provide an opportunity to inform their practice. This is important because some of the educational psychologists may have previously worked with some of the young people who are registered with APs.

If possible, I would like to come to your setting in **September 2021** to:

- Talk to your female students about the study.
- Gain consent from individuals and their parents/carers.
- Arrange to conduct recorded, individual semi-structured interviews (A separate room will be needed) once consent has been given.

Your student(s) will have the right to withdraw consent at any time, up to 14 days after their interview when analysis of the data will have begun. School safeguarding policies will be implemented throughout the research and signposting to useful organisations will also be available for the participants.

If you have any questions about this study, you can contact me or my university supervisor, Dr Julia Howe using the following contact details.

Dawn Dance - [redacted]
Dr Julia Howe - [redacted]

Please could you let me know whether you are happy for me to talk to your students about this study and I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind Regards
Dawn

Appendix D

Parent/Carer Consent Form

Your child has been invited to take part in this research and I need to have a signed consent (permission) that you are happy for them to take part. If you sign this consent form, you will be agreeing for me to interview and record your child on a Dictaphone and then delete once it is transferred to a safe database. I also need to make sure that you have read the participant information sheet, know what the research is about and understand your child's right not to take part.

If you have any questions or if you want to let me know that you've changed your mind about consent, you can either speak to me on [redacted] or email me at [redacted]

Research Project: Girls educational experiences

Researcher: Dawn Dance

Please **tick** the boxes to indicate that you give permission for me to talk to your child

I have been given information about the research that my child is taking part in and have had the opportunity to ask questions about anything I don't understand.	☐
I agree to my child being interviewed and know that they can change their mind at any time, without having to give a reason.	☐
I understand that my child has 14 days after their interview to change their minds.	☐
I agree that my child's interview can be recorded on a Dictaphone if it is deleted afterwards	☐
I give permission for things that my child says in the interview to be used in the research write-up and that their name or anything identifying them won't be used.	☐

I agree that my child's interview won't be heard by anybody else apart from the researcher, but parts of it will be read by the person who marks the research. ☐

I agree that the research will be saved to a safe database and that university associates and any university students who are interested will be able to have access to it. Other professionals may also use parts of the thesis in presentations or publications (This is optional, please put a cross in the box if you do not want this to be made available). ☐

_____ _____

Participant's parent/guardian's name (Printed)

Researcher's name (Printed)

Appendix E

Participant Information Sheet

Who am I?

My name is Dawn and I'm a student at the University of Birmingham, training to become an educational psychologist. An educational psychologist works with children and young people, as well as their families and teachers, to help them understand how they can support their child or student to do well in school.

What do you want to find out?

1. I want to understand some of the reasons why girls are not being educated in mainstream schools, as not many people have tried to find out.

2. I want to hear what girls have to say about how they feel about past experiences of school

3. I also want to know about girls' hopes and plans for the future

What do you want me to do?

I want you to talk to me. It's expected that this might take an hour, but if you want to talk for longer, that's also OK.

I will be recording our conversation on a Dictaphone (a recording device), but only so that I remember what YOU said and not what I THINK you said. Once I have written up a record of what was said, I will delete the conversation from the Dictaphone.

It's important that I don't guess what you mean

This is the Dictaphone that I will use to record our conversation on.

Will anybody be told about what I say to you?

Nobody will be told about what you've said, unless you choose to tell them afterwards. The only time I might have to say a part of what you say to me, is if I think that you or somebody else is going to get hurt in any way. Then I have to follow the same rules as staff in your school.

Do I have to take part?

No. It's your choice. Choice is also known as 'consent'.

If you do decide that you want to take part and then change your mind, you can.

If you have any questions or if you want to let me know that you've changed your mind about consent, you can either speak to me on [redacted] or email me at [redacted] either before the interview or within **14 days** after the interview and our conversation will be deleted from my records.

What are you going to do with the information afterwards?

- I will be writing about my research and will give you a chance to read what I've written before I have to hand it in for marking by my supervisor.
- Once my research has been marked, I will have to attend a meeting with other examiners, to say why I did the research and explain why I did it the way that I did.

- The research will be saved to a safe database. University lecturers and any university students who are interested in doing the same kind of research will be able to search for the research. Other professionals may also be interested in using parts of my thesis in presentations or publications. If you don't want this to be made available, it won't be.

- They will not be able to read anything about you that could identify you.

Who do I tell if I want to take part?
Please could you tell your teacher, and they will email me to let me know.

Who can I speak to if I have more questions?
If you want to speak to me or my university supervisor, who is making sure that I do the research properly, you can contact us using the details below or you can speak to your teacher or parents.

Dawn Dance – Trainee Educational Psychologist [redacted]
Dr Julia Howe – university supervisor [redacted]

Thank you for taking the time to read this information 😊.

Appendix F

Participant Consent Form

Why do I have to sign this form?

So that you can take part in this research, I need to have a written record of you agreeing to take part.

What does it mean if I sign this form?

If you sign this consent form, you will be agreeing for me to interview and record you on a Dictaphone. I also need to make sure that you understand from the participant information sheet, what the research is about and your right not to take part.

If you have any questions or if you want to let me know that you've changed your mind about consent, you can either speak to me on [redacted] or email me at [redacted]

Research Project: Girls educational experiences

Researcher: Dawn Dance

Please **tick** the boxes to indicate that you understand and agree to talk to me

I have been given information about the research and have had the opportunity to ask questions about anything I don't understand.	☐
I have chosen to be interviewed and know that I can change my mind at any time, without having to give a reason.	☐
I have 14 days after the interview to change my mind.	☐
I agree that my interview can be recorded on a Dictaphone if it is deleted afterwards	☐
I give permission for things that I say in the interview to be used in the research write-up, without my name or anything identifying me being used	☐

I agree that my interview won't be heard by anybody else, but parts of it will be read by the person who marks the research. ☐

I agree that the research will be saved to a safe database and that university associates and any university students who are interested will be able to have access to it. Other professionals may also use parts of the thesis in presentations or publications (This is optional, please put a cross in the box if you do not want this to be made available). ☐

_____ _____

Participant's name (Printed) **Researcher's name (Printed)**

Appendix G

Interview Schedule Questions

1. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself? (E.g., Things that you're good at or what you do in your spare time? Any achievements that you're proud of?)
2. What was primary school like?
3. Who were your friends?
4. Is there any adult that you remember from primary school? What were they like?
5. How did you feel about moving up to secondary school?
6. Did any of your friends go to the same secondary school as you?
7. Looking back, how would you describe your time at school?
8. Who told you that you were moving to this school and how did you feel?
9. What do you think your family thought about it?
10. What's the best/worst thing about being here?
11. What do you want to do when you finish school?
12. Do you think that being at this school has made it easier or harder for you to achieve your goals?
13. What three words would somebody who knows you well, say about you and what three words would you say about yourself?
14. If there's one significant event in your life what would that be and why?
15. Do you have any questions for me?

Appendix H

Sample of Chloe's interview transcript

Key:

Past	
Present	
Future	
Primary	**PR**
Secondary	**S**
Alternative Provision	**AP**

Chloe interview

Researcher: can you tell me little bit about your family kind of who is 'Chloe'?

Chloe: I come from a very dysfunctional sort of broken house erm my family, we don't really speak to extended family as much on my dad's side erm me and my dad don't have a great relationship constantly arguing my dad's never been really around when I was younger - I used to think my dad was just got there because he just used to sleep and add never really seen many never come to any parents evening sports days anything like erm

Commented [DD1]: Broken paternal relationship - view of fragmented family relationships

Researcher: would you have wanted him to

Chloe: yeah, I think that cause he hasn't when I was younger it's affected the whole dynamic of our relationship now and it's like I'm at the age know where I know what's going on, yet I can say stuff back

Commented [DD2]: Impact on family life and moving power relations

Researcher: OK

Chloe: instead of just like bottling it all down and like ignoring it cause I was younger

Commented [DD3]: Sense of powerlessness

Researcher: yeah, have you got like brothers and sisters?

Chloe: I've got one brother who was a golden child erm always straight through school no problems except for like friendships

Commented [DD4]: Less favourable, compared to sibling

Researcher: yeah, older than you?

Chloe: 17

Researcher: OK so you know you saying about you didn't feel like you could talk about how you felt could you, were a child how did you kind of, cause we all respond whether it's externally or in terms of how that kind of makes you feel about yourself and what things didn't you do because of that, do you think

Chloe: I feel like when I was younger it made me feel like stupid because I feel like when young you're not oblivious to like, you're not open to as much as you are when you get older cause when you're younger, it's like it's all just memories

Commented [DD5]: An heightened awareness of childhood now she's older. Ability to process memories

Researcher: yes

Chloe: yeah, and you're not actually thinking about everything too much

Commented [DD6]: Capacity to process events - not asked see research about children's narratives

Researcher: like reflecting on it

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Sample of Kyra's interview transcript

Kyra: well but mostly I wanna be nurse, I wanna be a fireman y'know all kind of really positive roles

Researcher: did you have any aspirations when you were younger

Kyra: I actually had aspiration to become, well this was when I was really young, girls in year one

Researcher: Yeah, yeah

Kyra: I was wanted to be like a dress designer, I wanted to try and design dresses that's what I would spend my time doing all day, but when I got older, I wanted to be a policeman, because everyone said I had the voice for it

Commented [DD64]: Previous aspirations

Researcher: Yeah, OK what voice do you need? What age was that when you wanted to go in the police?

Kyra: Year six or year eight

Commented [DD65]: To become a policewoman

Researcher: OK so quite recently, yeah

Kyra: Yeah, but now Cos I thought I've got experience for it, I've got the empathy for it, I've got the sympathy for it, I wanna be a therapist, or something to deal with children so I can be there for them, so they don't have to deal with the same way I had to deal with it. Cause I'm a very, I say it without sounding too sad, I'm a very near-death child cause of my family life. When I was in year seven or year eight, I had a depression phase and I still have that depression to this this day, and I still have it to this day, I have a lot of social anxiety, I'm very socially awkward as well. But one thing that stuck with me, was my suicidal thing part of me is still here. And the fact that I act very awkward in front of people, see I can't act normal in front of men, coz they scare me cause of what's happened.

Commented [DD66]: Personal experiences have shaped career aspirations. Poor SEMH and complex relationship with men - didn't allude to 'what had happened'

Researcher: So, being here then with all these boys how does that reduce those anxieties?

Kyra: Cause, well these boys are nothing like my father, but they had the same kind of thing as I had growing up, so they're not as bad, yeah, you've got the odd one that I don't get along with AP

Commented [DD67]: Historical male relationship - negative experiences for boys in AP. One factor to be explored in other research

Researcher: Yeah

Kyra: but they're more easy to be around then they were in my old schools... AP

Researcher: these boys here? Even though they bully you quite badly.

Kyra: Yeah, it's the fact that they do have a caring side to them they're not all bullies, like the kid in my class he's got a mother and a father but he's still a very caring man and he's got even though he's in that life, he's still a very nice and great personality man and I would actually stay his friend, but you've also got that one kid and he's the same kid who used to bully me here AP

Commented [DD68]: Explaining difference (perhaps their own vulnerabilities?)

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