# *"OUT OF SIGHT, OUT OF MIND":* A Q-METHODOLOGICAL STUDY OF VIEWPOINTS OF INCLUSION AND INCLUSIVE PRACTICE HELD BY STAFF WHO HAVE WORKED WITH PERMANENTLY EXCLUDED CHILDREN

**BY**

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**ABSTRACT**

School exclusion has been widely politicised and reported as a cause for concern in the media, with exclusions linked closely to risks of serious youth crime and antisocial behaviour, including gang involvement and knife crime. Decades of international research have consistently shown that permanent exclusion (PEX) from their mainstream school frequently precedes and precipitates cumulative negative life trajectories for young people. This provides evidence of the need to investigate the involved professionals' experiences and perceptions of inclusion and inclusive practice for those students who experience or are at high risk of permanent exclusion from school, as well as factors that support and hinder their inclusion within school settings.

The current study aimed to explore viewpoints of secondary school staff working in mainstream settings or pupil referral units (PRUs), who have had experience of working with students who have been permanently excluded, through the use of a q-methodological approach. The study contributed toward the following:

- informing more accurately targeted training and support to strengthen the capacity of the mainstream schools to accommodate needs of students at risk of PEx;
- generating and developing knowledge about and theoretical understanding of what supports or hinders inclusive practice for those students who become permanently excluded; and

A by-person factor analysis was selected to address the research aims for each of the two dataset (derived from mainstream and PRU staff); one factor solution with evidence suggestive of two further salient factors were produced. There were similarities between the two overarching factors and the four manifestations, which were, however distinct in nature.

The research highlighted the variety of viewpoints that could be held in relation to this topic area, recommendations for future research, and implications for policy and the practice of local

authorities, educational psychologists, and school systems made. The research provides a foundation for further research in this area, in the expectation that sustainable change can occur within the English educational context and in turn produce better life outcomes for the CYP at risk of permanent exclusions.

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# 1 Introduction

A core requirement of my postgraduate professional training in educational and child psychology is to design, implement and write a report of a substantive research study that is completed within the local authority (LA) in which I have undertaken supervised professional practice placement throughout years two and three of the training programme. In addition to, the research being judged relevant by managers within the LA Educational Psychology Service (EPS) whilst contributing to service development. I also have personal and professional experiences and interests relating to the phenomenon of PEx which further contributed towards my decision in choosing this as a topic area to explore. For the purposes of this thesis the pseudonym "Brownhill" will be used when referencing the LA.

The aim of this research is to explore the viewpoints of secondary mainstream school staff and pupil referral unit (PRU) staff, about inclusion and inclusive practice in education and in relations specifically to children and young people at significant risk of, and those who experience permanent exclusion (PEx) from mainstream secondary schools

## 1.1. Exclusion as a social phenomenon

Exclusion is viewed as a form of social control of those who differ from what is expected or is typical, and has been present in society for over a millennium; with examples dating back to the fourth century AD (Arnold et al., 2009). It is important to highlight the historical belief that those who were viewed as "different", deviating from society's ideal of "normal" needing to be "cured"; if this were not achievable there was a need for containment and/or exclusion for such misfits' own good, or to protect the "normal" majority from contagion. This concept featured throughout the history of disability, with the eugenics movement from the last century an often-cited example of this. More recently, the separation of children who were viewed as difficult, challenging, or disobedient has been occurring since the late 19$^{th}$ century in the UK and USA (Arnold et al., 2009).

The way in which exclusion has evolved over time reflects the ways in which society has changed, but there are still contemporary examples of exclusion, including the social phenomenon that is exclusion from school.

### 1.2. Exclusion in the English educational context

In 1944 the Education Act described categories for children requiring special education to identify children who were viewed as educable and those who were not. One of those categories was referenced as the "maladjusted" children, which was defined as "psychological disturbance" or "emotional instability", which in modern day terms may reference children with "behavioural" difficulties. The categorisation of children and subsequent special education could be viewed as another example of exclusion, but not necessarily an example of exclusion from school. In more recent history, in the 1960s and 1970s a new educational movement known as integration had emerged, with roots likely ingrained and linked to the human rights movement which was occurring in the same era (Arnold et al., 2009). The notion of inclusion in the 1990s had a greater emphasis placed on the approach than that of integration, resulting in it becoming a new focus in education (Gidlund, 2018).

The 1981 Education Act removed the requirements to categorise children and instead introduced the generic concept of special educational needs (SEN), following the Warnock report (Warnock, 1978). This aimed to further emphasise the function of mainstream schooling, a notion which meant children with SEN should be educated alongside their typically developing peers, with the attached caveats that their "inclusion" did not impede on their peers' access to education. This could be construed as the focus on the CYP experiencing SEN needing to fit in to education systems being shift to the education system needed to adapt (Arnold et al., 2009; Thomas, 2015).

Concerns around exclusion from school, namely permanent exclusion had begun to grow in the 1990s, despite the social phenomenon of exclusions not being a novel concept (Rendall & Stuart,

2005). Arnold et al. (2009) argued that these concerns could have been exacerbated by budget cuts in the 90s which led to the desire to reduce expensive residential provisions and instead place responsibilities on mainstream school, emphasising their need to educate children with SEN. Additional pressure placed on the school systems have been contributed to by the need for improved rankings in national tests following the introduction of the National Curriculum and League Tables, which could be viewed as a problematic factor in the inclusion of CYP with SEN. Since CYP experiencing SEN could disrupt school rankings within league tables but equally mainstream schools were encouraged to "include" CYP with SEN, with emphasis placed on their right to social inclusion (Arnold et al., 2009; Carlile, 2011; Rendall & Stuart, 2005).

> Permanent exclusion, along with its tendency to prompt a pathological reading of a pupil's issues, is therefore seen as an authoritarian strategy designed to ameliorate the inherent paradoxical tension experienced by the various professionals working within an education system dedicated to the concept of 'full inclusion' but measured and funded on the grounds of academic league tables" (Carlile, 2011, p. 303).

This brief history of exclusion as a social phenomenon and its relevance to educational policy with reference to integration and inclusion before considering exclusion from school, allows us to begin to develop an understanding of where English society is positioned within the current context. It does highlight that of exclusion as not being a new or novel phenomenon, instead it emphasises its continued presence throughout history potentially offering some insight into its complexity. It begins to highlight a number of factors, such as budget cuts and league tables, that place pressure on school systems and staff within them, suggesting the need to consider how these pressures can influence the human decision-making aspect of PEx. It proposes PEx as a complex, multi-faceted phenomenon, where decision-making essentially relies upon human factors, specifically, the

subjective values, beliefs, and judgements of education practitioners (and school governors), and the leeway afforded by (and the social values which inform) contemporary public policy.

### 1.3 Permanent exclusion from schools

School exclusion has been widely politicised and reported as a cause for concern in the media (No More Exclusions, 2021; Rendall & Stuart, 2005), with exclusions linked closely to risks of serious youth crime and antisocial behaviour, including violent crime, gang involvement, and knife crime (Haylock et al., 2020; HM Government, 2018; Roberts, 2019). Decades of international research have consistently shown that PEx from mainstream schools frequently precedes and precipitates cumulative negative life trajectories for CYP. The Brownhill EPS shared national concerns regarding levels of PEx from its schools, and the powerful, converging evidence of the detrimental personal, social, and economic costs for CYP, that result from this experience.

In England the population of CYP excluded from schools is characterised by an uneven demographic, in which male gender, poverty, social disadvantage and prevalence of adverse childhood experiences (ACES) feature with far greater frequency than in the general population as do CYP from Black, Asian and some other Minority Ethnic (BAME) heritage groups (No More Exclusions, 2021). In Brownhill, previous records show the proportion of BAME students within the mixed ethnic minority category were PEx from school was the highest in England, emphasising further the investment in this study and relevance to the locality of the service I am on placement with. Statistics in relation to exclusions across England are presented in Table 1 for PEx, recorded number of PEx in the Brownhill LA in Table 2, ethnicity breakdown in Table 3, and groups for which exclusion (both PEx and fixed term exclusion (FTE)) is most likely to occur in Table 4. Data for Table 4 was collected by No More Exclusions (2021) who as part of their research issued Freedom of Information (FOI) requests to schools in England regarding exclusion data.

**Table 1.**

*PEx rates from 2015 – 2020 across England as reported by HM Government (2021a).*

| | | 2015/16 | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | 2019/20 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Permanent exclusions | Total | 6,684 | 7,719 | 7,905 | 7,894 | 5,057 |
| | State-funded primary | 1,147 | 1,253 | 1,210 | 1,067 | 739 |
| | State-funded secondary | 5,446 | 6,384 | 6,612 | 6,753 | 4,269 |
| | special | 91 | 82 | 83 | 74 | 49 |

**Table 2.**

*PEx recorded in the Brownhill area from academic years 2016 – 2020 (HM Government, 2021a).*

| Type of educational setting | Number of permanent exclusions recorded for Brownhill area | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | 2019/20 |
| Special | 5 | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| State funded primary | 18 | 13 | 16 | 58 |
| State funded Secondary | 57 | 91 | 90 | 14 |
| **Total for the Brownhill area** | **80** | **104** | **109** | **75** |

Table 1 demonstrates that PEx occurs more frequently in secondary schools than it does primary schools, with No More Exclusions (2021) data corroborating this. Table 2 provides the local context in which the research was conducted, again demonstrating that PEx occurred more frequently in secondary aged pupils. Despite multi-level, multi-modal responses available within the Brownhill LA alongside utilisation of evidence informed interventions, approaches developed within the local

context based upon functional behavioural analysis, and LA organisational development groups centred around inclusion and belonging, PEx rates still remain high.

**Table 3.**

*PEx rates based on ethnicity group, as reported in HM Government (2021c).*

| Ethnicity | School Exclusions | | School Population Percentages** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | % Represented in the school population* | % Of exclusions in relation to population |
| **Asian** | **Overall total** | **366** | **11.5** | **0.04** |
| | Bangladeshi | 58 | 1.8 | 0.04 |
| | Indian | 38 | 3.3 | 0.01 |
| | Pakistani | 215 | 4.5 | 0.06 |
| | Asian other | 55 | 1.9 | 0.03 |
| **Black** | **Overall total** | **529** | **5.6** | **0.1** |
| | Black African | 229 | 3.9 | 0.07 |
| | Black Caribbean | 220 | 1.0 | 0.3 |
| | Black other | 80 | 0.8 | 0.02 |
| **Chinese** | **Total** | **3** | **0.5** | **0.008** |
| **Mixed** | **Total** | **658** | **6.4** | **0.01** |
| | Mixed White/Asian | 90 | 1.5 | 0.02 |
| | Mixed White/Black African | 82 | 0.9 | 0.02 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mixed White/Black Caribbean | 296 | 1.6 | 0.06 |
| | Mixed other | 190 | 2.4 | 0.04 |
| **White** | **Total** | **6,038** | **72.4** | **0.1** |
| | White British | 5,633 | 64.9 | 0.1 |
| | White Irish | 14 | 0.3 | 0.06 |
| | Gypsy/Roma | 107 | 0.3 | 0.4 |
| | Irish Traveller | 17 | 0.1 | 0.3 |
| | White other | 267 | 6.8 | 0.05 |
| **Other** | **Total** | **121** | **2.1** | **0.07** |
| **Unknown** | **Total** | **179** | **1.6** | **0.1** |

**Percentages calculated from statistics shared by (HM Government, 2021b).*

******NB.*** *exclusion data is from academic year 2018/19, population data is from 2020/21, they did not report school population data from academic year 2018/19 and 2018/19 is the most recent data available on the government's website. – although percentages will not have fluctuated a significant amount, which would result in the approximate percentages being completely invalid, they are not comparing the same time period, nonetheless it provides some insight in terms of representation in exclusions across different ethnicity groups.*

**Table 4.**

*Groups for which exclusion (both PEx and FTE) is most likely to occur as reported by No More Exclusions (2021).*

| Groups most likely to experience exclusion | Percentage as reported in No More Exclusions (2021) |
|---|---|

| | |
|---|---|
| Free School Meals (FSM) | Of the 34 secondary schools sampled, 46% CYP excluded were eligible for FSM, of the 39 primary schools sampled 45% of CYP excluded were eligible for FSM. |
| Special Educational Needs | Of the 34 secondary schools sampled who had presented characteristic data, 44% of CYP excluded were on the SEN register, with 30% of this figure not having an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP). |
| Ethnicity | The study highlights the disparity across ethnic groups with all ethnic groups other than White British recording a higher percentage of secondary school CYP excluded in comparison to the percentage represented in the school population. For example, CYP from Black Caribbean backgrounds represented 6.56% of recorded secondary school exclusions, whereas there were only 1.5% of Black Caribbean CYP who made up the school population. |

A remarkable feature from the statistics reported in Table 3 and 4 is the disparity across certain marginalised groups, with further data highlighting the disproportion representation of CYP experiencing SEN and/or disabilities (SEND) or eligible for FSM. There are reports that SEN children account for half of all PEx and FTE, and children eligible for FSM or pupil premium were four times more likely to receive a PEx or FTE (Stanforth & Rose, 2020), which both corresponds with No More Exclusions (2021) and local data reported by Brownhill LA. Other organisations report that those excluded are seven times more likely to experience SEND, 4 times more likely to live in poverty, 20 times more likely to have contact with social services, 10 times more likely to have a mental health difficulty and that black Caribbean children were disproportionately affected

(The Difference, 2021). Furthermore, Stanforth and Rose (2020) also reported boys as being four times more likely to be PEx and three times more likely to be fixed term excluded (FTE). These are all points that provide context for the phenomenon of exclusions within the English education context as well as supporting the rationale for this research.

Table 2, 3 and 4 show an overrepresentation for certain ethnic groups, primarily CYP from Black Caribbean background but also CYP from both Gypsy Roma and Irish traveller backgrounds.

It would be worthwhile considering the key legislation and political landscape relating to both disability and SEND. Table 5 considers relevant legislation for disability and this research, adapted from Garbett (2020). Table 6 considers relevant legislation in addition to those that are outlined in Table 5, that is also relevant to both SEND and behaviour/SEMH difficulties. The table also references legislation that is directly related to exclusion, which provides guidance to head teachers and governors around exclusion procedures outlining:

> Any decision of a school, including exclusion, must be made in line with the principles of administrative law, i.e. that it is: lawful (with respect to the legislation relating directly to exclusions and a school's wider legal duties, including the European Convention on Human Rights and the Equality Act 2010); rational; reasonable; fair; and proportionate. (Department for Education, 2022, p. 8)

**Table 5.**

*Key legislation relating to disability as represented in Garbett (2020).*

| Key Legislation relating to disability | Relevance to research |
|---|---|
| Disability Employment Act (1945) | Brought in to rehabilitate disabled service men and women. The National Health Service extended services to those disabled through work related accidents (McIvor, 2013). |
| Mental Health Act (1983) | Outlines the rights, assessment and treatment of individuals experiencing mental health difficulties. It details how an individual can be detained under the act if medical treatment is needed and if it is in the best interests of public and their health or safety. |
| Children's Act (1989) | Outlined the rights of the child and emphasised the importance of considering CYP's wishes and feelings, as well as their physical, emotional, and educational needs. |
| UNCRC (1990) | Detailed 45 rights of the child, adopted by the UK in 1992. |
| Disability Discrimination Act (1995) | Details that individuals are required to make reasonable adjustments for persons with disability. This was prompted by the introduction of the social model of disability. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Mental Capacity Act (2005) | Outlines that a person lacks capacity if at that point in time they are unable to make a decision based on an impairment relating to the mind or brain. This also states that if a person lacks capacity others can make important decisions on their behalf by acting in their "best interests." |
| Equality Act (2010) | Outlines and describes protected characteristics, including disability, which cannot be discriminated against. Visser and Stokes (2003, p. 71) argued "the right to equality is inextricably linked to the right to inclusive education". |

**Table 6.**

*Key legislation relating to SEND and SEMH.*

| Key Legislation relating to SEND/SEMH | Relevance to SEMH needs and exclusion |
|---|---|
| Education Act (1981) | Heavily influenced by the Warnock report (Warnock, 1978) where Statements of SEN were first introduced (McKinlay, 1996). Inclusion was generated from the 1981 education, removing the requirements to categories children and instead introducing the concept of SEN, a notion which meant children with SEN should be |

| | |
|---|---|
| | educated alongside their TD peers, moving from SEN CYP needing to fit into education systems, instead those education systems needing to adapt to the need of the CYP (Arnold et al., 2009). |
| Education Act (1993) | Pupil Referral Units were established with guidance on how they operated: they were to be temporary, interventive and transitional provision for children displaying challenging behaviour, however some have been used as provision exclusively for children experiencing SEMH (Visser & Stokes, 2003). The act also emphasised the importance of early intervention (McKinlay, 1996). |
| Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) | Outlines the right of education for all CYP, highlighting and emphasising the importance of inclusion for all CYP. It outlines tools and methods of practice in order for schools to fulfil the principle of education for all. |
| Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice (CoP) (DfES, 2001) | Provided practical guidance for LEAs, schools, and early years (EYs) settings to identify, assess and implement provision for CYP experiencing SEN as a result of reviewing the previous CoP that was created following the Education Act (1993) placing a duty on the Secretary of State to issue a CoP (McKinlay, 1996). The new CoP provided stronger rights for CYP to be educated in mainstream provisions, parents to receive advice and support, schools and EYs setting to inform parents they are making SEN provision and for them to request a statutory assessment. It also highlighted collaborative working with parents, schools, and agencies as well as the need for graduated approaches. The broad areas of SEN were identified as: communication and interaction, |

| | |
|---|---|
| | cognition and learning, behaviour, emotional and social development, and sensory and/or physical needs. The CoP referenced what we now know as social emotional mental health (SEMH) as emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD). |
| Every Child Matters (DfES, 2003) | Every child matters legislation (DFES 2003) was introduced to address and embed inclusion (Thomas, 2015), it was introduced as a response to the Victoria Climbié inquiry. The purpose of the legislation was to reduce levels of educational failure, ill health, abuse, and neglect, etc. Again, reinforcing the narrative of how important early intervention and inclusion is. |
| School suspensions and permanent exclusions (DfE, 2022) | Provides guidance on legislation around exclusions of pupils from LA maintained and academy schools and PRUs. It provides a guide to the law alongside statutory guidance. It emphasises that the "decision to exclude must be lawful, reasonable and fair", as schools have a statutory duty not to discriminate against protective factors which include disability and race. It highlights that disruptive behaviour may be communicating an unmet need but argues "good discipline in schools is essential" and that head teachers are supported to use exclusion as a sanction when warranted, however PEx should be a last resort. |
| SEND CoP (DfE & DoH, 2014) | The CoP extended its age range to 0-25 years of age with a clearer focus of participation from CYP and parent in decision making processes. Guidance for joint planning and collaborative working between education, health |

| | |
|---|---|
| | and social care was provided. Statements of SEN were replaced with EHCPs with a greater focus on support for CYP experiencing SEN to ensure better educational outcomes and successful transitions into adulthood. Finally, the term EBD was replaced with SEMH. |
| Incheon Declaration: Education 2030 (UNESCO, 2016) | Reinforces the notion of inclusive education and explicitly sets out that CYP should be consulted in regards to their educational development, to not do this would breach their rights (de Leeuw et al., 2019). |
| Behaviour and Discipline in Schools (DfE, 2020) | Published in 2013 but was updated 2020 to cover COVID regulations. The legislation sought to provide guidance for schools to create their behaviour policies with explanations as what power staff have in regard to discipline. It outlines its key points as:<br>- "Teachers have power to discipline pupils for misbehaviour which occurs in school and, in some circumstances, outside of school.<br>- The power to discipline also applies to all paid staff (unless the headteacher says otherwise) with responsibility for pupils, such as teaching assistants.<br>- Headteachers, proprietors and governing bodies must ensure they have a strong behaviour policy to support staff in managing behaviour, including the use of rewards and sanctions." |

This demonstrated that although PEx decision-making essentially relies upon human factors of education practitioners they are expected to follow lawful and just processes, whilst PEx statistics present disproportionate representation of vulnerable and marginalised groups of CYP; key legislation is expanded on further in Chapter 2.

Furthermore, English policy and practice have typically focused on the personal characteristics of marginalised and excluded pupils, their personal histories and family /and community influences on their development, character, behaviour and current presentation in school, at the expense of attention to school-based factors which may elicit or exacerbate the difficulties which staff experience as challenging or unacceptable. This way of formulating children's experienced difficulties aligns with "fundamental attribution error"; which relates to the tendency for people to account behaviours observed in others on over-emphasised personality-based explanations, or "within child" factors (Miller, 1984). This often means there is an under-emphasis on environmental explanations, with less recognition/understanding of how environmental factors may be influence the behaviours observed (Miller, 1984). This can limit the ability to view the child holistically and ignoring the interactive element of the child and their environment (Thompson et al., 2021).

Inclusive education policy and practice meanwhile, would require that unacceptable behaviour or manifestations of mental distress be viewed more systemically and in dynamic, interactionist terms, with analysis focusing on how adequately the immediate (school) context might precipitate and / or could accommodates and makes reasonable adjustments to facilitate the 'problem' student's needs. School improvement and developments to practice would be viewed as the legitimate focus for analysis and intervention, alongside therapeutic or other forms of support for the focus student. Greer (2020) asserted that an aim of the 2014 reform of Code of Practice (CoP) was to move away from viewing difficulties as "within child" factors by renaming EBD to SEMH. The rationale of this

was to highlight the presence of an unmet need in contributing towards poor behaviour not within child characteristics, which could pose the question of the purpose of exclusion, as some would argue they do not address these unmet needs rather it excerbates them (Greer, 2020; Murphy, 2022).

### 1.4 Brownhill context

The following synopsis is not supported by citation of the reference sources utilised to inform the account. This omission reflects my commitment to ensure confidentially is maintained and the LA remains unidentifiable, as was agreed in the application for ethical approval for this study within the university, as well as when negotiating the research with the LA.

Brownhill has a highly diverse population, comprising approximately 300,000 residents. It has ranked in the top 30 most deprived council areas in England, with several -wards ranked within the top 5% for deprivation in England. Mentioned earlier in this thesis is that Brownhill has a significantly higher rate of PEx for CYP from a mixed ethnic minority background; it is pertinent to add that PEx rates in general in Brownhill are significantly higher than many 'statistical neighbour' LAs with a comparable demographic in England. As a result of the high PEx rates, their reduction is a key strategic priority for both the LA and the EPS.

The introductory review of literature summarised in this volume thus far, suggests that, in England, explored factors which exacerbate PEx risks may be associated with policy and funding outcomes. reported in similar LAs could indicate that local policy and funding variants, alongside human factors which reflect local authority and school culture and their impact on decision-making about whether PEx forms a necessary and legitimate response to challenging pupil behaviour. It is school staff, namely the head teacher, who, taking account of the guidelines summarised in Table 6, take the decision to PEx following either attempts to support the student despite the presenting challenging behaviour or following a one-off 'excludable' behaviour (which would be detailed in

the school's behaviour policy). They, in turn, base their judgements on records maintained by 'hands-on' staff, typically assuming these records are reliable and objective. The headteacher's decision to exclude is then reviewed by the school governing board (DfE, 2022).

Trends shared by comparable LAs, where, to meet national expectations for pupil attainment and maintain league table positions which are likely to sustain levels of pupil enrolment, (which in turn secure the income to sustain staffing levels), is rendered a considerably greater challenge than is the case in LAs in which there are lower levels of socio-economic disadvantage. It can be argued that the levels of deprivation observed in the Brownhill area paired with reduced resources and funding, as well as additional pressures for league table results could exacerbate pressures on school staff.

From a psychological perspective, mediating mechanisms contributing to PEx decisions in Brownhill (as in other LAs), could relate to the fundamental attribution error referenced earlier Additionally, teachers' constructs about themselves - as effective teachers, for example, are placed in jeopardy by pupils who do not engage with their teaching or accept their authority. To be unable to meet the needs of a pupil expressing challenging behaviour and reduce these occurrences, would be to risk invalidation of core constructs.

Ravenette (1988), for example, suggested that pupils' challenging behaviour presents the following sources of threat to many teachers' core constructs:

- a threat to the teacher's skill in developing an adequate professional understanding of the child or of children like this;
- a threat to the teacher's competence (in knowing how to teach and interact with pupils effectively);
- a threat to a mainstream teacher's role within inclusive education policy, if they are incapable of accommodating diversity; and

- a threat to the teacher's ability to help this pupil and / or other similar pupils in the future in future: one of the key sources of many teachers' espoused reasons for entering the teaching profession and viewing their job as fulfilling and rewarding.

Closely aligned with personal construct psychology, as a paradigm offering potential insight into the mechanisms that may influence teacher behaviour and their perspectives on whether pupil behaviour is, or is not acceptable and / or whether, as mainstream teachers, (or, from the head teacher's perspective), it is reasonable or realistic for them to be expected to work effectively with such students, in parallel to accommodating the needs of other pupils, within the resources available to them within a mainstream school, are theories of cognitive dissonance (e.g. Festinger, 1962).

The theory argues that dissonance between an individual's beliefs, perceptions, judgements, and other cognitive processes causes significant discomfort or stress, which humans typically resolve by aligning previously dissonant beliefs. This could contribute to fundamental attribution bias and to also resolve threats to teachers' core constructs about their identity and competence as teachers. By perceive the "challenging" pupil as 'beyond the pale', having exceptionally complex needs or difficulties, and so simply unsuitable for education in a mainstream school, and giving less weighting to the influence of school- or classroom-based of factors such as the suitability of curriculum content, pedagogy, relational tone, the behaviour management system, risks of discriminatory practices. Resolution of dissonance in this direction would then legitimise- or even render desirable – if only for the sake of other pupils, permanent exclusion of the pupil. cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1962).

Such hypotheses have informed my own decision to explore teachers' espoused beliefs and perspectives as the focus of the current research study, and the inclusion with the Q-methodology concourse of evidence, of statements of belief. As noted above, Brownhill reports high rates of PEx., In informing understanding of the factors which may contribute to this trend, I judged it

relevant to explore the viewpoints of the "people with the problems" (Fullan, 2020), anticipating that this could contribute to a better understanding of how PEx is viewed by a sample of Brownhill teachers, with the insights derived from his study having the potential to be harnessed within the local authority strategy to reduce the incidence of PEx.

### 1.5 Personal and professional investments

It is essential for me at this juncture to explain both my personal and professional experience and investment within the field of exclusion. My motivations were rooted in the desire to better understand the phenomenon of exclusion and inclusion, what contributes towards implementation of, what supports and what prevents implementation of and how educational psychologists (EPs) can support school systems to be more inclusive. The desired outcomes of this research are to gain insight into how school staff perceive the phenomenon of permanent exclusion of often-already marginalised youth.

This phenomenon is highly relevant to my positionality as a trainee EP on placement and prospective employed newly qualified EP, converging with my personal investment which relates primarily to my partner who himself experienced PEx during his secondary education. Unbeknownst to us both were the implications of this PEx and the impact it would have longer term, which had become more apparent as we transitioned into adulthood. This is where my interest in the area began, with the desire to uncover why exclusions, especially PEx, occur, what purpose do they serve and who benefits from this action and process. This interest and investment were then further motivated by my stance on social justice and belief on inclusion and thus inclusion for all, which includes those CYP who experience difficulties with SEMH, with SEMH also being referenced as "challenging behaviour".

As I was motivated in exploring viewpoints relating to exclusion of secondary school staff, who have worked with children at risk of and/or who have been PEx, and may also be experiencing

SEMH difficulties, presented the opportunity to obtain in-depth perspectives relating to this social phenomenon. Based on my prior knowledge and subsequent review of the literature, I felt Q-methodology was the most appropriate form of research method and analysis. I also recognised risks associated with bottom-up approaches of elicitation such as interviews, namely social desirability effects which could selectively silence participants from acknowledging politically off-message sentiments.

Q-methodology is an approach that incorporates both quantitative and qualitative approaches, where participants subjectively express viewpoints by assigning their own value and meaning to a topic presented to them. The analysis of Q-methodology allows for these subjective viewpoints to be explored through quantitative methods, presenting a level of objectivity. Due to the topic at hand presenting as socially controversial, q-methodology was felt to be the most effective and appropriate form of research method to extract these viewpoints, this is expanded on further in the methodology chapter of this report.

From my position based on life experiences and professional practice I view the area of PEx through a dynamic systems theory perspective. If a child does not conform, subscribe, or adapt to their school environment, whether this be due to disaffection or inappropriate provision, then it should be the school environment that adapts and provides support that is additional to and otherwise different from typical provision to ensure and enable the child's inclusion within the school environment. This is how the SEND CoP defines special educational provision, which in my view brokers the case that although not all CYP who are PEx formally identified as experiencing SEND, they may require provision that is additional which may act as a form of special educational provision.

> … special educational provision is educational or training provision that is additional to or different from that made generally for other children or young people of the same age by

> mainstream schools, maintained nursery schools, mainstream post-16 institutions or by relevant early years providers. (Department for Education & Department of Health, 2015, p. 16).

This argument is further strengthened by the 2022 SEND review, which outlines alternative provision where CYP typically attend following PEx (The Difference, 2021), as needing to be funded properly and to become "an integral part of local SEND systems" (HM Government, 2022, p. 6). PEx and its links to SEND are discussed further in Chapter 2.

## 1.6 Structure of this thesis

The remainder of this thesis is structured as the following:

- Narrative literature review
- The aims, purpose, and subsequent research questions
- The methodological approach for this research
- The results of this research
- The discussion of findings and conclusions drawn from this research.

# 2 Literature review

This chapter conducts a narrative literature, which serves a dual purpose. The first purpose establishes what the current research is on the topic of permanent exclusions from school. It explores both the English legislative context of PEx in education and the legislative context in the other jurisdictions of the UK. It begins to identify some of the factors that may exacerbate or prevent the occurrence of PEx whilst also examining the stakeholder experience of PEx, focusing primarily on school staff, parents and CYP, in recognition of the human factors that contribute to the decision-making process of PEx.

The second purpose of the narrative literature review was to build the concourse for the Q-methodology, which is a crucial step for this research design. The concourse is the collection of knowledge held on a particular topic (Watts & Stenner, 2012), in this case PEx. The themes drawn from the literature review helped to build up the concourse and subsequent Q-set, this research process will be expanded more in Chapter 3 of this thesis. The current chapter then concludes by outlining the research purpose, rationale, aims and questions.

The search strategy involved searching the following key terms:

- Incl* and pupil referral units
- Perspect* and pupil referral units
- View* and pupil referral units
- Sch* and Q-method
- Inclusion
- SEMH
- Permanent exclusion

## 2.1 Permanent exclusion in England

PEx is viewed as an essential tool to manage good behaviour by the UK government, once all other approaches to behaviour managed have been exhausted (DfE, 2022). Guidance recommends schools and LAs do not take a no exclusion policy/stance as this may prevent children accessing alternative provision (AP) when appropriate as well as potentially presenting as a safeguarding issue (DfE, 2022). It is viewed as a method to protect other pupils and teaching from disruption enabling calm and supportive environments (DfE, 2022). This is a common theme across all legislation relating to SEND and behaviour in education, where children have the right to inclusive education on the condition it is compatible with the efficient use of resources and is not detrimental to other service users (Warnock, 1978).

The guidance provided by the DfE (2022) outlines it is only that of the headteacher who has the power to both suspend (fixed term exclusions) and PEx, which is ratified by school governors. They are required to apply the civil standard of proof; that whatever incident is being reported is more than likely to be true whilst taking into consideration the CYPs viewpoint and how this will impact on decision-making processes (DfE, 2022). The DfE outline:

> The decision to exclude a pupil permanently should only be taken:
>
> - in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy; and
> - where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others such as staff or pupils in the school. (Department for Education, 2022, p. 13)

Examining the guidance highlights further the human factors that influence whether a PEx is used as an approach or not, ultimately it is school staff, namely the head teacher, who makes this decision.

The rates of exclusion from school have already been highlighted as a concern since the 1990s, and it could be argued as having been successfully reduced over the last 25 years, with rates in 1997/98 being reported at 12,198 (Cole et al., 2003) whereas recent data shows a reduction to around 5-7000 exclusions in recent years. However, it is useful to consider the multitide of factors that could account for this reduction:

- The COVID-19 pandemic which resulted in a vast number of children receiving home/online learning;
- "Off-rolling" (HM Government, 2019);
- Back door exclusions where parents are pressured to withdraw or move their child (Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, 2022);
- Managed moves (Carlile, 2012);
- Dual registration (Robb, 2019), etc., which are situations which would not be recorded as a PEx but act in the same way.

The remainder of this literature review sets out to explore the factors associated with PEx; which may act as a hindering or a supportive factor of PEx.

Furthermore, despite figures being down compared to where they were in the 1997/98, there has been a steady increase of rates of PEx in England since 2012 (Caslin, 2021; Department for Education, 2019a). Research implies the change in policy and guidance as a potential contributing factor, with the current Conservative government having a greater focus academic achievement and traditionalism which may lead to disengaged and disaffectionate

CYP (Caslin, 2021). Nonetheless, research has indicated that guidance and policy has significant influence on practice in schools, with Murphy (2022) asserting schools being positioned as an extension of the government. This is useful to consider, as McCluskey et al., (2019) indicated guidance such as "Discipline and behaviour in schools" (Department for Education, 2013) could be viewed as "facilitating head teachers regular use of exclusion" (McCluskey et al., 2019, p. 1154), again implying the human influence on the decision to PEx. It can be argued at the very least this guidance ensures school autonomy which could be viewed as a positive step but also may lead to inconsistencies in the use of PEx, with some utilising the practice more often than others (Caslin, 2021; Department for Education, 2019b), potentially inferring the concept of a "post code" lottery in relation to support (Caslin, 2021).

Conversely, the paper references "exclusion" and not PEx, which is a form of exclusion but not the only form, the reference to regular use of exclusion could relate to internal or fixed term (suspension) and not necessarily PEx, meaning this should be considered cautiously to avoid over generalising findings which may not be applicable solely to PEx. Additionally, when considering the quote above, its important to recognise the guidance is simply that – guidance (McCluskey et al., 2019). It is not mandatory, which offers a contradicting argument that head teachers do not need to follow it and therefore are not being facilitated or encouraged to regularly use exclusion, again emphasising the influence of school staff on the occurrence of PEx. It also does not account for the practice of "unlawful exclusions" suggesting the guidance may only influence practice insofar.

It is pertinent to consider these differing versions of "exclusion", particularly those that may be considered as "unlawful exclusions" (e.g., off-rolling and back door exclusions), because in essence the CYP is still being removed from their school but not in an official process, which could have implications for how this area is researched and examined. It is unlikely

"unlawful exclusions" would be recorded or admitted to, resulting in a potentially whole population of children who are not being monitored and/or potentially not having their viewpoints examined as they are not officially being identified as PEx. The acknowledgement of these "unlawful exclusions" was recognised across multiple jurisdictions of the UK, indicating it is not solely an English issue.

Continuing on, the increased use of alternative provision, opens the market for mainstream schools to remove CYP displaying challenging behaviours from mainstream settings (Thompson et al., 2021). Whilst the increased academisation and break away from LAs is argued as having an adverse effect on school relationships, which can result in a loss of expertise within school settings and a breakdown in joined up/multi-agency services (Cole et al., 2019; McCluskey et al., 2019). It can be argued that these factors are needed for CYP to succeed if they are PEx. Culham (2003) argues the need for greater collaboration between schools, further education, employers and PRUs to ensure those who are PEx are provided opportunities to be successful and break the cycle of exclusion, "it is crucial that schools work closely with external agencies and other education providers in ensuring that those who have been excluded find their way back into school or an educational environment that meets their individual needs" (Culham, 2003, p. 408). The need for collaboration and joined up working has been identified as supportive in reducing PEx in different jurisdictions of the UK (Caslin, 2021; Cole et al., 2019; Department for Education, 2019b; Duffy et al., 2021; McCluskey et al., 2019), with the break away from close relationships between schools and LAs via academisation being cited as debilitating (Caslin, 2021; Cole et al., 2019; McCluskey et al., 2019). Recent reviews indicate how damaging the exclusion processes are within our education systems (Caslin, 2021; Department for Education, 2019b), with exclusions being cited as a failure on these CYP:

> If we do not address these issues and ensure educational professionals and parents feel enabled to effectively support young people who have received the SEBD label to remain in the classroom, as a society, we will simply continue to fail this group of pupils. (Caslin, 2021, p. 130)

Moreover, Caslin (2021) discussed how research 25 years ago suggested concerns around the rising number of schools removing certain groups of CYP, positioning this as a societal failure. Despite the time that has passed, these findings are still very much relevant in the current day, with PEx rates on the rise suggesting our education system is facilitating the sanctioning of those who do not conform, arguable those CYP experiencing SEMH difficulties (Caslin, 2021). There has been an experienced paradigm shift in the applied psychological theory and research which have informed schools' behaviour management policies, from use of behavioural psychology's teacher-led / directed emphasis on rules, routines and consequences (normally institutional rewards and sanctions), toward more emancipatory, compassionate, psycho-educational approaches aiming to create contextual conditions within which children feel secure and can thrive by addressing their attachment needs and adopting trauma-informed, relational approaches (Greer, 2020).

The use of these sanctions have been frequently argued against over the years, especially with educationalists and psychologists. These professionals have pushed for relational and empathetic approaches of earning respect from children to respond to unmet needs, contrasting with the DfE's guidance (and subsequent papers) on behaviour and discipline (Greer, 2020). Greer (2020) suggested the guidance as advocating punitive sanctions, meaning unmet needs are not addressed fully and the use of sanctions rather seeks to reestablish power and control for school staff rather than build and foster relationships. It is most important to consider that effective interventions that meet the needs of CYP experiencing difficulties with SEMH development, need the vision and support from

stakeholders involved in its implementation (Greer, 2020). Although, there is not a consensus on what is deemed the most appropriate approach for this group of CYP, those who are responsible for implementing the provision need to at the very least believe in it, if they do not support what is being suggested they are likely not going to maintain it or implement it whilst maintaining fidelity.

## 2.2 English Legislative Entitlement

The next stage of this review considers the English legislative entitlement relative to the area of permanent exclusion, with this being identified as "inclusion". Inclusion gained popularity in the 90s, following the United Nations idea of "Education for All" (EFA) and the Salamanca Statement (Gidlund, 2018; McCluskey et al., 2015). The British government supports the Salamanca statement, which outlines the human right to an inclusive education (McCluskey et al., 2015; Visser & Stokes, 2003) regardless of gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity and disability. Whilst, the EFA is described as "an international commitment to ensure that every child and adult receives basic education of good quality" (Miles & Singal, 2010, p. 3). However, the promotion of EFA has been continuously criticised since its proposal because a number of vulnerable and marginalised children are still being excluded from their education (Miles & Singal, 2010).

Inclusion is argued as a dominant ideology within education, linked significantly to social justice in its bid to erase social exclusion (Thomas, 2015), signalling the relevancy of this practice to permanent exclusion. In England, the SEN CoP 2001 further emphasised inclusive ethos and the belief that children's SEN should be met within mainstream provision (Thomas, 2015), which was maintained in the reformed SEND CoP (2014), with the caveat that it does not disrupt the education of others, "schools and colleges should have clear processes to support children and young people, including how they will manage the effect of any disruptive behaviour so it does not adversely affect other pupils" (DfE & DoH, 2015, p. 98).

The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) defined inclusion and inclusive schools as the following:

> The fundamental principle of the inclusive school is that all children should learn together, wherever possible, regardless of any difficulties or differences they may have. Inclusive schools must recognize and respond to the diverse needs of their students, accommodating both different styles and rates of learning and ensuring quality education to all through appropriate curricula, organisational arrangements, teaching strategies, resource use and partnerships with their communities. There should be a continuum of support and services to match the continuum of special needs encountered in every school. (UNESCO, 1994, p. 11-12).

The concept of inclusion for all however was not consulted with or developed by schools or school staff. Instead it is perceived as a political concept tied to human rights that has been passed onto national and local governments across the world which in turn has filtered into schools, leaving teachers with little choice but to implement inclusion regardless of their own views and understanding (Gidlund, 2018). In addition to this, there is a suggested importance that teachers have the same consistent understanding of what inclusions means and what it looks like in practice (Gidlund, 2018). Inclusion is arguably reliant on staff attitude and ability to fulfil this ideology in practice (Gidlund, 2018; Thomas, 2015). Changing legislation is only a step towards inclusion, it does not ensure the change of attitudes only encourages it (Visser & Stokes, 2003). Consequently, conflicts and contradictions within the English policy context can result in reduced opportunities for inclusion within school settings (Thompson et al., 2021). If those who are responsible for delivering and implementing inclusive practice do not subscribe to the ideology or even understand it, then the reality of inclusive schools cannot be reached to the fullest extent.

Inclusion is tricky concept to define, with a variety of definitions and definitive definitions missing as well as vague references in government documents, including the SEND CoP (2015) (Stanforth & Rose, 2020). The Conventions of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN, 2016 cited in Schuelka, 2018, p.3) define inclusion as:

- "A fundamental right to education
- A principle that values students' wellbeing, dignity, autonomy, and contribution to society
- A continuing process to eliminate barriers to education and promote reform in the culture, policy, and practice in schools to include all students."

The definitions offered from the Salamanca Statement and the Conventions of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, appear to be similar in nature, emphasising the fundamental right to education for all, placing the child at the centre of focus and seeking to remove barriers that result in education being inaccessible. This emphasises the notion that it is the environment and context that need to accommodate the child, not the child needing to adapt to the environment. Inclusion challenges the notion that defines people by their "deficits" in education and thus segregation and exclusion because of their difference, with continuous debates around whether inclusion is attainable and realistic for educational provisions (Culham, 2003). Historically, English policy has arguably focused on within child factors limiting the ability to view the child holistically (Gazeley et al., 2013; Thompson et al., 2021). It is useful to consider these points alongside ways in which inclusion is formulated as the information provides an insight into the conceptualisation of inclusion within the English educational context.

For the purpose of this research I used the definition outlined in Schuelka's (2018) paper, due to its concise nature drawing on the key components of inclusion which resonate with my

own core values. In addition, as the paper which raised this definition was written in the UK I felt it would ensure consistency when using it in my own research which is conducted in England.

This section highlights significant attempts from the English government to introduce inclusion and inclusive practice since the introduction of the EFA and Salamanca statement, with relevant legislative documents reflecting this, it provides context for PEx as an approach used within the English education sector. However, there are no operational definitions used, potentially contradictory policies, and caveats attached that inclusion should be achieved so long as it does not interrupt the education of other children. Whilst the legislative change was achieved the research highlights that this is not enough to change ideology and shift mindsets in relation to educational practice and without consultation with those responsible with implementation, namely staff working in school systems, inclusion and inclusive practice may not be achieved, emphasising the need to consult those working within school systems to understand their viewpoints. However, it is important to consider, from an organisational psychology position, the significant impact of policy on basic assumptions, espoused values and beliefs and the surface manifestations in school organisations (Schein, 2010), whilst the examination of factors that support or prevent PEx in other jurisdictions of the UK in section 2.5 of this thesis provides evidence for this claim.

## 2.3 Inclusive special education

It has been identified in the first chapter of this thesis that CYP with SEND are represented in the PEx statistics. As there has been an emphasis of inclusion in legislation and policy, particularly for those experiencing SEND, it would be useful to explore research into this area. This section explores research into inclusion of CYP experiencing SEND which includes difficulties with the following four broad areas explained in Table 7, as detailed in the SEND CoP (2014).

**Table 7.**

*The four broad areas of the SEND CoP and their definitions as outlind in the DfE and DoH (2014) SEND CoP.*

| SEND Area | Explanation as detailed in the SEND CoP (DfE and DoH, 2014) |
|---|---|
| Cognition and Learning | When CYP learning, despite adequate differentiation, is behind age related expectations. It may include learning difficulties such as moderate learning difficulties (MLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD), profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), and specific learning difficulties (SpLD) such as dyslexia. |
| Communication and Interaction | When CYP have difficulties communicating with others, this relates to speech, language, and communication difficulties. Diagnoses such as Autism may suggest CYP have specific difficulty with social interaction. |
| Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) | When CYP have difficulties with their social and emotional development that presents in a variety of ways including challenging or disruptive behaviour, withdrawal, self-harm, etc. These behaviours may indicate an underlying mental health need or difficulties with social and emotional skills. |
| Sensory and/or Physical | When CYP have a disability that prevents special education provision for them to access their education. This can include physical disabilities such as hearing impairment and vision |

| | |
|---|---|
| | impairment, as well as physical disability. These difficulties can fluctuate and be age related. |

Research recognises the difficulty of accepting and embracing the inclusive ideology that had been pushed since the 1990s as well as the dilemmas that are evident as a result of attempting to be inclusive, with some circumstances resulting in the "… inherent dilemma that all inclusion implies exclusion" (Qvortrup & Qvortrup, 2018, p. 807). For example, Qvortrup and Qvortrup (2018) highlighted how special educational provision was an attempt at meeting the needs of children with SEND but often resulted in them being educated in other types of provisions i.e., special schools, so an attempt at being inclusive resulted in actual exclusion from mainstream provision, this form of exclusion is vastly different from PEx, however. The emphasis on inclusion in policy has not necessarily meant it was has been realised, parents have reported over the years that despite the move to inclusive policy, there were still barriers present that prevented CYP participation in this, with these barriers also being highlighted in other pieces of literature, including lack of resources and funding, hostile school environments, inflexible teaching styles and ethos to difference in mainstream settings (Caslin, 2021; Department for Education, 2019b; Gazeley et al., 2013; Runswick-Cole, 2008; Trotman et al., 2015).

I have already outlined the tensions within the dynamic systems in the English education context but reference to the systems is frequently mentioned in literature (Caslin, 2021; Parker & Levinson, 2018) which would act as a barrier to achieving inclusive schools. Nevertheless, children who fit within the SEMH SEND category (previously EBD or Social Emotional Behaviour Difficulties (SEBD)) are viewed as being more difficult to include and are often at greater risk of PEx (Caslin, 2021; Menzies & Angus, 2021; Runswick-Cole, 2008; Trotman et al., 2015). Children with SEBD were viewed as being the most difficult to include because of the nature of their challenging behaviours and that approaches to these

difficulties were inconsistent (Caslin, 2021; Thomas, 2015). A factor that could hinder the inclusion of these groups of children may relate to whether EBD/SEMH was viewed as a SEND (Pirrie & Macleod, 2009), which was conflated further by it being identified as behavioural rather than emotional difficulties, presenting the biggest challenge to school systems (Pirrie & Macleod, 2009). It is interesting to consider these associated difficulties, particularly when Scotland had redefined SEN as additional support needs (ASN) (Barrett et al., 2015). The difficulties with conflicting and unclear terminology identified above may have became apparent when attempting to introduce and encourage inclusive policy, which could have led them to redefine the terms. This may have been to ensure any child who is experiencing difficulty were to receive the appropriate support and resources whether it was viewed as an educational need or a vulernablilty e.g., CYP living in poverty, having care experiences, etc., (Barrett et al., 2015).

The definitions of EBD and SEMH within the codes of practice are open to interpretation creating an essence of blurred boundaries and disjointed meanings (Pirrie & Macleod, 2009) of what these areas of SEND are and how to provide and implement adequate provision. In particular, the CoP (DfE & DoH, 2014) stipulates that not all disruptive behaviours is SEND, but then proceeds to include disruptive behaviour as an example of SEMH needs. This could present as contradictory and incoherent to those who are responsible for both identifying need and implement adequate support. It would therefore be worthwhile exploring literature that examines inclusion and inclusive practice with this population of CYP.

## 2.4 Inclusion of students who experience social, emotional, and mental health difficulties

Before the discussion of literature surrounding CYP experiencing SEMH difficulties, it should be emphasised here that those who are PEx are not always identified as experiencing SEND, despite CYP experiencing SEND being seven times more likely to be excluded (The

Difference, 2021) and nearly half of those excluded are identified as experiencing SEND (No More Exclusions, 2021). However, it has been presented in previous sections that those experiencing SEMH are identified as being more difficult to "include". Therefore, it is plausible to suggest, those who are identified as experiencing SEND are likely to be experiencing SEMH as a primary area of need, this was reported by the DfE (2019a) "young people who have had the SEBD label attached to them are the most likely group of pupils to be excluded from the classroom" (Caslin, 2021, p. 124)..

According to HM Government (2021a) persistently disruptive behaviour is the most commonly cited reason for PEx, this is consistent from the academic year 2014/15 to 2019/20, consistent with literature (Farouk, 2014; No More Exclusions, 2021) and reflected in the Brownhill area. This is important as the SEND CoP specifically states persistently disruptive behaviours is not always indicative of SEND, this is conflicted further by the CoP definition of SEMH including "disruptive" behaviours. Examples of these disruptive behaviours would be physical aggression, such as kicking, throwing, hitting, etc., verbal aggression, such as swearing, calling out insults, etc.; calling out in class; interrupting peers; presenting as disobedient or not following instructions, etc. I would argue from experience and examination of literature into this area, that if a child's "behaviour" leads to them being PEx and thus interrupting and impacting their education, then they are experiencing difficulties that can be identified as "SEND".

It is purposeful to examine literature surrounding inclusion of children experiencing SEMH difficulties. It is useful to differentiate the different forms of exclusion from/in schools; children being moved to another setting that is deemed more suitable to meet the individual needs of the child could be viewed as a form of exclusion. Whereas, exclusion from school, on the other hand, is described as traumatic removal of a child from their current school (Carlile, 2011; Pirrie & Macleod, 2009) where they are then moved to a short-term provision,

from experience, however, PRU placements are not always “short-term”. It should be stated here that the terms relating to SEMH difficulties are used interchangeably and can be referred to as EBD, SEBD, challenging behaviour, disruptive behaviour, difficult behaviour, the list is exhaustive.

The conflicting discourses of SEMH difficulties can also be a hindrance to CYP experiencing difficulties in this area. Pirrie and Macleod (2009) raised the occurrence of discussions as to whether EBD/SEMH was a form of SEND, which was conflated further by SEMH being identified as behavioural difficulties rather than emotional difficulties, presenting the biggest challenge to school systems. It is plausible to indicate the reason for this is related to the lack of understanding of the presenting difficulties and thus unmet need, if a CYP SEMH difficulties are viewed as poor behaviour and lack of discipline rather than an inability to appropriately regulate their emotions and thus resulting behaviours, it has a direct impact on what provision is implemented to support the CYP. Furthermore, the definition of EBD and SEMH within both CoP are open to interpretation creating an essence of blurred boundaries and disjointed meanings, moving SEMH further and further away from SEN (Caslin, 2021; Murphy, 2022; Stanforth & Rose, 2020). This provides further rationale for Scotland’s approach of reidentifying SEND as Additional Support Needs (ASN), to encompass all learners who are struggling (Barrett et al., 2015).

Further complications arise through the misconception that difficulties are caused only by home, parenting or trauma (Department for Education, 2019b; Gillies & Robinson, 2012; Stanforth & Rose, 2020). In my own professional practice, I have heard school staff indicate they were not sure whether challenging behaviour was as a result of the environment or SEND, as though they are perceived to be completely separate constructs. The number of terms for SEMH, as already established in the English context, is what could evoke confusion within policy and research with this population of students. With the belief those CYP who

exhibit challenging behaviour are both responsible for their behaviour and are products of circumstances and the environment, often being excluded for the very reason they require support (Murphy, 2022; Stanforth & Rose, 2020).

Moreover, with there being a large gap between what inclusion is set out to be and what it actually looks like in practice, to include children without making changes to the curriculum, school set up and educational system does not make their difficulties go away. It could instead intensify their difficulties, articulating how complicated teachers may find implementing inclusion within school systems (Caslin, 2021; Cole et al., 2019; Department for Education, 2019b; Gidlund, 2018). Previous literature has presented evidence for the practice to research gap, that there are not enough practical strategies for staff to use with CYP experiencing SEMH difficulties, arguing there is a significant need for better interventions within school settings as well as efforts needed to focus on improving staff knowledge and skillset for SEMH (Caslin, 2021; Cole et al., 2019; McKenna et al., 2019). This was further supported by the Timpson review (DfE, 2019b) which referenced the additional pressures school systems faced, which related to league tables, funding levels and curriculum changes. This suggests there is not only a tension between the dynamic systems but potentially a misunderstanding of what SEMH is and how to appropriately support CYP experiencing these difficulties. It implies that within the English context, policy and practice still do not have a consistent understanding and approach to SEMH difficulties which could lead to the perceptions of inclusion being unachievable for this population of children.

Schools who are viewed to embrace more of an inclusive ethos are more able to successfully meet the needs of CYP with SEMH difficulties. Research has indicated that those schools who are better able to meet the needs of CYP experiencing SEMH difficulties were found to have more inclusive ideals and qualities within the system (Gazeley et al., 2013; Malmqvist, 2016; McCluskey et al., 2019). Even when confounding variables are controlled for, such as

demographic area, the data showed the differences in exclusion rates were found to be factors relating to the schools rather than the pupils (Malmqvist, 2016). This indicates the barriers could be attributed to the environment rather than the CYP. The study provides evidence for the narrative that it is the environment disabling and enforcing barriers for CYP not characteristics that could be ascribed to the individual. Despite one of the studies being conducted in Sweden which may impact generalisability of findings across contexts, these findings are relevant to the English context. Particularly as potential issues with the English approach to, in some circumstances, perceived segregation through the use of special schools and PRUs have already been recognised.

A frequent theme attributed to inclusive practice generally, but in particular for CYP experiencing SEMH difficulties and/or at risk of PEx, throughout the literature is relational approaches to the CYPs difficulties. Research frequently cites the importance of empathy, relationships, trust, communication, and restorative approaches to supporting CYP experiencing SEMH as well as these qualities and approaches being cited as potential explanations for why certain schools, areas and countries may have lower rates of exclusion (Caslin, 2021; Duffy et al., 2021; Gazeley et al., 2013; Greer, 2020; McCluskey et al., 2019; Murphy, 2022; Trotman et al., 2015). These approaches also feature throughout my professional practice, with relational approaches (Hooven et al., 1995; Hughes & Golding, 2012; Siegel & Hartzell, 2013) continuously promoted and discussed with school communities particularly when support is requested around a CYP experiencing SEMH. It is an interesting point to consider as not all English policies and guidance relating to CYP with SEMH and/or displaying challenging behaviour would advocate for a relational approach, instead it recommends the need for a punitive stance (Department for Education, 2013; Greer, 2020). Despite the perceived value of relational approaches, previous research does not cite them as the only attribution of inclusive practice, and it certainly does not indicate that

relational approaches will result in exclusions being reduced completely. They indicate the benefit of these approaches as a contributing factor to inclusive practice that in some circumstances can result in the reduction of PEx alongside other factors such as policy, funding, resources, and so on.

It would be useful to consider the implementation of inclusive practice in other jurisdictions in the UK, which have been touched on already, to offer a comparison to the English context. In recent years inclusive practice in the four jurisdictions of the UK have been examined, particularly in relation to rates of permanent exclusion. This will be discussed in further detail in section 2.5, but it is important to understand at this juncture the differences in inclusive practice that is being observed across the UK. Much of the research into this area demonstrates the potential for countries such as Scotland to be viewed as more successfully adopting an inclusive ethos, particularly when compared to their English counterparts (Barrett et al., 2015; McCluskey et al., 2019).

It is implied through this research this may be as a result of policy supporting inclusive practice with a strong focus on social justice, terminology and definitions being clear and used consistently, in particular the redefinition of SEN to ASN so that it encompasses all learners who "require support for whatever reason" (Barrett et al., 2015, p. 181) and encouragement of an ethos where there is the recognition for the school to change and adapt, not the child (Barrett et al., 2015). This is an interesting account when compared to the English context which I have discussed in this section, suggesting that jurisdictions in the UK have experienced varying difficulties with implementing inclusion, although it is pertinent to recognize that despite both countries being a part of the UK, there is both a geographical and population difference, with England being significantly larger than Scotland. They are also governed in different ways which will have implications for policy development.

## 2.5 PEx rates and patterns across the UK

The four jurisdictions of the UK have had similar histories, since the last decade or so, tackling the identified issues differently and as a result are experiencing different outcomes. It would be useful to examine what these differences are, the relevance to consideration of staff attitudes to those at risk of PEx, and the observed ability to implement inclusive education across these jurisdictions. The patterns and trends of PEx across the UK have been examined over recent years. So far, this volume has primarily considered PEx in the English context, where rates have been rising since 2012. At this point it would be useful to understand what the rates of PEx present as in the Scottish and Irish context.

Despite English PEx rate rising since 2012, rates elsewhere have remained low, with Scotland experiencing a historic low rate in 2014/15, which is reported to have been maintained, where only five CYP in the jurisdiction were PEx (McCluskey et al., 2019). Similarly, both Northern Ireland and Wales present with lower rates of PEx, which are demonstrated over time (Duffy et al., 2021). Demonstrating the significant disparities in exclusion rates across the four jurisdictions (Duffy et al., 2021; McCluskey et al., 2019; Thompson et al., 2021), with England accounting for 97.4% of all PEx CYP (McCluskey et al., 2019). Nonetheless, it is advised to be cautious when interpreting and examining these statistics. England is reported to have five times the number of students than the combination of the other three jurisdiction, which may account for such a large figure (McCluskey et al., 2019). Statistics also do not present the whole picture and will often not be the true figure, The research group examining the four jurisdictions noted frequently the differences in recording methods of data presented in each country, which again could influence the interpretation of these statistics (Duffy et al., 2021; McCluskey et al., 2019; Thompson et al., 2021).

Statistics aside, it is appropriate to examine these papers because they provide insight into why there may be disparities in the patterns and rates of PEx across the UK. The purpose of this large-scale research project was to understand why the disparities were occurring and what may be supporting more "inclusive provision" in other areas of the UK. Consistent themes across the research related to inclusive policy, collaboration and co-construction as well as a preventative rather than reactive stance (McCluskey et al., 2019). Policy is a theme that has continuously appeared throughout this literature review. It appears in the Scottish context that their policies support inclusion, advocates for a relational approach rather than punitive with a heavy focus on co-construction and a preventative approach (Caslin, 2021; Greer, 2020; McCluskey et al., 2019; Thompson et al., 2021). There is also indication that school staff are held more accountable for PEx compared to their English counterpart, where research has indicated this lack of accountability contributes to high PEx rates (McCluskey et al., 2019; Thompson et al., 2021).

Interestingly, Scottish policy has been likened to the Labour Government's "Every Child Matters" (ECM) (Department for Education and Skills, 2003) legislation, which has since been all but phased out in England(McCluskey et al., 2019). Rates of PEx were reduced pre-2010 when the ECM legislation would have been in effect, suggesting that inclusive practice with this population of children is achievable to an extent (Cole et al., 2019; McCluskey et al., 2019). Another apparent key contributor is the collaborative work occurring in Scotland, with research indicating policy is influenced through co-construction of key stakeholders. Again, this offers explanations as to why there is a disparity in comparison to England, with previous research indicating a factor that hinders inclusion is the separation and removal of close working between LAs and schools (Cole et al., 2019; McCluskey et al., 2019; Thompson et al., 2021). There should be particular interest placed on the co-construction as a supportive factor here. Policy is viewed as having a significant influence on inclusion and

thus reducing PEx rates, with co-construction of the policy supporting its implementation. This again highlights to some extent the significant impact of human factors on decision making. We cannot ignore the viewpoints of those who are involved in the decision-making process of PEx as they are likely to influence whether the process is considered.

Despite rates being lower in other jurisdictions of the UK, this does not mean they are not experiencing any difficulties with PEx. Themes that were identified as hindering inclusive practice and leading to PEx related to lack of funding, resources, and dissonance between policy and practice (Cole et al., 2019; Duffy et al., 2021; McCluskey et al., 2019; Thompson et al., 2021). These factors are also present within the English context, although arguably more heightened particularly dissonance between policy and practice. It is also plausible to suggest that the lack of funding and resources will have an influence on the implementation of policy into practice. If systems do not have access to the level of support required to fulfil the policy, implementation into practice will be limited. There are only so much school systems can do when operating within a budget.

These disparities in current patterns across the UK as well as patterns established pre-2010 could present as contradictory of earlier points made regarding implementing policies that they have not consulted on. The research examined here demonstrates inclusive practice to some extent was achieved in pre-2010 and led to a reduction in PEx (Cole et al., 2019), regardless of whether school staff consulted on the policy. This alludes back to the influence of policy and what messages are filtered down from the top. If the current governments priorities lie within academia, traditionalism and league tables (Caslin, 2021) then policies will reflect this, with disaffected and disengaged children posing a threat to these systems. It is not surprising rates of exclusion are on the rise in the English context.

The disparities across the UK are useful to consider when exploring PEx within the English context. It provides evidence that PEx can be reduced, although not erased, when policies, that are co-constructed by the 'people with the problem' (Fullan, 2020), support inclusive practice, emphasise the need for a preventative and accountable stance, and endorse the need for relational and restorative approaches. It provides us with an understanding of factors that can support the reduction of PEx but also implies the need to be cautious. PEx has not been erased in these jurisdictions they are simply reduced. There are still factors that hinder the ability to reduce and/or remove PEx which resonate well within the English context as well as the recognition from the government that these procedures are essential to improving behaviour within school systems. It will be important to understand how the people with the problem (Fullan, 2020) in the English context perceive the concept of inclusive practice of CYP PEx, and whether the supporting and hindering factors highlighted here arise in their shared viewpoints.

### 2.6 Experiences of permanent exclusion

Despite CYP with SEND representing a minority within English schools, they account for nearly half of all exclusions, with exclusion cases resulting in increased difficulties with CYP mental health presentation (Caslin, 2021; Department for Education, 2019b; Gazeley et al., 2013; Thompson et al., 2021). To begin to understand the experience of exclusion, there is a need to emphasise the point made in section 2.4 which identifies CYP experiencing difficulties associated with their SEMH development in the UK are increasingly and disproportionately excluded from English schools, either through lawful or unlawful means (Thompson et al., 2021).

An explanation for these higher rates of exclusion in CYP experiencing SEMH difficulties could be attributed to poor understanding around the child's presentation or lack of funding and resources (Thompson et al., 2021). Nonetheless, there is a clear overrepresentation of

those experiencing SEMH difficulties being PEx compared to any other SEND category (Caslin, 2021; Duffy et al., 2021; McCluskey et al., 2019), "it could be argued that it is unsurprising that children with SEMH needs are more likely to be excluded, because this is often associated with challenging behaviour" (Department for Education, 2019b, p. 38). However, it is recognised that not every child who is PEx will be identified as experiencing the SEND category of SEMH, which is emphasised by statistics indicating only half of all those PEx have SEND. Nonetheless research drawing links between SEMH needs and PEx were not only conducted in the English context but also in other UK jurisdictions, providing a justification for why this current research emphasises this link, which will be presented in the research methodology.

The following sections will examine the experiences of PEx from those at the varying interactive systems of a child's life, primarily focusing on school staff and parents, before focusing on CYP's experiences.

### *2.6.1 School staff experiences*

A study explored a specialist teacher service working with PRUs. This paper looked at the strategies adopted by "Behaviour Support Service" (BST) teachers working with PRUs and found that the BST's, although were supportive of reintegration of CYP back into mainstream settings, their pedagogic practice could have been viewed as exacerbating the disaffection and misbehaviour exhibited by pupils attending the PRU (Meo & Parker, 2004). Suggesting a potential contradiction between their views and practices. The authors concluded that PRUs could encourage exclusionary practice but have an important part to play in reintegration, explaining the importance of teachers reflecting on their experienced difficulties and the learning process, and the need for further research on reintegration, inclusion and exclusion within and outside of PRUs (Meo & Parker, 2004). It is important to note this research was conducted nearly 20 years ago, indicating that if replicated in contemporary practice, findings

may not be consistent. The findings would not be generalisable to all contexts but instead offer an understanding of what may influence inclusive practice, as well as provide further justification for the consideration of organisational culture. The differences between beliefs and practice could be exacerbated by public and political pressures. Interactions between schools and national policies have direct impact on classroom practice which in turn is highly influential on exclusion; policy needs to safeguard time, tolerance and support understanding in context of other pressures and desires the school system may be experiencing (Arnold et al., 2009; Gillies & Robinson, 2012; McCluskey et al., 2019; Murphy, 2022; Thompson et al., 2021). It is difficult to balance the pressure to improve disciplines and maintain league tables whilst promoting inclusion (Gillies & Robinson, 2012; Murphy, 2022; Thompson et al., 2021), these are concepts that contradict one another.

Further resesarch has highlighted implicit beliefs that certain races and classes of children who typically demonstrate challenging behaviour, are impacted by poor parenting practices (Gillies & Robinson, 2012). It was found that good parenting is viewed by teachers as a mediating factor in disadvantaged families, that those who are from white middle class families are not living in privilege and the entitlement of this is in isolation of the disadvantage experienced by others (Gillies & Robinson, 2012), with school staff indicating they believe they are compensating for poor parenting (Cole et al., 2019; Department for Education, 2019b). The misconception raised around parenting is another factor that can prevent holistic understanding of a CYP SEMH difficulty as well as concealing unmet needs. Emphasising the argument of attempting to encourage inclusion through an unchanged framework may compound further issues around institutional racism and classism without providing opportunities for critical reflections (Gillies & Robinson, 2012). Furthermore, there needs to be a mutual understanding and motivation for inclusion of this group of children,

and if this is absent through professional communication this could lead to exclusions (Thompson et al., 2021).

In order to PEx, headteachers must provide evidence of support provided, including evidence of offered opportunities to improve behaviour, unless it is from a one-off incident that is detailed as an excludable "offence" in their school policies, this evidence is presented to the governors who are responsible for ensuring the school practices within the remit of the law (Carlile, 2012). Carlile (2012) asserted PEx can be viewed as "state power" which prejudices certain types of groups, relevant to institutional racism, working class students and students experiencing SEND. PEx can be viewed as an incident where the school system has failed a CYP (Carlile, 2012). Unpicking factors that contribute to challenging and problematic behaviours is incredibly complex, with many risk factors identified as potentially resulting in problem behaviours, such as race, gender, sexuality and ethnicity all contributing to different presentations (Jenson & Bender, 2014).

### *2.6.2 Parental experiences*

Parental experiences of exclusion and processes relating to exclusion could also be perceived as negative. Carlile (2011) argued parents and professionals are faced with making decision within a context where concepts of tolerance and inclusion are constantly competing, resulting in interprofessional conflict. Whilst literature also acknowedges the heavy load from schools which are experienced by parents, the struggle to balance working whilst their children experience exclusion, calls from school during working hours and expectations to attend meetings at short notice, placing significant burdens on parents (Department for Education, 2019b; Gillies & Robinson, 2012). Teachers were also reportedly quick to judge parents negatively if they did not appear to display adequate concern, without considerations of the factors shared above (Gillies & Robinson, 2012).

Parents, especially mothers, were described as being highly important to the children's lives. Parents expressed concerns around their child's safety whereas schools appeared more concerned about the risk the child posed to others (Gillies & Robinson, 2012). Parents felt there were a lack of protection for their children, with the study aluding to these children having unsupported SEND (Gillies & Robinson, 2012). The labels made of these children in school followed them onto the streets and into the community (Gillies & Robinson, 2012), with the use of labels in school being argued as reinforcing "within-child" narratives (Caslin, 2021), which again contradicts the inclusive ideology being encouraged.

### *2.6.3 CYP experiences*

This following section explores direct experiences of CYP who are PEx. A suggested barrier to inclusion and reintegration in mainstream school for children was down to an inappropriate curriculum (Solomon & Rogers, 2001). The study found there was little evidence to support the belief that CYP experience disaffection due the curriculum, arguing disaffection, instead, was impacted more by motivation and inappropriate coping strategies adopted by the pupils which was not helped in out of school contexts (Solomon & Rogers, 2001). The article argues that the activity of excluding pupils is not concerned with the wellbeing of the pupil and that exclusion serves other purposes, concluding that pupils who are excluded should be reintegrated back into mainstream settings as soon as is possible (Solomon & Rogers, 2001).

Successful reintegration can be viewed as being based on a number of factors such as individual characteristics, family, environment, and school systems/ethos, with the argument that reintegration should be considered in the context it is presented in and that a "one size fits all" approach is inadequate and inappropriate (Atkinson & Rowley, 2019). The notion of a "one size fits all" approach being inadequate was also concluded in a Netherlands study which also utilised q-methodology (de Leeuw et al., 2019). The authors of the study also raised the importance of children's viewpoints and that they should form part of any research

and reforms in education, to ignore their views is to deny inclusion (de Leeuw et al., 2019). Preferences and needs are likely to differ between children (de Leeuw et al., 2019), "education should not happen around students, nor should it be performed on them; they should be active agents in a collaborative process." (Parker & Levinson, 2018, p. 890). It is clear from the studies explored thus far, that child voice is important to any decision making processes relevant to CYP who are PEx or at risk of PEx, and that support must be tailored and personalised to each individual child, with studies globally concluding this, emphasising the trustworthiness of these findings.

Primary and secondary school CYP were found to attribute problem behaviour to external factors, and attribute PRUs as being supportive due to several factors such as structure and personalisation (Jalali & Morgan, 2018). This provides further evidence of the inappropriateness of a "one size fits all" approach. The study found that primary school CYP were more likely to want to attend mainstream schools whereas secondary school CYP adopted an "opt out" approach, with sense of belonging being a key factor, the findings found little change in perceptions across primary to secondary (Jalali & Morgan, 2018). This emphasises the importance of child participation and the collaboration between mainstream settings and alternative provisions. Further research also examined CYP perceptions of PEx and found they often agree with the process of it but also felt a sense of injustice in certain circumstances (DfE, 2019b). This sense of injustice could be related to CYP feeling as though PEx occurs through misconceptions of their needs, whether this be related to unrecognised and/or unsupported SEND or in some circumstances trauma (Murphy, 2022). Nonetheless, it provides evidence for the need to consider each child's situation individually, suggesting the inappropriateness of a "one size fits all" approach.

It is suggested from research gathered that in order to support CYP who are PEx their views should be consulted and used towards decision making processes. Additionally, approaches

to this group of children should be personalised and based on their individual unmet need. It is plausible to suggest without this personalisation CYP could quickly become disaffected and unmotivated by mainstream provision and thus challenging behaviours may start to become present.

## 2.7 Longer term implications

The life long negative effects of PEx result in it being viewed on a national level as problematic, which prompted the encouragement of multiagency and collabroative working in the early 2000s (Carlile, 2011).

> …young people who have been permanently excluded from any type of school are at a far greater risk of a variety of negative outcomes, including prolonged periods out of education and/or employment; poor mental and physical health; involvement in crime; and homelessness. (Pirrie et al., 2011, p. 520)

An impact report produced by "The Difference", a charity organisation working to tackle the implications of PEx, indicated that less than 2% of children who are excluded and educated at alternative provision achieve a pass for their Maths and English GCSE, 9 out of 10 of them are incarcerated and half finish their education at age 16 (The Difference, 2021). The frequently reported poor outcomes for young people who are excluded from their schools, and evidence that, for a majority of these already-vulnerable CYP, exclusion compounds and exacerbates pre-existing difficulties, highlight the importance of investigating the involved professionals' experiences and perceptions of:

- the universal rights of CYP to inclusion, which are now enshrined in international law and local authority policy.
- the factors which threaten the viability of inclusion of the small minority of students who are, eventually, excluded from their school; and

- factors which would better facilitate the continuing inclusion of these young people, and / or, following exclusion and placement in a PRU.

## 2.8 Organisational Culture perspective

An ongoing theme throughout this literature relates to the organisational culture of the school system, with policy having a significant impact on practice. It also recognises that not all schools practice in the same way, suggesting there is an element of human factors within individual school systems. Based on the examination of the literature as well as the nature of the phenomena this research sought to explore, it was also approached from an organisational culture perspective. A salient finding throughout the literature references the difficulties schools and staff experience when implementing inclusive practice particularly for those experiencing SEMH difficulties and/or at risk of PEx. PEx presents as a complex issue with many converging factors that either facilitates it or hinders it. As the phenomena is centred around the school environment, the very act of PEx is to remove a CYP from their school setting, I judged it pertinent to understand staff attitudes and viewpoints surrounding this area, if organisational change surrounding PEx is to be addressed and potentially changed.

An organisational cultural perspective would argue that those people with the problem that you wish to change should be those who are consulted with:

> Have good ideas but process them, and get other ideas from those you work with, including— no, *especially* —those you want to change. We now know that the more complex the change, the more that people with the problem must be part of the solution. (Fullan, 2020, p. 45)

I have developed and processed the "good ideas" through both my personal and professional experience leading up to this research and this subsequent detailed literature review. The next

step would be to gain perspective from those people with the problem – in the case of this research this was identified as school staff.

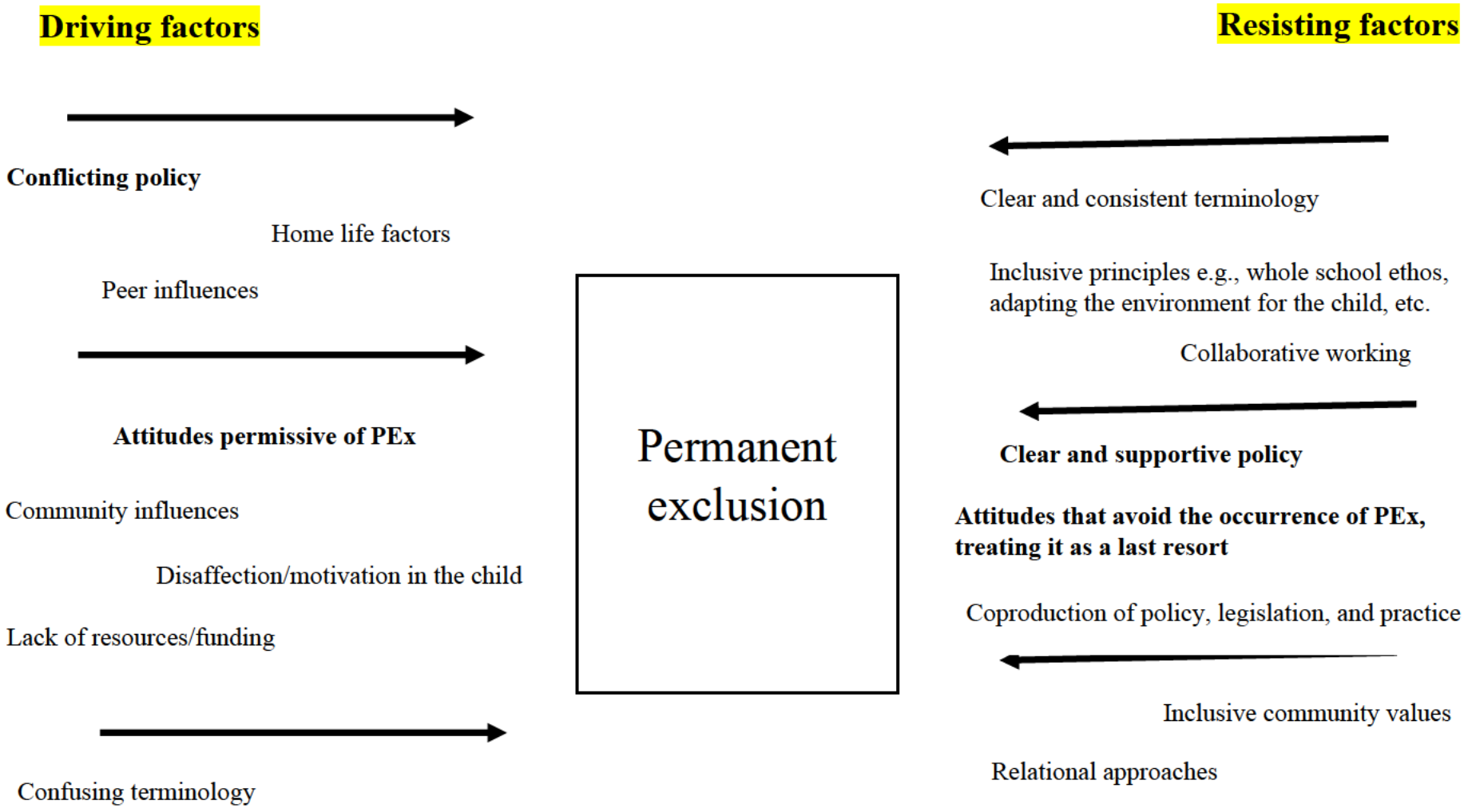
This judgement was further developed through the consideration of Schein's organisational culture model. Schein posited that organisational culture is the pattern of basic assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered and developed to cope with problems within the external and internal system (Schein & Schein, 2016). These patterns of assumptions have continuously worked well enough to be viewed as valid from the perspective from the organisation and is subsequently passed onto any new members of that organisation, meaning these assumptions become the norm (Schein & Schein, 2016). This model provides further rationale for examining school staff viewpoints surrounding the practice of PEx, to begin to understand what basic assumptions and espoused values and beliefs have been generated and therefore influence behaviour, particularly relating to PEx and inclusive practice, within those systems and organisations. Without this understanding, organisational change cannot be fully achieved and although changing practice was not the primary focus of this volume, findings relating to staff viewpoints provides an understanding of what these beliefs are, and subsequent behaviours, which leads to recommendations for policy, practice and further research which may contribute to change processes.

## 2.9 Conclusions from the literature review

The research review suggests a multitude of factors contribute to why CYP may be excluded from school; this ranges from the curriculum being suitable and interesting, CYP finding school challenging, external factors such as home, internal factors such as the CYP's level of motivation, the driving and resisting factors from a force field analysis are presented in Figure 1.

**Figure 1.**

*Force field analysis of permanent exclusion*



The research also demonstrates that CYP who experience difficulty with their SEMH needs have their needs better met in schools that display inclusive practice. The literature review highlights the importance of policy and implications of policy on practice in schools, however it also presents the value as understanding the human factors that contribute to PEx by exploring through an organisational culture perspective. The espoused values and beliefs of the "people with the problem" (Fullan, 2020; Schein, 2010) as a useful first step in both understanding the occurrence of PEx but also for beginning the process of organisational change.

Much of the research can also be used to form the Q-set relating to inclusive practice as it demonstrates what participants have argued as successful for inclusion previously. The research both provides descriptions as to how inclusive practice can produce better outcomes for CYP who experience SEMH difficulties, strategies for successful reintegration, implications for inclusive practice within settings as well as factors that may hinder inclusion.

Experiences of those involved in exclusion either directly as the CYP or indirectly as school staff, parents or support services is bleak and exclusion can be seen to lead to more problematic and uncertain futures for the CYP involved, alongside a perceived failure by schools, parents, and society itself.

I judge this study of value in contributing to understanding of the force-field of risks and protective influences which can best be harnessed to mitigate risk and facilitate continuing inclusion of CYP. The vast majority of the literature reviewed has utilised methods such as interviews, scaling, quantitative methods, and ethnography when exploring experiences of school staff, parents and CYP. Whilst a few of studies utilised Q-methodology, this was used with CYP rather than school staff who are responsible for implementing inclusion with this group of CYP, highlighting a potential gap in the research. With Q-methodology being desirable to explore viewpoints because of benefits, explored more thoroughly in Chapter 3, which include limiting the risk of social

desirability bias. It also allows for the research focus on human factors e.g., staff tenets, values, and expectations, which have been explored from the literature review. I anticipated that the research has value in contributing to improvements in practice and in the experience of CYP.

In summary then, relevant to the study is the widespread acknowledgement of the universal entitlement of all CYP to be included as fully as is viable in their local mainstream school and in the life of their community. Clearly, by definition, exclusion from school runs counter to this universal right. In this context, stakeholder understanding of the concepts of inclusion, special educational needs, disabilities, and disorders is relevant to their thinking and decision-making about which CYP should/ should not / cannot be 'included'. Whether they hold essentialist views of the SEMH difficulties experienced by young people at risk of exclusion, or construe difficulties as the products of unhelpful past and/or current environmental influences on the young people's presentation and coping resources, is likely to affect the interpretations they place on the challenging behaviour young people may present and their beliefs about what provisions are necessary to contain such challenges and facilitate improvement for these young people.

### 2.10 Research Purpose

The purpose of my research was to explore viewpoints of secondary mainstream and PRU school staff, who included both qualified teachers and teaching assistants and are collectively referred to as "teaching staff". The viewpoints related to inclusion and inclusive practice with CYP people who become excluded from their mainstream school. The research elicits and analyses the perceptions and beliefs of staff who work in PRUs and staff working in mainstream schools from which, within the last two-year period, at least one student has been PEx. The inquiry does not focus on particular students; the requirement that participating mainstream school staff should work in settings from which a student has been PEx, reflects the need for these staff to have recent experience of the exclusion process.

Based on the literature and trends examined, I judged it necessarily to discover the views of inclusion from staff working and linked with these CYP. It is important to begin to understand whether these adults feel they can embed inclusion with this population of CYP in addition to understanding what supports and hinders inclusive practice before change can be facilitated.

### 2.11 Rationale

In light of the converging research demonstrating the negative outcomes for many CYP who are PEx from school, and consequently, are placed in a PRU, I judged it relevant to discover mainstream school and PRU staff members' views and beliefs about inclusion; the characteristics of CYP who are excluded from school; circumstances which staff judge render it expedient or desirable to exclude CYP from their mainstream schools; and factors they identify as having the potential to reduce risks of exclusion and / or to facilitate inclusion in mainstream settings following a short-term placement in a PRU. I chose secondary school staff members in both the mainstream and PRU setting because statistics highlight exclusions are likely to occur in secondary school aged pupils.

I considered it pertinent to explore:

- how both mainstream school and PRU staff understand the concept of inclusion and the conditions necessary to allow responsible operationalisation/implementation with the highly heterogenous population of CYP who are on the roll of mainstream schools;
- what they believe and / or have experienced to support cf. hinder or prevent inclusive practice, both in general and with particular refence to those CYP who present significant social, emotional and / or mental health difficulties and risk / experience exclusion from their mainstream school;
- how they conceptualise exclusion, the conditions under which exclusion from school is desirable and / or necessary, and its impact upon excluded pupils, peers; and

- how they view the complementary roles of mainstream schools and PRUs in meeting the needs of pupils who are at risk of and / or who experience PEx from their mainstream school.

### 2.12 Aims

To explore the perceptions of inclusion and inclusive practice held by staff who work closely with CYP who experience or are at high risk of experiencing PEx needs from their mainstream school (namely PRU staff and staff from mainstream schools from which (a) student(s) has / have been excluded).

I anticipated that the findings derived from this research can be harnessed to build upon the experiences, insights, and expertise of both mainstream school and PRU staff who fulfil different but complementary roles in mediating the education of pupils who are excluded from school. The data they provide can be used to inform developments to practice in order to make fuller use of the skills and resources of both participant groups to contribute to better-targeted support and intervention.

### 2.13 Research Questions

The research questions were devised based on the conclusions of the literature review whilst also considering the concourse for Q-methodology. Therefore, the research questions are outlined alongside the links to the concourse based solely on them generated from the literature review in Table 8. This is revisited in Chapter 3 where the concourse is developed further.

**Table 8.**

*The three research questions and how they related to the Q-set based on literature review themes.*

| Research Questions (RQ) | Links to concourse and Q-set based on literature review themes |
|---|---|

| | |
|---|---|
| RQ1. What are the views of inclusion and inclusive practice held by:<br>a. staff members working in PRUs; and<br>b. staff from mainstream schools from which pupils have been excluded (and in at least one case, subsequently placed in a PRU) since September 2019? | Context dependent<br>Q-set item: 6, 13, 17, 43<br><br>School systems/ethos<br>Q-set item: 2, 21, 25, 28<br><br>Purpose of exclusions<br>Q-set item: 36, 37, 38, 39, 40 |
| RQ2. What do staff from the two types of educational setting (mainstream school and PRU) identify as the principal threats to viable / effective inclusive mainstream education for those CYP at risk of / who go on to experience exclusion from their mainstream school? | Pedagogic practice<br>Q-set item: 46<br><br>Staff wellbeing/capacity<br>Q-set item: 8, 20, 23, 24, 48 |
| RQ3. What specific factors do staff identify as contributing to the improved inclusive mainstream education for those CYP at risk of / who go on to experience exclusion from their mainstream school? | |

# 3 Methodology

## 3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology and procedures followed during this research. Firstly, the ontological and epistemological perspectives which influenced decisions about the research methodology, design, methods of data collection and analysis are considered, prior to considerations of ethical requirements and presentation of the research aims, outline and procedure. This chapter closes by clarifying the claims that can legitimately be made for the trustworthiness of the findings reported in Chapter 4, and the extent to which implications for practice in Brownhill within the English educational contexts.

## 3.2 Epistemological and ontological standpoints

Epistemological standpoints relate to how we constitute knowledge within our research, epistemology is concerned with human knowledge (Risjord, 2014) and ontology is concerned with how we construct realities, in the case of social science how we construct social realities (Blaikie & Priest, 2019). In the case of my research, I adopted a pragmatist philosophical stance for my epistemological and ontological standpoints.

Pragmatism rejects the traditional assumption of subjective and objective dualism; instead, it recognises that both subjective and objective realities inextricably coexist: neither can exist without the other (Baert, 2005; Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011). Pragmatism rejects arguments that particular methods are required in order legitimately to research and inform understanding of phenomena within the physical or social world, and that different methods are required, depending on the field of inquiry, for example subjective methods can be used in natural sciences and vice versa (Baert, 2005; Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011). Pragmatists view humans as having a set of behaviours or "habits" (Dewey, 1922) influenced by our past experiences but recognising the development of our beliefs and actions occurs within a constant interactional process between people, the natural and

the social world (Morgan, 2014). Pragmatism recognises these "habits" are neither rigid nor fixed but can be adapted and changed based on new experience (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011).

Pragmatism forms the ontological and epistemological position within which my current research is situated: I recognised at the outset that I had built a set of beliefs and actions in relation to students' PEx from school, which was based on my prior personal and professional experience. I recognised, however, that my understanding did not equate to definitive knowledge of the topic area but reflected only my own situation and experience (Baert, 2005). I wanted to extend my understanding and adapt my beliefs and actions further through the inquiry within an area which I knew to be subject to diverse understandings.

The purpose of my research was to inquire into the area of student exclusion from school, to further my understanding. Pragmatism is postulated as a paradigm that can embrace both quantitative and qualitative methods through theorising human inquiry as both involving interpretations whilst being established in empirical experience (Yardley & Bishop, 2017).

Q-methodology is a research design that can be embraced by a Pragmatist philosophical stance, and it was selected as a method of action to inquire into this area. It is relevant as it provides participants with an opportunity to construct themselves and situations which can result in actionable knowledge: how they interact with the statements is a reflection of how they construct this concept. The quantitative element of Q-methodology allows me to strategically extract factors whereas the qualitative element allows me to apply subjective meaning resulting in actionable knowledge. Q-methodology also recognises that someone completing a Q-sort today could interact completely differently with the same activity a week later (Watts & Stenner, 2012) based on new experiences, demonstrating this constant interaction with subjective and objective realities which I believe to be the stance of Pragmatism.

## 3.3 Design and aims of this research

The research utilised a Q-methodological design focusing on two samples: secondary mainstream school staff and secondary PRU school staff. The two samples are analysed separately in recognition they will have somewhat differing experiences due to the educational provision they work within. Participants were recruited through a convenience/opportunity sample, meaning participants were recruited based on who confirmed consent and was available to participate within the time frame for the study. Participants received an information sheet (Appendix A) and were asked to read and sign a consent form (Appendix B).

I judged it necessarily to discover the views of inclusion from staff working and linked with CYP who are PEx as it is important to begin to understand whether these adults feel they can practice inclusion with this population of CYP in addition to understanding what supports and hinders inclusive practice before change can be facilitated. The use of Q-methodology was chosen as the method of data collection and analysed because of the controversial nature of the subject area. There was a heightened risk of social desirability bias if the use of elicitation methods, such as interviews, were used, this is discussed further in section 3.4 of this chapter.

## 3.4 Ethical considerations

My ethical consideration and decisions regarding this research were guided by the University of Birmingham (UoB) Code of Practice for Research (University of Birmingham, 2021), the British Psychological Society's (BPS) Code of Ethics and Conduct (British Psychological Society, 2018), and the BPS' Code of Human Research Ethics (BPS, 2014). I received ethical approval from the University of Birmingham Ethics Committee before any participants were recruited and data collected (Appendix C) and Appendix D contains all ethical considerations.

I paid particular attention to the ethical consideration of psychological harm and/or reputational damage. The topic area of PEx and inclusion can be viewed as controversial and highly politicised

which in turn may impact on participants response to questions presented to them. I opted for Q-methodology to address this ethical consideration as well as avoid any potential socially desirability bias. If I had used methods such as an interview, because of the controversial nature of this topic area, participants may have provided me with answers they believed to be socially desirable. Removal of this barrier through the use of Q-methodology allowed participants to impose their views on a set of statements reducing the pressure and risk of this bias occurring.

### 3.5 Aims and outline of Q-methodology

The method combines qualitative and quantitative measures, and provides in depth accounts similar to qualitative explorations, but uses factor analysis to depict the viewpoints explored, "a defining principle of Q is its assumption that subjective viewpoints are amenable to systematic analysis" (Simons, 2013, p. 31). Q-methodology is then made up of two distinctive processes: the Q-sort and the by-person factor analysis and correlation (Stenner et al., 2017). Q method is likened to discourse analysis, which is a method of analysing texts to uncover underlying patterns and meanings, "an advantage that Q method has over other forms of discourse analysis is that the participants' responses can be directly compared in a consistent manner, since everyone is reacting to the same set of Q statements" (Webler et al., 2009, p. 5).

The letter "Q" was used to show that it differs from R method techniques which typically represents popular statistical tests (Webler et al., 2009). In Q-methodology, subjects and variables are inverted, with the statements being the subjects and the variables being the participant, this is where it differs from R methods (Webler et al., 2009). A Q-study begins with generation of a set of statements relevant to the research topic, to form a 'concourse' (Webler et al., 2009). In this research, the concourse is derived from analysis of research, alongside viewpoints expressed in media reports and by colleagues, which I have recorded in my research journal. Participants then sort these statements into a configuration (Q-Sort) which represents a subjective dimension, in the case of this research

the degree in which participants agree with the statements (Stenner et al., 2017; Watts & Stenner, 2012). Q-sorts that are "sorted" in the same way represent a shared viewpoint on the topic matter, "Q studies duly allow the holistic identification and rich description of a finite range of distinct viewpoints relating to the addressed issue or subject matter" (Stenner et al., 2017).

### *3.5.1 Background and outline of q-methodology*

Q-methodology was a method developed by William Stephenson, almost nine decades ago, Stephenson (1953) was a British physicist and psychologist (Watts & Stenner, 2005; Watts & Stenner, 2012; Webler et al., 2009). Stephenson in 1935 proposed an alternative to more traditional factor analytic methods, setting out to systematically explore subjectivity, "Q methodology was designed expressly to explore the subjective dimension of any issue towards which different points-of-view can be expressed" (Stenner et al., 2017, p. 212). Stephenson was interested in discovering new methods of studying individual beliefs and perceptions. It is argued the most prominent expert alive in the field is Steven Brown, who wrote an extensive book in 1980 and developed a primer in 1993 which provides an excellent oversight of the methodology (Webler et al., 2009).

### *3.5.2 Subjectivity and an abductive approach*

Q-methodology is reported as the oldest and one of the first attempts at introducing subjective and interpretivist methodologies (Stenner et al., 2017; Watts & Stenner, 2012). Q-methodology is a form of examining questions that only an individual's experience and application of meaning through the use of reliable, objective, substantive aspects, demonstrating that subjectivity and objectivity are complementary process (Watts & Stenner, 2012).

> Only subjective opinions are at issue in Q, and although they are typically unprovable, they can nevertheless be shown to have structure and form, and it is the task of Q technique to make this form manifest for purposes of observation and study. (Brown, 1986, p. 58)

Furthermore, the use of factor analysis within Q-methodology is how it relates to an abductive approach (Watts & Stenner, 2012). An abductive approach is to generate explanations and new insights rather than attempting to prove a theory or hypothesis (deductive) or describe an observed phenomenon (inductive), "the overall aim of abduction is to generate, by close attention to the empirical facts… a single hypothesis or wider explanatory theory…" (Watts & Stenner, 2012, p. 39). The beginning of abduction is the discovery of empirical facts, which is what is achieved through the statistical element (factor analysis) of q-methodology, it continues to be an abductive approach through the exploratory nature, not confirmatory, of the factors (Watts & Stenner, 2012).

### 3.6 Justification of the use of q-methodology

The use of Q-methodology supported elicitation of each participant's personal perspectives which allowed for analysis of what each view held as key constituents of and conditions for inclusive special education, the principal threats to inclusion, and so on. Q-methodology also allowed for comparisons to be made within each of the two group of participants and between the two groups. It allowed areas of high and low consensus to be identified, and for reliable differentiation between dominant cf. minor perceived influences on inclusive practice. Q-methodology can be used to offer both rich data whilst being systematically analysed through factor analysis. The methodology allowed for several participants to be used in the study because time constraints from interviews are removed, whilst still producing qualitative results.

Q-methodology has been used previously in this area of research, but it was used to explore pupil reintegration from alternative provision (Atkinson & Rowley, 2019). I decided that addressing school staffs' perspectives on inclusion of CYP who are PEx, whom they work with directly, was a valid way forward, evidenced by the frequent reference in literature to school staff not being consulted about inclusion and inclusive practice, I found it valuable to explore their shared viewpoint firsthand.  Due to nature of the topic being perceived by some as quite controversial and

highly politicised, I felt the essence of how Q-methodology is structured was advantageous due to participants not needing to directly express and verbalise viewpoints instead sorting viewpoints based on their beliefs, resulting in the development of shared beliefs regarding a socially contested topic (Watts & Stenner, 2005). This was advantageous both because it may have reduced the fear of discussing a controversial topic but also allowed participants to express their belief in a less risky manner e.g., frequent quotes from participants would not be generated or used. Moreover, I believe it to be clear that Q-methodology fits within the core concepts of Pragmatism through the abductive approach and recognition of objective and subjective reciprocal interactions.

### 3.7 Procedure for this Q-methodological research

Q-methodology has frequently been misunderstood and misrepresented since its creation, with some researchers using either the Q-sort or the factor analysis aspects of Q-methodology, both of these distinct elements are what constitutes Q-methodological studies (Watts & Stenner, 2005). Q-methodology is structured by six steps as outlined in Stenner et al. (2017):

1. Formulating the research question
2. Generating the Q-set
3. Selecting a P-set
4. Collecting data
5. Analysing Q-sort data
6. Interpreting Q-factors

Step 1 has been addressed, the rest of this chapter discusses steps 2 – 4 in depth, and briefly discusses steps 5 – 6, Chapter 4 discusses steps 5 – 6 in more detail.

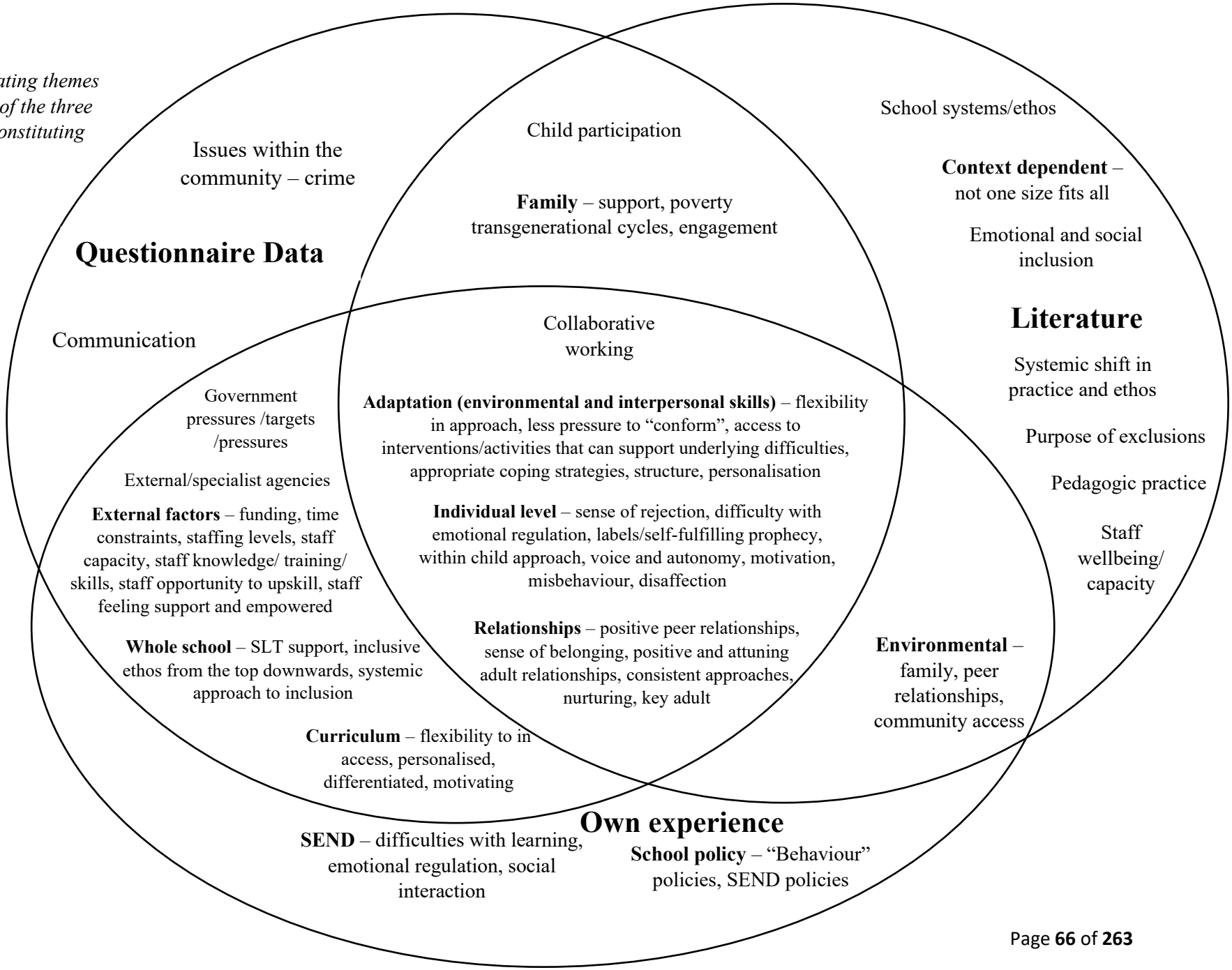
### *3.7.1 Q-set generation*

A concourse is where the Q-set is generated and is text created from those knowledgeable about the content, “a Q-study begins by identifying a concourse, or a body of literature about the topic” (Webler et al., 2009). The concourse can contain information from websites, newspapers, public records, interviews, literature, etc., it can be generated from pre-existing sources of information, new information or a combination of both (Webler et al., 2009). My concourse was generated based on pre-existing literature, my own experience of PEx and inclusion of CYP experiencing SEMH needs, and questionnaire data. The questionnaire was sent to EPs and professionals supporting CYP at risk of PEx, 14 professionals completed the question (10 trainee EPs/EPs, 2 professionals supporting CYP at risk of PEx and 2 were anonymous). The questionnaire was devised of questions related three key areas: inclusive practice, preventing PEx and reintegration, Appendix E presents the questionnaire. Data was analysed and coded for frequently appearing themes. Statements (Q-set) were then generated based on the concourse. Ensuring statements were representative of the entire concourse, strategic sampling can be used, which is where the concourse is divided into categories with statements being sorted into these categories, I did something similar cross-referencing data collected from my three sources and identifying overlaps using a Venn diagram (figure 2). The Venn diagram was then used to formulate the Q-set.

Although there is not a set criterion of how many statements should be used for a Q-sort, its typically advised to use between 20 and 60 (Watts & Stenner, 2012; Webler et al., 2009). For my research there were 60 Q-statements identified and generated because the topic of PEx is large and from experience often controversial. As there was the potential for a variety of viewpoints, a larger number of statements were needed. This is because fewer statements limit a participant's ability to express a viewpoint (Webler et al., 2009). Good Q-statements should be easy to read and have clear meanings (Watts & Stenner, 2012; Webler et al., 2009).

**Figure 2.**

*Venn diagram demonstrating themes and overlapping themes of the three sources of information constituting the concourse.*



Statements are framed in subjective terms, with the 'Q-sort' then harnessed to allow each participant to signal whether or not, and how strongly, in relative terms, they agree with each of the statements presented for review (Watts & Stenner, 2005; Watts & Stenner, 2012; Webler et al., 2009). It is important to note here that, as established throughout Chapter 2 but specifically section 2.4 of this volume, that this research positions a coexisting link between CYP experiencing SEMH and those who are PEx, although recognising that not every child who is PEx will be identified as having the SEND category of SEMH. Therefore, some of the Q-set items will contain reference to both SEMH and/or PEx.

Statements were checked by two independent researchers to check if they covered identified themes in the Venn diagram (see figure 2), and for ambiguity, duplication, and any statements that may present as controversial or politically motivated. In the initial Q-set generation (Appendix F), statement 3, 19 and 60 were identified as overlapping alongside 13 and 42, and 57 and 43. Statements 52 and 53 were also raised as potentially ambiguous. Based on the feedback provided wording was adapted for all overlapping statements except statement 21 which was completely changed. Definitions of terminology were provided with the Q-sort instructions to address potential ambiguity, including for statements 52 and 53. See Appendix G for the final Q-set. Despite the Q-set being check by two independent researchers, it was not piloted before data collection commenced. Participants were given the opportunity to discuss the Q-set and Q-sort during data collection and had access to information sheets which explained the procedure of completing the Q-set.

It would be useful to revisit the research questions to demonstrate how the triangulation of knowledge from the three sources: literature review, own experience, and questionnaire data, address the research questions with the associated Q-set item in Table 9.

**Table 9.**

*The three research questions and how they link to the concourse and Q-set following triangulation of data.*

| Research Questions (RQ) | Links to concourse and Q-set |
|---|---|
| RQ1. What are the views of inclusion and inclusive practice held by:<br>c. staff members working in PRUs; and<br>d. staff from mainstream schools from which pupils have been excluded (and in at least one case, subsequently placed in a PRU) since September 2019? | Context dependent<br>Q-set item: 6, 13, 17, 43, 57<br><br>School systems/ethos<br>Q-set item: 2, 28, 32, 50, 54<br><br>Purpose of exclusions<br>Q-set item: 36, 37, 38<br><br>Pedagogic practice<br>Q-set item: 46<br><br>Staff wellbeing/capacity<br>Q-set item: 8, 20, 23, 24, 48 |
| RQ2. What do staff from the two types of educational setting (mainstream school and PRU) identify as the principal threats to viable / effective inclusive mainstream education for those CYP at risk of / who go on to experience exclusion from their mainstream school? | Environment<br>Q-set item: 18, 58<br><br>Family<br>Q-set item: 12, 29<br><br>Child participation<br>Q-set item: 14, 56<br><br>Collaborative working<br>Q-set item: 26<br><br>Relationships<br>Q-set item: 16, 27, 52 |
| RQ3. What specific factors do staff identify as contributing to the improved inclusive mainstream education for those CYP at risk of / who go on to experience exclusion from their mainstream school? | Individual level<br>Q-set item: 1, 15, 39, 55<br><br>Adaptation<br>Q-set item:4, 9, 30, 44,<br><br>School policy<br>Q-set item: 25, 33<br><br>SEND<br>Q-set item: 7, 34<br><br>Communication |

| | |
|---|---|
| | Q-set item: 19<br><br>Community/crime<br>Q-set item: 11, 40<br><br>External factors<br>Q-set item: 3, 47, 60<br><br>Government pressure<br>Q-set item: 10, 49<br><br>External/specialist agencies<br>Q-set item: 22, 53<br><br>Whole school/community<br>Q-set item: 21, 35, 41, 42, 59<br><br>Curriculum<br>Q-set item: 5, 31, 45 |

### *3.7.2 Participants (P-set)*

The participant group within Q-methodology is identified as the P-set. There is no minimum required number for participants as Q-methodology can be used in single case study designs "Q-methodology does not need large numbers of participants and it is not interested in *head counts*" (Watts & Stenner, 2012), there are however recommendations for minimum numbers particularly if your philosophical stance places importance on statistical testing for example those who position themselves within a positivist stance (Watts & Stenner, 2012). This was not the case for my research, I focused primarily on trying to obtain a sample that could be viewed as representative of my target population, I was able to recruit 10 participants across four mainstream secondary schools, there were a total of 20 mainstream secondary schools in the LA the research took place in, and I recruited nine participants from one PRU, there were 2 secondary PRUs located within the LA. All 10 of the mainstream participants data was retained and used for data analysis, however only seven of the PRU participants data was retained due to two participants record sheets being completed inaccurately resulting in a loss of their data set for analysis. Participants were teaching staff within PRUs and mainstream school settings who had worked closely with PEx pupils and

their parents/ carers since September 2019, denoting they would possess some form of a viewpoint on the topic presented.

Data regarding participants age, sex/gender, ethnicity, job role, number of years in post within their current employment setting, and total number of years' qualified teaching experience was collected for each participant; however, two of the PRU participants did not complete the form fully, see Table 10 for overview of participant demographics. Within the design, there was no specific quota set for a certain number of participants from either type of setting or to meet pre-set demographic criteria. These descriptive data were to be used for purposes of description of sample characteristics and to contribute to the analysis of between-participant similarities and differences in response patterns.

**Table 10.**

*Demographics of the participants*

| Demographics | | Mainstream P-set | PRU P-set |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender/sex | Female | 8 | 5 |
| | Male | 2 | 2 |
| | Prefer not to say | 0 | 0 |
| Age | 18 – 24 years | 1 | 1 |
| | 25 – 34 years | 2 | 3 |
| | 35 – 50 years | 5 | 1 |
| | 51 – 60 years | 2 | 1 |
| Ethnicity | White British | 9 | 4 |
| | Black Caribbean | 0 | 1 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Any other Mixed or Mixed ethnic background | 1 | 0 |
| Years' experience | 0 – 5 years | 2 | 0 |
| | 6 – 10 years | 1 | 1 |
| | 11 – 15 years | 4 | 1 |
| | 16 – 20 years | 3 | 0 |
| | 21+ years | 0 | 3 |
| Job role | Teacher | 2 | 1 |
| | Teaching Assistant | 1 | 4 |
| | Other | 7 | 0 |

For the age criteria, most participants for the mainstream group were in the 35 – 50 years age group, for the PRU group most were 25 – 34 years. Most participants were from a White British ethnicity/national background for both groups. Most participants for the mainstream group had 11 – 15 years' experience, for the PRU group most had 21+ years. Finally, most participants marked themselves as other for the mainstream group, with a variety of roles relating to senior leadership, safeguarding and SEND, and for the PRU group most were teaching assistants. Participants were judged as representative of the school work force population, the characteristics of the school work force as by the Uk Government (2022) are outlined below with their relevancy to the datasets used:

- Most teachers (75.5%) and teaching assistants (89%) are female in the UK, both datasets recruited more females than males.
- Most teachers and teaching assistants are White British, although teaching assistants have greater ethnic diversity (17.9%), both datasets had a higher proportion of participants from White British ethnic backgrounds.

- Most teachers are aged between 30 – 39 years (33.2%), with the next largest age group being 40 – 49 (27.5%), most participants who were teachers fell within either of these age categories.
- Most teaching assistants are aged between 50 – 59 (29.4%), with the next largest age group being 40 – 49 (27.8%), most participants who were teaching assistants fell within either of these age categories.

Despite the P-set arguably yielding a small number, particularly in regard to the PRU dataset, it is plausible to suggest they are somewhat representative of the schoolwork force. This indicates that viewpoints produced from this research should somewhat uncover a range of viewpoints. It has been stipulated there are a finite number of viewpoints relevant to a single topic area (Brown, 1980), which provides further evidence this research provides some representation of the target population viewpoints relating to this topic area.

### *3.7.3 Q-sort administration*

The Q-sort was administered with participants face to face, on site of where they were employed. Participants were given the option of participating via virtual or face to face means on the consent forms, all participants chose face to face means of administration of the Q-sort. Where there were multiple participants from a school, participants were given the option of participating in a group (single room) setting or individual setting, again participants chose to participate in a group/single room setting.

Participants were reminded of their right, instructed verbally of what was required of them and reminded I was available to answer any questions they may have to clarify any aspects of the Q-sort process. Participants frequently asked questions and were able to seek clarity over the Q-sort, most questions/inquiries alluded to placing more than the two allotted spaces for most agree/most

disagree and there were questions around the numbers presented at the top of the Q-sort. Participants were provided with clarification and most participants appeared to understand what was required of them. However, after examining participants' recordings of their final Q-sort, it appeared, despite having the opportunity to ask for clarification, two participants had not understood the Q-sort process and/or recording of the Q-sort. Both participants were within the PRU setting, where administration was facilitated as a group of nine. This indicated to me that the group setting may not always allow participants to feel comfortable to ask clarification questions nor allow myself as a researcher the opportunity to monitor whether participants had fully understood the instructions.

#### 3.7.3.1 Conditions of instructions

In order for the research question to be answered withing Q-methodology, the participant must be able to respond effectively to it, this is generally achieved through the appropriate condition of instruction (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Participants were provided with instructions and acronym checklist during the Q-sort activity, which can be found in Appendix H and I. The instructions notified the participants that during Q-sort activity they would be asked to sort statements which relate to inclusive education and, specifically, to the ease and success with which the needs of children and young people who have been PEx and/or who experience significant social emotional mental health difficulties which placed them at high risk of PEx, can be met in mainstream secondary schools.

In addition to this, Watts and Stenner (2012) stipulated participants should be able to sort the Q-set by a "single, face-valid dimension, such as most agree to most disagree". Participants were also given this instruction: when considering each statement, frame it thus: "On the basis of my professional experience as a member of staff in my current school, I agree/disagree that… (statement on the cue card)".

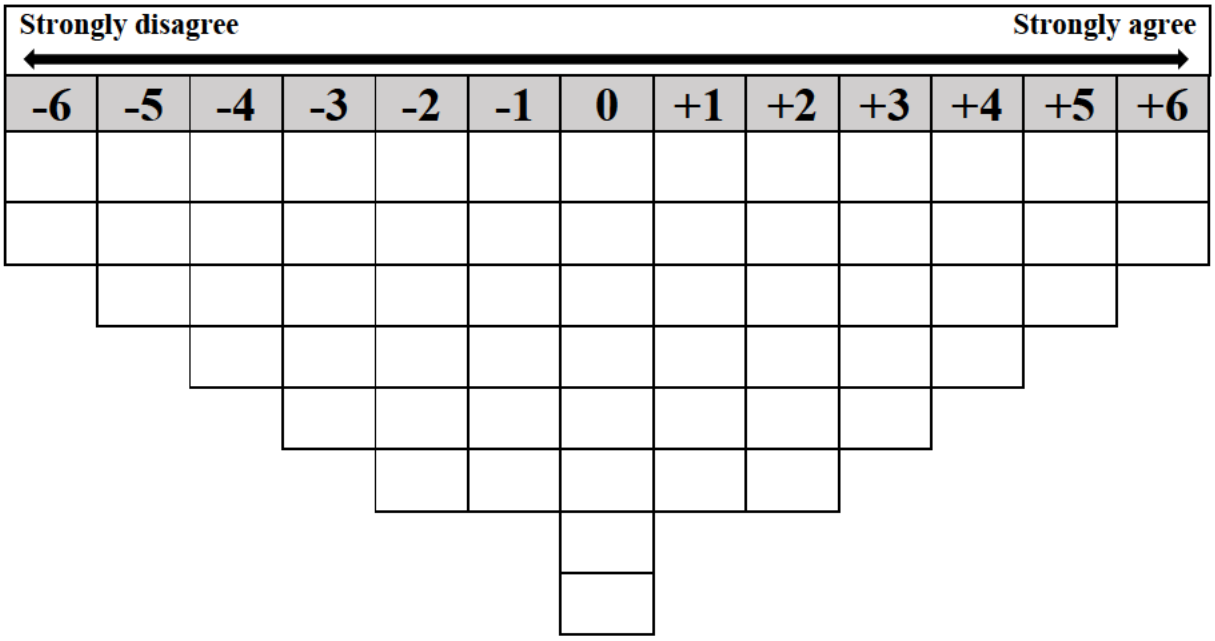
#### 3.7.3.2 The Q-sort

The procedure in Q-methodology is known as the Q-sort and this is how participants sort and rank the Q-set presented to them, thus imposing their subjective viewpoints on the Q-sort (Brown, 1980; Watts & Stenner, 2012). Participants were given an instruction sheet before interacting with the Q-sort, I asked them to look at each statement before then sorting them into three piles: agree, disagree, neutral/unsure to ease the decision-making process, especially as they had 60 statements to rank and evaluate.

Once they had completed the pre-sorting activity, I instructed the participants to sort their Q-set onto the platykurtic distribution grid based on whether they agreed or disagreed with the statements (condition of instruction). It was suggested by Brown (1980) that Q-sets with 60 or more statements should utilise a 13-point distribution (-6 to +6) (Watts & Stenner, 2012) which is why the grid is designed this way. Moreover, a platykurtic distribution, or flattened distribution, is recommended for more complex topic areas, where participants are more likely to have specific strong feelings towards the topic area but also allows for participants to rank a larger number of statements towards the middles based on indifference (Watts & Stenner, 2012). PEx and the inclusion of CYP at risk of this and/or experiencing significant SEMH needs is a highly controversial and divisive topic area, as established in the second chapter of this volume, a platykurtic distribution allowed for a "greater opportunity to make fine-grained discriminations at the extremes of the distribution… a strategy that allows us to maximise the advantages of our participants' excellent topic knowledge" as described by Watts and Stenner (2012), which in turn presented as an appropriate distribution for the Q-sort grid, see Figure 3 for the platykurtic distribution grid.

**Figure 3.**

*The platykurtic (-6 to +6) distribution grid used for the 60-item Q-set*




Participants were advised to begin sorting their Q-set at the poles of the distribution grid based on the items which the participants felt most strongly about before working inwardly. Participants were informed that the negative part of the grid did not necessarily imply they disagreed with the statements, they were advised to draw lines on the grid based on where they stopped agreeing with statements and where they started disagreeing regardless of the position on the grid. Participants were reminded that they were free to move around their ranking of their statements until they were satisfied with their final placement, once they had reached their final placement, they were advised to review the final rankings before recording them. Participants then recorded their Q-sort on a record sheet which was an A4 sheet mimicking the grid presented in Figure 3, participants were asked to record the number of statements, where it had been placed on the grid, on the record sheet.

#### 3.7.3.3 Post sort information

Following the completion of the Q-sort participants were asked to complete a "post Q-sort" questionnaire in addition to the demographic questionnaire (Appendix J & K). This simply asked participants to explain the reason for why they had chosen the statements at each of the poles, as

well as whether they felt there were any concepts missing from the Q-set and whether they had any additional comments. The completion of this questionnaire was voluntary. The post Q-sort and demographics questionnaire was used to support the interpretation of the factors, following the completion of the analysis. Watts and Stenner (2012) indicated the use of demographic information allowed for better interpretation of the produced factors/viewpoints.

### *3.7.4 Factor analysis and interpretation*

The last steps of Q-methodology are the factor analysis and factor interpretation. This research observes two participant groups: mainstream school staff and PRU staff, as they are from different settings this likely means they will have different experiences and understanding of the topic area. Therefore, the datasets from each group are analysed separately, and once individual group analysis and interpretations have taken place, I draw comparisons between the viewpoints produced from each group. Q-methodology allowed for inverted factor analysis of participants' responses, and since all participants had considered the same statements, it was possible to identify within-participant response patterns, between-participant patterns, and any between-group response trends. There are computer packages that support with the factor analysis due to it not being the traditional version of factor analysis (Watts & Stenner, 2012), an example of this is PQMethod (Schmolck, 2014) which is the package used in this study. The analysis involves the following processes:

- First, correlations between the Q-sorts are established, demonstrating the by person nature of the methodology (Stenner et al., 2017). This process takes into consideration all of the data (Stenner et al., 2017)
- Following this, either Centroid Factor Analysis (CFA) or Principal Component Analysis (PCA) is used to reduce the data and extract factors from the correlation matrix (Stenner et al., 2017; Webler et al., 2009). CFA is typically the "extract method of choice for most Q-methodologists" (Watts & Stenner, 2012).

- Once factors are extracted, a number of statistical tests gave indication to how many factors should be retained and subsequently rotated (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Factor rotation enables the factor to produce the most informed and best possible viewpoint to be achieved (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Factor rotation can be completed by a built-in automated process which produced the best mathematical outcome, by-hand or a combination of both (Stenner et al., 2017; Watts & Stenner, 2012; Webler et al., 2009).
- Once these steps are completed, the factor solutions will have been generated, and these factors are then analysed and factor arrays are produced (Watts & Stenner, 2012). The factor arrays represent the viewpoints of each factor (Watts & Stenner, 2012).

The final stage of Q-methodology is factor interpretation. The information collected from the post Q-sort questionnaire, demographic information, knowledge generated from the literature, theory and cultural/historical grounds as well as my own subjective experiences are used during this interpretation process (Frater, 2021; Watts & Stenner, 2012). Although there is no specific method to interpreting factors, the crib sheet method as outlined in Watts and Stenner (2012) was followed. I used the post Q-sort questionnaires to corroborate and validate the viewpoints produced.

### 3.8 Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of this research is discussed with reference to Guba's (1981) four key dimensions, summarised in Table 11.

**Table 11.**

*Four aspects of trustworthiness, as described by Guba (1981), and the relevancy to this research.*

| Four aspects of trustworthiness | Relevance to this research |
|---|---|
| Truth value: establishing confidence that the | To ensure the research would produce viewpoints on the intended topic area, I developed my concourse and Q-set based |

| | |
|---|---|
| findings are truthful and have studied what was set out to be studied (Guba, 1981) | on previous literature, questionnaires with professionals working within the field and my own experiences. To further ensure the truth value, I had independent research review the Q-set to confirm it was representative of the concourse. Interpretations of the factors was also supported by post q-sort questionnaires, where responses from participants who significantly loaded onto the factor was consulted to support interpretation. |
| Applicability: the findings can be applied to different contexts and participants (Guba, 1981) | Although, it is not the aim of Q-methodology to generalise findings given the subjective nature of the viewpoints, it does provide insight into the target population we are inquiring with and therefore provides a starting point for next steps. There is however the argument of logical generalisation, that if it is found in one case its highly it will be found in other similar cases (Patton, 2013). As the mainstream participant group were from four different schools, if there are similarities between the viewpoints or if participants from different school's load onto the same viewpoint, this logical generalisation would apply. |
| Consistency: findings would be consistent if repeated in different contexts/participants but with the same method of inquiry (Guba, 1981) | Again, consistency is not an aim of Q-methodology, the approach recognises it is uncovering a shared viewpoint that was presented in the given situation and is based on how the participant ascribes meaning within that context (Watts & Stenner, 2012). |

| | |
|---|---|
| Neutrality: findings are a product of the participants and method of inquiry, not informed by bias or motivations of the researcher (Guba, 1981) | The process of Q-methodology involves factor analysis which is a form of statistical analysis, so there is an essence of neutrality within the analysis process (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Q-methodology sets out to structure a quantitative analysis of qualitative data. |

## 3.9 Data analysis

As referenced in section 3.7.4 the data analysis method for Q-methodology is by-person (inverted) factor analysis. For the mainstream data set there were 10 Q-sorts participants from across four mainstream secondary schools. These were analysed using by-person factor analysis. For the PRU data set there were seven eligible Q-sorts from the nine participants from a single secondary PRU. Here, one of the original nine Q-sorts was not analysed as the participant had completed the record form inaccurately; a second participant was not analysed because there were two items that had been recorded twice, again invalidating their record, however their responses were compared to the factors produced to explore any similarities.

Factor analysis allows for subjective data to be empirically observed and patterns within a data set to be identified (Watts & Stenner, 2012). The purpose of by-person factor analysis, is to find patterns across Q-sorts that are analysed, in turn producing factors or 'viewpoints' that participants significantly load (Webler et al., 2009). Such significant loading indicates that those participants' Q-sorts distinguished that particular factor, and that their Q-sort would indicate that overall, they subscribe somewhat to the viewpoint that has been produced in that factor (Watts & Stenner, 2012; Webler et al., 2009).

As part of the factor analysis procedure, factors must be extracted and retained. There are typically two methods in Q-methodology that achieve factor extraction: Centroid Factor Analysis (CFA) and Principal Components Analysis (PCA). CFA was the chosen factor extraction technique for this research, reasons pertaining to this choice are described further in Chapter 4 section 4.2. The factor extraction and retention process are informed by the following statistical tests:

- Factors which possess a low eigenvalue (EV) (less than 1) are often disregarded, particularly as EVs are viewed as "indicative of a factor's statistical strength and explanatory power" (Watts & Stenner, 2012, p. 105). The Kaiser-Guttman criterion therefore indicates that only factors with EV more than 1 should be retained (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Nevertheless, there are mixed opinions about the value of so strict a criterion, particularly as in large datasets it can result are meaningless factors being retained, whilst conversely there is the potential to dismiss meaningful factors that do not satisfy this criterion (Brown, 1980; Watts & Stenner, 2012; Webler et al., 2009).
- Brown (1980) outlined a further two statistical methods to indicate retention (Watts & Stenner, 2012). One of these related to whether a factor had two or more significant loadings (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Brown (1980) proposed the following equation to identify where a loading was significant at 0.01 level (Watts & Stenner, 2012):
    - $2.58\ x\ (1 \div \sqrt{no.\ of\ items\ in\ a\ Q-set})$
- Brown (1980) also outlined Humphrey's rule as a statistical test to indicate retention. This method related to whether the cross product of the two highest factors loadings were higher than the standard error (Brown, 1980; Watts & Stenner, 2012). The following equation was again outlined by Brown (1980) to calculate the standard error (Watts & Stenner, 2012):
    - $1 \div (\sqrt{no.\ of\ items\ in\ a\ Q-set})$

- The final statistical test relates to the Scree test (Cattell, 1966). This is used frequently within factor analysis but was only designed to be used in the perspective of PCA, and should not be used when CFA is used (Watts & Stenner, 2012).

This factor analysis process alongside the factor interpretation is discussed in more depth in the following chapter.

# 4 Results

## 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analyses of the Q-sort configurations of the mainstream and PRU participant group. The factor analysis process involves factor extraction, factor rotation, factor arrays before factors are interpreted, each of these steps are discussed for both datasets in this chapter. Comparisons of factors produced between both datasets is discussed in Chapter 5.

## 4.2 Factor extraction

Factor extraction is the first step of the factor analysis process, which involves identifying Q-sorts that have distinct patterns in their configurations (Watts & Stenner, 2012). This is where factor loading becomes relevant, the factor extraction step illustrates which Q-sorts exemplified each factor that has been produced (Watts & Stenner, 2012). There are typically two methods in Q-methodology that achieve factor extraction: Centroid Factor Analysis (CFA) and Principal Components Analysis (PCA), although it is argued there is little difference between the two methods and that they will, in practice, produce very similar results (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Although PCA typically produces the better mathematical solution, this is not usually a position within Q-methodology (Watts & Stenner, 2012), where priority is afforded to theoretical judgement, not mathematical sophistication (Brown, 1980). CFA is often preferred in Q-methodology, due to its straightforward nature, which allows for greater flexibility with data exploration (Watts & Stenner, 2012). For this reason, CFA was the chosen factor extraction technique for this research.

When first considering factor extraction, Brown (1980) indicated the 'magic number seven' as the default unrotated factor extraction, to avoid prematurely disregarding potentially valuable factors (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Following the extraction of seven unrotated factors, there are four

additional statistical tests that can be applied to the unrotated factor extraction to provide guidance on how many factors should be retained for rotation (Watts & Stenner, 2012). These statistical tests relate to the Kaiser-Guttman criterion (Guttman, 1954; Kaiser, 1960), two or more significantly loading (Brown, 1980), Humphrey's rule (Brown, 1980) and the scree test as described in section 3.9. The unrotated factor loadings, eigenvalues (EV) and variance can be found in Appendix L and M. All four of these tests were applied to both the mainstream dataset and the PRU dataset to indicate how many factors should be retained for rotation, the applications of these tests are outlined in the Appendix N for mainstream data, and Appendix O for PRU data, to summarise:

- Kaiser-Guttman criterion:
    - Mainstream dataset indicated 1 factor
    - PRU dataset indicated 1 factor
- Two or more significant loadings (Brown, 1980):
    - Mainstream dataset indicated 3 factors
    - PRU dataset indicated 3 factors
- Humphrey's rule (Brown, 1980):
    - Mainstream dataset indicated 2 factors
    - PRU dataset indicated 2 factors
- The scree test (which was checked by an independent researcher):
    - Mainstream dataset indicated 3 factors
    - PRU dataset indicated 3 factors

### 4.3 Factor Rotation

Based on the four statistical tests that were completed on both the mainstream and PRU dataset, they implied that 1 – 3 factors should be retained for rotation for each dataset. As Watts and Stenner

(2012, p. 110) warned “abandoning these factors at this stage is a risk”, I decided to retain three factors for rotation.

Loadings onto a factor indicate how much a participant’s Q-sort is similar to that factor. The factor rotation process relates to the spatial positions of these loadings, they are coordinates that indicate the position of each Q-sort in the study (Watts & Stenner, 2012). The aim of all factor analytical techniques is to provide understanding and explanations for a given topic area through production of the best possible viewpoint(s), the method of factor rotation enables this to be achieved (Watts & Stenner, 2012).

There are two traditional methods to factor rotation: varimax or by-hand rotation. Varimax is an automated factor rotation technique that produces the best possible mathematical solution, by-hand is much more flexible and reliant on the researcher's judgement (Watts & Stenner, 2005). There are critiques of the varimax method because of its mathematical nature, with many Q-methodologists, including Stephenson himself, preferring data to be driven by theoretical means not mathematical (Watts & Stenner, 2005). The case for by-hand rotation is that researchers can harness the data and allow other sources of information to influence the solution, with this being the most salient point in which the abductive approach is used (Brown, 1993). Nonetheless, the varimax technique is often selected for its simplicity and reliability (Watts & Stenner, 2005).

A method of utilising both techniques relative strengths is to combine both the approaches, where varimax rotation is used first and is followed up with by-hand rotation (Watts & Stenner, 2012). This provides the simple and reliable technique with the best possible mathematical solution, whilst also allowing for theoretical judgements to ensure the best possible solution that has the maximum number of participants loading onto factors, whilst reducing the number of participants who do not significant load onto any factor (non-significant Q-sorts), or who significantly load onto multiple

factors (confounding Q-sorts) (Watts & Stenner, 2012). The best possible solutions have participants who have significant loadings on one factor, with the higher the loading the greater contribution made to the final product (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Therefore, for this research I utilised the combined method, using varimax rotation first and then by-hand rotation to ensure the best possible solution.

Following the varimax rotation for the mainstream dataset, I utilised by-hand rotation to reduce the number of confounding Q-sorts. I manually rotated Factor 1 and 2 by -1 degree to load Q-sort RS005 onto Factor, without impacting any other significant loads across the two factors. This resulted in a factor solution where all 10 Q-sorts loaded onto one of the three factors. The explained variance was 33% for the factor solution, including more of a representation due to the by-hand rotation. It is suggested that 35-40% or above is observed as a good solution (Kline, 1994; Watts & Stenner, 2012), with Brown (1980) explaining the factor solution should account for as much of the explained variance. Furthermore, Frater (2021) outlined Webler et al. (2009)'s guidance for a good factor solution which is presented in Table 12.

**Table 12.**

*Criteria outlined by Webler et al. (2009).*

| Criteria | Description |
|---|---|
| Simplicity | It is better to have fewer factors present as it allows for easier understanding, insofar as not disregarding valuable factors. |
| Clarity | The best factor solution is where Q-sorts significantly load highly onto only one factor, limiting non-significant and confounding Q-sorts. |
| Distinctness | Correlations between factors should be low, the higher the correlation the less distinct the factor. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Stability | Participants who agree will have data that clusters together, maintaining this cluster stability results in a good factor solution. |

In reference to the distinctness criterion (Webler et al., 2009), it is further argued that factors that are significantly correlated risk being too alike for individual interpretation (Watts & Stenner, 2012). The mainstream dataset's correlation coefficient between Factor 1 and 2 was 0.37, between Factor 1 and 3 was 0.41, and between Factor 2 and 3 was 0.09. Unfortunately, correlation coefficients between Factor 1 and 2, and 1 and 3 were above this study's significance level (0.33), which could suggest Factor 2 and 3 are alternative manifestations of Factor 1 (Watts & Stenner, 2012).

Consequently, a one-factor solution, with recognition of the two additional nuances/manifestations, was selected as the best possible solution for the mainstream dataset based on the following criteria:

- There were no non-significant or confounding Q-sorts
- Two or more Q-sorts significantly loaded onto the factor and the manifestations
- Eigenvalue was above 1 for the first factor
- Humphrey's rule indicated the use of two factors
- The scree test indicated the use of three factors

The final factor solution for the mainstream dataset is presented in Table 13, those indicated with a X indicate significant loadings at $p<0.1$. Factor 2 and 3 will now be referenced as Factor 1a and 1b to acknowledge them formally as alternative manifestations to the overarching Factor 1.

**Table 13.**

*Final factor solution for mainstream data set.*

| | Factor Loadings | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Q-sorts** | 1 | 1a | 1b |
| ASP001 | 0.2679 | 0.4862 X | 0.0083 |
| ASP002 | 0.5206 X | 0.1513 | 0.2266 |
| CK001 | 0.4478 X | 0.1746 | 0.1590 |
| EA001 | -0.0107 | 0.3840 X | -0.0869 |
| EA002 | 0.4946 X | 0.1419 | 0.2243 |
| RS001 | 0.2731 | -0.0368 | 0.5698 X |
| RS002 | 0.6224 X | 0.2308 | 0.2317 |
| RS003 | 0.5128 X | 0.1005 | 0.2985 |
| RS004 | 0.1914 | -0.0856 | 0.3921 X |
| RS005 | 0.3174 | 0.5878 X | 0.0476 |
| **Total Q-sort loadings** | 5 | 3 | 2 |
| **Eigenvalue** | 2.34 | 0.72 | 0.17 |
| **% Explained variance** | 16 | 9 | 8 |

Following the varimax rotation on the PRU dataset, I utilised by-hand rotation to reduce the number of confounding Q-sorts. I manually rotated Factor 1 and 2 by +3 degrees to load Q-sort NB006 onto Factor 1, without impacting any other significant loads across the two factors. Following this, I manually rotated Factor 1 and 3 by +9 degrees to load NB001 onto Factor 1. This resulted in a

factor solution where 6 out of the 7 Q-sorts loaded onto one of the three factors, with only 1 Q-sort not significantly loading onto any factor. Subsequently only one Q-sort significantly loaded onto Factor 3, and although it is usually recommended at least two Q-sorts to represent a shared viewpoint, there are circumstances when one significantly loading factor can used on theoretical basis (Watts & Stenner, 2012). I had attempted a two-factor solution in light of discovering factor 3, however despite varimax and attempts at manual rotation a 2-factor solution resulted in one non-significant loading and one confounding loading, in addition to NB008 having a lower loading on the Factor 1 in the two-factor solution, in comparison to their loading on Factor 3 in the three-factor solution. Based on this information, I judged at this point the three-factor solution to be the more optimal solution despite Factor 3 only having one significant loading.

The explained variance was 40% for the factor solution, including more of a representation due to the by-hand rotation. Referring back to the guidance that outlines distinctness as an indicator of a good factor solution (Webler et al., 2009). The correlation coefficient between Factor 1 and 2 was 0.43, between Factor 1 and 3 was 0.4, and between Factor 2 and 3 was -0.07. Again, correlation coefficients between Factor 1 and 2, and 1 and 3 were above this study's significance level (0.33), suggesting Factor 2 and 3 could also be alternative manifestations of Factor 1.

Consequently, a one-factor solution, with recognition of the two additional nuances/manifestations, was selected as the best possible solution for the PRU dataset based on the following criteria:

- There were a reduced number of non-significant or confounding Q-sorts
- The scree test indicated the use of three factors
- Eigenvalue was above 1 for the first factor
- Humphrey's rule indicated the use of two factors
- Two or more Q-sorts significantly loaded onto the factor

- There was 40% explained study variance

The final factor solution for the PRU dataset is presented in Table 14, those indicated with a X indicate significant loadings, those in bold indicate a non-significant loading. Factor 2 and 3 will now be referenced as Factor 1a and 1b to acknowledge them formally as alternative manifestations to the overarching Factor 1.

**Table 14.**

*Final factor solution for PRU data set.*

| | **Factor Loadings** | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Q-sorts** | 1 | 1a | 1b |
| NB001 | 0.7852 X | 0.0778 | 0.2915 |
| NB002 | 0.2070 | 0.5501 X | -0.0101 |
| **NB004** | **0.0108** | **0.1261** | **-0.0430** |
| NB006 | 0.5588 X | 0.3083 | -0.0336 |
| NB007 | 0.3244 | 0.5716 X | -0.0225 |
| NB008 | 0.3076 | -0.1179 | 0.5505 X |
| NB009 | 0.6763 X | 0.1669 | 0.0754 |
| **Total Q-sort loadings** | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| **Eigenvalue** | 1.94 | 0.65 | 0.23 |
| **% Explained variance** | 23 | 11 | 6 |

## 4.4 Factor Arrays

Prior to the factor interpretation stage is the development of factor arrays. Factor arrays are the single Q-sort that represents that particular viewpoint/factor (Frater, 2021; Watts & Stenner, 2012). Factor arrays are generated from the Z-score, meaning the highest Z-score in the case of this research would result in the ranking of +6, working inwardly, with the lowest Z-score being ranked as -6 (Watts & Stenner, 2012). The factor arrays support the interpretation of the factors as they demonstrate where statements are ranked based on the viewpoints of those subscribing to it. The table containing the Z-score and factor arrays for each viewpoint in the mainstream and PRU dataset can be found in Appendix P and Q.

## 4.5 Factor Interpretation

Once the factor analysis is completed interpretations of factor take place, which is the factor step of the analytical process. Brown (1980) explained this is typically the interpretation of the statements which both distinguish the factor i.e., items ranked at the poles on both extremes (-6, -5, +6, +5), and the statements that distinguish that particular factor from the other extracted factors. There is no specific way of completing this but Watts and Stenner (2012) depicted a crib sheet method, which involves identifying the factors pole statements (-6 and +6), factors that are ranked higher than the other factors in the factor array and factors that are ranked lower than the other factors in the factor array. The authors indicated the need to consider why participants may have ranked the statements where they have, whilst also consulting the participants individual Q-sorts and post Q-sort data to support with the interpretation, they stress the importance of not dismissing any statements, highlighting the importance of considering them all (Watts & Stenner, 2012). This is where the logic of abduction is applied, they advised generating a preliminary hypothesis as to why participants may have ranked the statement as they have and use corresponding statements to either prove or disprove that hypothesis (Watts & Stenner, 2012).

This is the method that was used to structure the factor interpretation. I provide a concise interpretation summary of the factors and the alternate manifestations, coupled with demographic information and post Q-sort information for significant loadings, and distinguishing statements. I then discuss the consensus statements across the factor and the two alternate manifestations. Henceforth the terminology "viewpoint" will be used in place of "factor". The breakdown of demographics, pole rankings and post Q-sort information for Q-sorts significantly loading onto each of the six viewpoints can be found in Appendices.

### 4.5.1 Mainstream Factors

#### 4.5.1.1 Overarching viewpoint 1 – School systems are accountable for inclusion and there cannot be a "one size fits all" approach

The Q-sort factor array for Viewpoint 1 is presented in Figure 4. Information pertaining to the demographics of participants who significantly loaded onto the Viewpoint 1 can be found in Appendix R, alongside the statements they ranked at both extremes of the pole and the information they recorded in the post Q-sort questionnaire. Table 15 displays the distinguishing statements for this viewpoint and the crib sheet used to form this viewpoint can be found in Appendix S.

Viewpoint 1 has an eigenvalue of 2.39 and accounts for 16% of the study variance. Four females and one male with age range of 25 - 60 years and number of years' experience range of 0 – 20 years had significantly loaded onto this factor. Participants were from 4 different mainstream settings.

**Summary**

We believed the inclusion of CYP at risk of PEx and/or those who have been PEx is heavily dependent on the school's ethos and whether there is consistency across approaches from staff (items 2, 10, 15, 18, 21, 16, 25, 46, 47, 57). This is impacted by whether we feel supported within our school system (items 5, 6, 20, 23, 28 and 29), have received adequate training and resources to

understand and support CYP experiencing these difficulties (items 4, 8, 9, 24, 35, 55 and 60), are able to work collaboratively with all those involved in the school community i.e., child, parent, and external agencies (items 26 and 22) and whether there is flexibility to approaching CYP experiencing these difficulties (items 7, 25, 32, 37 and 51). We emphasise the need for person centred approaches (item 30), ensuring children and young people's views are listened to (item 56) and that they are a part of decision-making processes (item 14). We felt that a "one size fits all" approach was ineffective (item 13) and that each individual child experiencing difficulties with SEMH development, at risk of PEx and/or PEx should have their individual situations considered, without the label of SEND which was viewed as not always co-existing with "poor behaviour" and in some circumstances as a distraction away from other contributing factors to a child's presentation (items 34, 39, 40 and 47).

**Figure 4.**

The Q-sort Factor array for Viewpoint 1.

**Strongly disagree** ⟷ **Strongly agree**

| -6 | -5 | -4 | -3 | -2 | -1 | 0 | +1 | +2 | +3 | +4 | +5 | +6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 34 | 10 | 1 | 18 | 2 | 3 | 11 | 8 | 12 | 5 | 6 | 43 | 21 |
| 37 | 33 | 15 | 29 | 9 | 4 | 24 | 27 | 19 | 7 | 13 | 46 | 56 |
| | 39 | 45 | 31 | 17 | 20 | 35 | 30 | 22 | 14 | 16 | 54 | |
| | | 57 | 40 | 44 | 23 | 36 | 32 | 28 | 26 | 25 | | |
| | | | 51 | 47 | 48 | 41 | 42 | 38 | 52 | | | |
| | | | | 58 | 59 | 50 | 49 | 53 | | | | |
| | | | | | | 55 | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | 60 | | | | | | |

**Table 15.**

Distinguishing statements for Viewpoint 1 and the corresponding factor arrays, those significant at a $p < .01$ are indicated by an *.

| Distinguishing Statement | Ranking on the Q-sort |
|---|---|
| ***21** – For inclusion to work it must be a whole school approach, where everyone within the school community, including SLT, subscribes to the inclusive ethos | +6 |
| ***13** – There cannot be a "one size fits all" approach to inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties and are at risk of exclusion: individual cases and contexts need to be considered | +4 |
| ***25** – School policies, particularly behaviour policies, should be inclusive and reflect the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties | +4 |
| ***16** – Positive, consistent relationships between adults and children can prevent children and young people from being permanently excluded | +4 |
| **28** – Inclusion fails when school staff feel unsupported or are not given adequate support and supervision | +2 |
| **12** – Parental engagement and support are crucial for the inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties, particularly those at risk of permanent exclusion | +2 |

| Distinguishing Statement | Ranking on the Q-sort |
|---|---|
| ***22** – The support from external and specialist services, such as educational psychologists, inclusion team, social workers, etc., is important to support inclusion within mainstream settings | +2 |
| ***42** – When a child or young person has been permanently excluded, they should be able to return to a mainstream school, rather than transferring to a specialist setting | +1 |
| ***35** – To support children's and young people's SEMH needs properly, we must first fully understand what is contributing to these needs and then plan support accordingly | 0 |
| **58** – Mainstream schools which have lower exclusion rates tend to serve less diverse, socially and/or economically-deprived or complex communities | -2 |
| **2** – Inclusion and inclusive practice in schools, particularly for children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion, is heavily dependent on senior leadership | -2 |
| ***40** – Excluding children and young people risks leading them to a life of crime and/or poor outcomes | -3 |
| **18** – Children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion often (disproportionately, compared with other students), live in poverty | -3 |

| Distinguishing Statement | Ranking on the Q-sort |
|---|---|
| **51** – Behaviourist approaches to SEMH difficulties are the most effective way of addressing and reducing misbehaviour in mainstream schools | -3 |
| **39** – Exclusions occur because children and young people misbehave, are unmotivated and disaffected from their learning | -5 |
| **34** – Children and young people whose behaviour is consistently poor have special educational needs | -6 |

#### 4.5.1.2 Manifestation viewpoint 1a – Inclusion is influenced both by factors inside and outside of the school system

The Q-sort factor array for Viewpoint 1a is presented in Figure 5. Information pertaining to the demographics of participants who significantly loaded onto the Viewpoint 1a can be found in Appendix T alongside the statements they ranked at both extremes of the pole and the information they recorded in the Post Q-sort questionnaire. Table 16 displays the distinguishing statements for this viewpoint and the crib sheet used to form this viewpoint can be found in Appendix U.

**Figure 5.**

The Q-sort Factor array for Viewpoint 1a.

**Strongly disagree** ⟷ **Strongly agree**

| -6 | -5 | -4 | -3 | -2 | -1 | 0 | +1 | +2 | +3 | +4 | +5 | +6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 37 | 31 | 29 | 4 | 15 | 16 | 2 | 6 | 9 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 11 |
| 50 | 34 | 33 | 8 | 36 | 18 | 10 | 7 | 27 | 24 | 12 | 17 | 22 |
| | 59 | 42 | 44 | 39 | 23 | 13 | 21 | 32 | 35 | 20 | 19 | |
| | | 58 | 45 | 41 | 28 | 14 | 25 | 40 | 55 | 38 | | |
| | | | 57 | 48 | 46 | 30 | 26 | 43 | 56 | | | |
| | | | | 53 | 52 | 47 | 51 | 54 | | | | |
| | | | | | | 49 | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | 60 | | | | | | |

**Table 16.**

Distinguishing statements for Viewpoint 1a and the corresponding factor arrays, those significant at a $p < .01$ are indicated by an *.

| Distinguishing Statement | Ranking on the Q-sort |
|---|---|
| ***11** – Influences outside school - such as peers, crime and gangs in the community can jeopardise the inclusion of children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties | +6 |
| ***22** – The support from external and specialist services, such as educational psychologists, inclusion team, social workers, etc., is important to support inclusion within mainstream settings | +6 |
| ***17** – Children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties need more targeted support for their emotional expression and regulation, and social interaction | +5 |
| ***3** – Inclusion of children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion is hindered by funding and budgetary constraints | +5 |
| **19** – Clear open communication between all stakeholders, i.e., child, parent, school staff, external professionals, etc., supports inclusion and inclusive practice for children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties | +5 |

| Distinguishing Statement | Ranking on the Q-sort |
|---|---|
| **12** – Parental engagement and support are crucial for the inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties, particularly those at risk of permanent exclusion | +4 |
| ***20** – In order to support the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties, teaching staff must have a good understanding of what the child may be experiencing | +4 |
| ***1** – Children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties in mainstream classes disrupt the education of other children. | +3 |
| ***24** – School staff need specialist training, knowledge, and skills to meet the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties | +3 |
| **9** – Children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties – and particularly those at risk of permanent exclusion or who have already been permanently excluded - need access to a nurturing key adult | +2 |
| **54** – Following a permanent exclusion, children and young people should always be offered a fresh start in their new school setting | +2 |
| ***43** – Where inclusion is successful, all children and young people feel that they belong within their school | +2 |

| Distinguishing Statement | Ranking on the Q-sort |
|---|---|
| ***40** – Excluding children and young people risks leading them to a life of crime and/or poor outcomes | +2 |
| **10** – Government targets and pressure make inclusion of children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties difficult | 0 |
| ***13** – There cannot be a "one size fits all" approach to inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties and are at risk of exclusion: individual cases and contexts need to be considered | 0 |
| **2** – Inclusion and inclusive practice in schools, particularly for children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion, is heavily dependent on senior leadership | 0 |
| ***46** – Inclusion and inclusive practice for all children, including those experience SEMH difficulties, should be fundamental to pedagogic practice | -1 |
| **53** – Behaviourist approaches to SEMH difficulties are the most effective way of addressing and reducing misbehaviour in mainstream schools | -2 |
| ***58** – Mainstream schools which have lower exclusion rates tend to serve less diverse, socially and/or economically-deprived or complex communities | -4 |

| Distinguishing Statement | Ranking on the Q-sort |
|---|---|
| ***42** – When a child or young person has been permanently excluded, they should be able to return to a mainstream school, rather than transferring to a specialist setting | -4 |
| ***59** – Inclusion of children and young people with SEMH difficulties is a valid ideal, but often unrealistic in mainstream schools | -5 |
| ***31** – The curriculum isn't designed for children and young people who experience severe SEMH difficulties | -5 |
| ***50** – Children and young people are often permanently excluded because school systems are inflexible, with a marked reluctance to adapt to support students' needs | -6 |

Viewpoint 1a has an eigenvalue of 0.72 and accounts for 9% of the study's variance. Two females and one male with an age range of 18 - 60 years and number of years' experience range of 0 – 20 years had significantly loaded onto this factor. Participants were from 3 different mainstream settings.

**Summary**

We believed inclusion of CYP who are at risk of or have been PEx from school is dependent on collaborative working of all of those within the school community, this includes the school system, school staff, parents, child, peers, and external professionals (items 2, 11, 12, 19, 22, 29, 47 and 56). Without each member of the community taking responsibility and accountability achieving inclusion is difficult. We believed aspects of the school system can continuously be problematic and impact upon inclusion, examples of this relate to funding and budgets (items 3 and 60), access to resources (items 9 and 17), staff capacity and skillset/knowledge (items 20, 24 and 35), school ethos (items 2 and 50), curriculum content and flexibility (items 3, 5 and 6), government pressure/targets (items 10 and 49) etc. We placed an importance on peer relationships (items 11 and 27), parental involvement (items 12), and a sense of belonging/rejection in CYP experiencing difficulties with their SEMH needs and/or at risk of PEx (items 7 and 55). We favour behaviourist approaches, in some circumstances, to inclusion particularly for addressing CYP displaying poor behaviour (items 8, 51 and 52). We do not believe consistently poor behaviour is always indicative of SEN (item 34), views the behaviour as disruptive to others (item 1), and views exclusion as necessary in certain circumstances (items 37 and 38) i.e., safeguarding other children but not for effectively supporting CYP experiencing difficulties with their SEMH development, we believe mainstream settings are not always the most appropriate to meet a CYP SEMH needs (items 41, 42 and 59) but we gave consideration to the risks associated with exclusion (item 40) i.e., poorer life outcomes.

#### 4.5.1.3 Manifestation viewpoint 1b – Systemic factors inhibit inclusion for all

The Q-sort factor array for Viewpoint 1b is presented in Figure 6. Information pertaining to the demographics of participants who significantly loaded onto the Viewpoint 1b can be found in Appendix V, alongside the statements they ranked at both extremes of the pole and the information they recorded in the Post Q-sort questionnaire. Table 17 displays the distinguishing statements for this viewpoint and the crib sheet used to form this viewpoint can be found in Appendix W. Viewpoint 1b has an eigenvalue of 0.17 and accounts for 8% of the study's variance. Two females with an age range of 25 - 50 years and number of years' experience range of 6 – 15 years had significantly loaded onto this factor. Participants were from the same mainstream setting.

**Figure 6.**

The Q-sort Factor array for Viewpoint 1b.

| **Strongly disagree** ⟵ | | | | | | | | | | | | ⟶ **Strongly agree** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **-6** | **-5** | **-4** | **-3** | **-2** | **-1** | **0** | **+1** | **+2** | **+3** | **+4** | **+5** | **+6** |
| 2 | 1 | 13 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 8 | 6 | 52 | 30 | 32 | 40 | 43 |
| 33 | 34 | 15 | 10 | 11 | 9 | 16 | 7 | 55 | 35 | 42 | 41 | 60 |
| | 45 | 22 | 27 | 12 | 17 | 19 | 18 | 57 | 38 | 46 | 49 | |
| | | 36 | 29 | 14 | 20 | 23 | 37 | 58 | 47 | 56 | | |
| | | | 48 | 26 | 21 | 24 | 44 | 59 | 53 | | | |
| | | | | 31 | 28 | 25 | 50 | 60 | | | | |
| | | | | | | 39 | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | 51 | | | | | | |

**Table 17.**

Distinguishing statements for Viewpoint 1b and the corresponding factor arrays, those significant at a $p < .01$ are indicated by an *.

| Distinguishing Statement | Ranking on the Q-sort |
|---|---|
| ***40** – Influences outside school - such as peers, crime and gangs in the community can jeopardise the inclusion of children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties | +5 |
| ***49** – The support from external and specialist services, such as educational psychologists, inclusion team, social workers, etc., is important to support inclusion within mainstream settings | +5 |
| ***41** – Children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties need more targeted support for their emotional expression and regulation, and social interaction | +5 |
| ***42** – Inclusion of children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion is hindered by funding and budgetary constraints | +4 |
| ***47** – Clear open communication between all stakeholders, i.e., child, parent, school staff, external professionals, etc., supports inclusion and inclusive practice for children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties | +3 |

| Distinguishing Statement | Ranking on the Q-sort |
|---|---|
| ***57** – Parental engagement and support are crucial for the inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties, particularly those at risk of permanent exclusion | +2 |
| **58** – In order to support the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties, teaching staff must have a good understanding of what the child may be experiencing | +2 |
| ***37** – Children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties in mainstream classes disrupt the education of other children. | +1 |
| ***5** – School staff need specialist training, knowledge, and skills to meet the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties | -2 |
| ***12** – Children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties – and particularly those at risk of permanent exclusion or who have already been permanently excluded - need access to a nurturing key adult | -3 |
| ***27** – Following a permanent exclusion, children and young people should always be offered a fresh start in their new school setting | -3 |
| ***13** – Where inclusion is successful, all children and young people feel that they belong within their school | -4 |

| Distinguishing Statement | Ranking on the Q-sort |
|---|---|
| ***22** – Excluding children and young people risks leading them to a life of crime and/or poor outcomes | -4 |
| ***2** – Inclusion and inclusive practice in schools, particularly for children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion, is heavily dependent on senior leadership | -6 |

**Summary**

We believed inclusion of CYP experiencing SEMH is often hindered by systemic factors such as the resources, curriculums, school ethos and wider pressures such as government policy, whilst we do not view it as being influenced by senior leadership (item 4, 39, 47, 49, 50, 60, 21 and 2). Furthermore, we implied that those schools which are more inclusive serves less diverse communities particularly in relation to socio-economic status (item 58 and 18). We emphasised the importance of the CYP having a sense of belonging, the need for person centred approaches, and relational approaches to successful inclusive practice, implying a "one size fits all" approach is not effective nor appropriate (43, 30, 35, and 13). We viewed the degree of inclusion is indicative based on exclusion rates, the lower the exclusion rate the more inclusive the school is, whilst implying exclusion does serve a purpose and can form a part of effective behaviour policies, avoiding a "zero tolerance" approach, and somewhat supporting wellbeing within CYP, whilst also suggesting challenging behaviour is not always a result of SEND (item 33, 25, 34, and 32).We viewed when exclusions have occurred, CYP need an opportunity for fresh start in a new setting in order to safeguard them from becoming embroiled in crime (item 54, 42 and 40). We indicated there are aspects of the mainstream school that cannot support inclusion for CYP experiencing SEMH difficulties such as the inflexible curriculum, opportunities for small group and specialist support (item 59, 60, 44, 45, 24 and 25). Finally, we do not place importance on the involvement of external services such as EPs, social workers, etc., parents or peer relationships on supporting inclusion and inclusive practice but recognise the importance of value of external agencies when CYP are at risk of exclusion (item 29, 53, 11, 12, 22, and 27).

#### 4.5.1.4 Consensus statements

Consensus statements relate to the statements that did not distinguish between any of the three viewpoints, the table containing the statements and their corresponding Z-scores and factor arrays

for each viewpoint can be found in Appendix X. Quotes will be used to support the consensus statements, these quotes have been taken from the participants' post Q-sort information questionnaire. There were 11 of the statements that were found to be significant at P> .01, and the remaining four statements were significant at P>.05.

#### *4.5.1.4.1 External factors*

External factors such as adequate resources and adaptations (4: -1, -3, -1), were not viewed as supporting inclusion and inclusive practice of CYP at risk of PEx. However, there was some agreement that there is not enough support, funding, or training for mainstream schools to practice inclusion with CYP experiencing difficulties with SEMH development (60: 0, 0, +2)

*"Although resources could be made available this does not guarantee success. Adaptations themselves are not always successful."* (Participant ASP001)

#### *4.5.1.4.2 Mainstream vs. PRUs*

PRUs were not viewed as being better set up than mainstreams for supporting needs of CYP experiencing SEMH difficulties (44: -2, -3, +1), but equally mainstream schools were not viewed as being able to provide opportunities for small group working or personalised curricula (45: -4, - 3, -5).

*"Sometimes mainstream schools are not the most appropriate settings..."* (Participant RS003)

*"I do not feel mainstream schools can be inclusive without limits."* (Participant ASP001)

#### *4.5.1.4.3 Staff knowledge, understanding, and capacity*

All three viewpoints agreed that a child's presenting behaviour was communicating an unmet need (7: +3, +1, +1), meanwhile disagreeing that the biggest barrier to inclusion was related to 'within child' factors (15: -4, -2, -4). Staff wellbeing and capacity were not viewed as significantly contributing to inclusion or inclusive practice (23: -1, -1, 0), whilst there was some level of

agreement with inclusion failing if staff are not adequately supported (28: +2, -1, -1). Finally, supporting the needs of CYP experiencing SEMH difficulties was not viewed entirely as placing immense strain and pressure on teaching staff (48: -1, -2, -3).

*"As SLT have the final decision/say – despite knowledge/expertise of staff who actually know the student"* (Participant EA001)

*"...small groups are not always possible"* (Participant RS003)

#### *4.5.1.4.4 Family*

Viewpoints disagreed that there is little to be done in schools if a child's parent or family were not onboard (29: -3, -4, -3).

#### *4.5.1.4.5 Relational vs behavioural approach*

There was a level of agreement that person-centred approach being the best way to support CYP SEMH needs (30: +1, 0, +3), whilst also agreeing behaviourist approaches will remain mostly ineffective without the use of relational approaches (52: +3, -1, +2)

*"I have seen the impact of strong relationships first hand on numerous occasions (16)"* (Participant ASP002)

*"Education is child centric and can only be successful is all staff "buy in""* (Participant CK001)

#### *4.5.1.4.6 Purpose of exclusions*

There was strong disagreement with removing exclusions from behaviour policies (33: -5, -4, -6), with some disagreement around exclusions not serving a purpose for enhancing wellbeing (36: 0, -2, -4). All viewpoints agreed that exclusions are necessary in cases where other children need to be safeguarded (38: +2, +4, +3).

*"Exclusions can play a part in an effective behaviour policy"* (Participant RS001)

#### 4.5.1.5 Non-significant and confounding Q-sorts

There were no non-significant or confounding Q-sorts for the mainstream dataset.

### 4.5.2 PRU Factors

#### 4.5.2.1 Overarching viewpoint 1 – Relational and holistic approaches are fundamental to inclusion

The Q-sort factor array for Viewpoint 1 is presented in Figure 7. Information pertaining to the demographics of participants who significantly loaded onto the Viewpoint 1 can be found in Appendix Y, alongside the statements they ranked at both extremes of the pole and the information they recorded in the Post Q-sort questionnaire. Table 18 displays the distinguishing statements for this viewpoint and the crib sheet used to form this viewpoint can be found in Appendix Z.

**Figure 7.**

The Q-sort Factor array for Viewpoint 1.

**Strongly disagree** ⟷ **Strongly agree**

| -6 | -5 | -4 | -3 | -2 | -1 | 0 | +1 | +2 | +3 | +4 | +5 | +6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 34 | 33 | 29 | 28 | 23 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 7 | 5 | 6 | 13 | 21 |
| 40 | 36 | 57 | 39 | 32 | 3 | 10 | 8 | 12 | 9 | 20 | 17 | 35 |
| | 48 | 58 | 45 | 42 | 15 | 14 | 11 | 22 | 19 | 24 | 43 | |
| | | 60 | 49 | 47 | 37 | 18 | 16 | 38 | 25 | 26 | | |
| | | | 59 | 50 | 41 | 31 | 46 | 53 | 30 | | | |
| | | | | 55 | 52 | 44 | 27 | 56 | | | | |
| | | | | | | 51 | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | 54 | | | | | | |

**Table 18.**

Distinguishing statements for Viewpoint 1 and the corresponding factor arrays, those significant at a $p < .01$ are indicated by an *.

| Distinguishing Statement | Ranking on the Q-sort |
|---|---|
| **43** – Where inclusion is successful, all children and young people feel that they belong within their school | +5 |
| **18 –** Children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion often (disproportionately, compared with other students), live in poverty. | 0 |
| **47** – Clear open communication between all stakeholders, i.e., child, parent, school staff, external professionals, etc., supports inclusion and inclusive practice for children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties | -2 |
| ***48 –** Supporting the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties places immense strain and pressure on teaching staff | -5 |
| ***40** – Influences outside school - such as peers, crime and gangs in the community can jeopardise the inclusion of children and young people experiencing SEMH | -6 |

Viewpoint 1 has an eigenvalue of 1.94 and accounts for 23% of the study's variance. Two males and one female with an age range of 35 - 50 years and number of years' experience range of 6 – 21+ years had significantly loaded onto this factor.

**Summary**

We believed there is a fundamental need for schools to take a holistic and relational approach to meeting the needs of CYP who are at risk of exclusion, in order for inclusion to be realised there must be an understanding of what is contributing to a CYP presenting needs as well as relational approaches being necessary to support CYP (item 17, 20, 9, and 35). We felt CYP should feel a sense of belonging within their school community, and these approaches need to be a part of the whole school ethos, with all members of the school community being onboard and subscribing to this viewpoint, senior leadership is pivotal for this (item 21, 43 and 2). We placed value on collaborative working with professionals and parents, but also recognised inclusive practice can still be maintained even if parents in particular are not onboard (item 12, 19, 26 and 29). We do not view exclusions as a life sentence, disagreeing that exclusions lead to a life of crime, whilst recognising the place of exclusions in support CYP wellbeing as well as safeguarding other children (item 40, 36 and 38). We placed importance on specialist training and adaptations within the curriculum i.e., curricula relating to social emotional development are a necessity (item 24, 5, 6 and 17). School policies, including behaviour policies should be inclusive reflecting the needs of CYP experience SEMH difficulties with a "one size fits all approach" not being appropriate, but exclusions and behavioural approaches still having a place within these policies, with exclusions not being reflective of inclusion within school (item 13, 36, 51 57, 38, and 33). We indicated there are aspects of mainstream schools that do not allow for inclusive practice with PRUs being somewhat more appropriately structured to meeting the needs of CYP but believing there is enough support and funding to realise inclusion within these settings (item 3, 44, 45, 59, and 60). We suggested SEMH

difficulties are not wholly as a result of external factors such as poverty, socio-economic status, environment, or diversity and are not always disruptive, but also do not always arise as a result of SEND (item 1, 34, 58, 57, 39, 47).

#### 4.5.2.2 Manifestation viewpoint 1a – 'Within child' factors and external influences jeopardise inclusion

The Q-sort factor array for Viewpoint 1a is presented in Figure 8. Information pertaining to the demographics of participants who significantly loaded onto the Viewpoint 1a can be found in Appendix Aa, alongside the statements they ranked at both extremes of the pole and the information they recorded in the Post Q-sort questionnaire. Table 19 displays the distinguishing statements for this viewpoint and the crib sheet used to form this viewpoint can be found in Appendix Ab.

Viewpoint 1a has an eigenvalue of 0.65 and accounts for 11% of the study's variance. Two females with an age range of 50 – 61+ years and number of years' experience range of 21+ years had significantly loaded onto this factor.

**Summary**

We perceived the most significant contributing factors to disruptive SEMH difficulties, which in turn may put CYP at risk of PEx, are factors not related to the school setting, including external factors such as peers, crime, and 'within-child' factors such as motivation and disaffection as well as unmet need, however, we do not always view these difficulties as related to SEND (item 1, 7, 11, 27, 15 and 39). Despite this, we recognised school staff can make a difference and support CYP experiencing SEMH difficulties, through an emphasis on empathy, sense of belonging, relational approaches and understanding of what may be contributing to CYP's difficulties, where all CYP views and individual needs should be considered, avoiding a "one size fits all" approach (item 13, 4, 8, 9, 16, 27, 29, 43, 52 and 51). We placed an emphasis on reintegration following a PEx, with a focus on a fresh start and preparation for adulthood (item 41, 42 and 54). We do not however, place

significant importance on the contributions of external agencies and parents nor recognise the need for inclusion to be a whole school ethos pioneered by senior leadership, although acknowledging the value of clear communication between stakeholders, it does view these factors as fundamental for inclusive practice (item 19, 22, 29, 26, 53, 2 and 21). We had conflicting views on the purpose of exclusion, expressing that they are not necessary for those experiencing SEMH difficulties nor for safeguarding purposes with rates of exclusion being indicative of inclusion in mainstream settings, but equally believe they should form part of behaviour policies where there is not a need for school policies to be inclusive and reflecting the needs of those experiencing SEMH difficulties (item 33, 35, 37, 57 and 38). We viewed PRUs as somewhat as better placed to meet the needs of CYP experiencing SEMH difficulties but recognising mainstream settings as also suitable (item 44, 45 and 60).

**Figure 8.**

The Q-sort Factor array for Viewpoint 1a.

**Strongly disagree** ⟷ **Strongly agree**

| -6 | -5 | -4 | -3 | -2 | -1 | 0 | +1 | +2 | +3 | +4 | +5 | +6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 34 | 29 | 37 | 30 | 2 | 24 | 3 | 10 | 5 | 9 | 1 | 4 | 11 |
| 51 | 33 | 53 | 38 | 22 | 26 | 31 | 12 | 6 | 14 | 8 | 7 | 13 |
| | 49 | 57 | 50 | 23 | 32 | 35 | 21 | 18 | 17 | 15 | 16 | |
| | | 60 | 56 | 25 | 40 | 44 | 39 | 27 | 19 | 42 | | |
| | | | 59 | 28 | 46 | 48 | 45 | 41 | 20 | | | |
| | | | | 36 | 58 | 52 | 47 | 43 | | | | |
| | | | | | | 54 | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | 55 | | | | | | |

**Table 19.**

Distinguishing statements for Viewpoint 1a and the corresponding factor arrays, those significant at a $p < .01$ are indicated by an *.

| Distinguishing Statement | Ranking on the Q-sort |
|---|---|
| ***11**– Influences outside school - such as peers, crime and gangs in the community can jeopardise the inclusion of children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties | +6 |
| ***7** – A child's presenting behaviour is a form of communication, which may indicate they have an unmet need | +5 |
| ***16** – Positive, consistent relationships between adults and children can prevent children and young people from being permanently excluded | +5 |
| **4** – Inclusion of children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion can be achieved with adequate resources and adaptations i.e., differentiated curriculum | +5 |
| ***15** – The biggest barriers to the inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties relate to 'within-child' factors such as motivation and disaffection | +4 |
| ***1** – Children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties in mainstream classes disrupt the education of other children | +4 |

| Distinguishing Statement | Ranking on the Q-sort |
|---|---|
| ***42** – When a child or young person has been permanently excluded, they should be able to return to a mainstream school, rather than transferring to a specialist setting | +4 |
| **41** – When a child or young person has been permanently excluded support should focus on reintegration into mainstream schools and preparation for adulthood | +2 |
| **43** – Where inclusion is successful, all children and young people feel that they belong within their school | +2 |
| ***35** – To support children's and young people's SEMH needs properly, we must first fully understand what is contributing to these needs and then plan support accordingly | 0 |
| ***26** – Collaborative working across all stakeholders, i.e., child, parent, school staff, external professionals, is the key to inclusion working in mainstream schools | -1 |
| **46** – Inclusion and inclusive practice for all children, including those experience SEMH difficulties, should be fundamental to pedagogic practice | -1 |
| **24** – School staff need specialist training, knowledge, and skills to meet the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties | -1 |

| Distinguishing Statement | Ranking on the Q-sort |
|---|---|
| **22** – The support from external and specialist services, such as educational psychologists, inclusion team, social workers, etc., is important to support inclusion within mainstream settings | -3 |
| **38** – Exclusions are sometimes necessary to safeguard the needs and rights of other children and young people in their teaching groups / the school | -3 |
| ***56** – Children and young people's wishes and perspectives are important and should always be considered | -3 |
| ***30** – A person-centred approach is the best way to support children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties | -3 |
| ***53** – Mainstream school staff should always seek the support of external agencies, e.g., educational psychologist, inclusion, for children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion | -3 |

#### 4.5.2.3 Manifestation viewpoint 1b – Inclusion is a choice

The Q-sort factor array for Viewpoint 1b is presented in Figure 9. Information pertaining to the demographics of participants who significantly loaded onto the Viewpoint 1b can be found in Appendix Ac, alongside the statements they ranked at both extremes of the pole and the information they recorded in the Post Q-sort questionnaire. Table 20 displays the distinguishing statements for this viewpoint and the crib sheet used to form this viewpoint can be found in Appendix Ad.

Viewpoint 1b has an eigenvalue of 0.23 and accounts for 6% of the study's variance. One female with an age range of 25 – 34 years had significantly loaded onto this factor. It is important to note here that this viewpoint does not represent a shared viewpoint but rather a singular viewpoint, it was retained in the factor solution for reasons explained previously but is considered later against shared viewpoints to demonstrate individual differences.

**Figure 9.**

The Q-sort Factor array for Viewpoint 1b.

**Strongly disagree** ⟷ **Strongly agree**

| -6 | -5 | -4 | -3 | -2 | -1 | 0 | +1 | +2 | +3 | +4 | +5 | +6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 29 | 10 | 41 | 1 | 8 | 9 | 4 | 2 | 14 | 18 | 26 | 35 | 31 |
| 59 | 33 | 42 | 15 | 40 | 12 | 5 | 3 | 27 | 21 | 30 | 50 | 34 |
| | 36 | 49 | 43 | 44 | 19 | 6 | 16 | 28 | 22 | 46 | 56 | |
| | | 57 | 51 | 45 | 23 | 7 | 17 | 37 | 24 | 47 | | |
| | | | 52 | 55 | 32 | 11 | 20 | 38 | 53 | | | |
| | | | | 58 | 48 | 13 | 25 | 60 | | | | |
| | | | | | | 39 | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | 54 | | | | | | |

**Table 20.**

Distinguishing statements for Viewpoint 1b and the corresponding factor arrays, those significant at a $p < .01$ are indicated by an *.

| Distinguishing Statement | Ranking on the Q-sort |
|---|---|
| ***31** – The curriculum isn't designed for children and young people who experience severe SEMH difficulties | +6 |
| ***34** – Children and young people whose behaviour is consistently poor have special educational needs | +6 |
| ***50** – Children and young people are often permanently excluded because school systems are inflexible, with a marked reluctance to adapt to support students' needs | +5 |
| **28** – Inclusion fails when school staff feel unsupported or are not given adequate support and supervision | +2 |
| **37** – Exclusions are necessary to support the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties | +2 |
| ***60** – There is not enough support, funding, and/or training for mainstream schools to practise inclusion, particularly with children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties | +2 |
| **13** – There cannot be a "one size fits all" approach to inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties and are at risk of exclusion: individual cases and contexts need to be considered | 0 |

| Distinguishing Statement | Ranking on the Q-sort |
|---|---|
| **9** – Children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties – and particularly those at risk of permanent exclusion or who have already been permanently excluded - need access to a nurturing key adult | -1 |
| **19** – Clear open communication between all stakeholders, i.e., child, parent, school staff, external professionals, etc., supports inclusion and inclusive practice for children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties | -1 |
| **8** – Training and CPD opportunities, particularly relating to trauma, attachment, and nurture, are important in enabling all staff to meet the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties | -2 |
| **43** – Where inclusion is successful, all children and young people feel that they belong within their school | -3 |
| ***10** – Government targets and pressure make inclusion of children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties difficult | -5 |

**Summary**

I believed inclusive practice is heavily influenced by the school system and structure, not "within-child" factors, inclusion is a valid ideal that is dependent on senior leadership (item 2, 46, 10, 11, 12, 15, 29 and 59). I perceived the curriculum as not being designed for CYP who experience SEMH difficulties, but recognised external factors such as peer relationship, poverty, access to resources, training, etc., as being a contributing factor to exclusionary practice (item 31, 2, 46, 10, 15, 29 and 59). I believed there is value to be taken from relational and person-centred approaches in supporting the needs of CYP experiencing SEMH difficulties, however school staff should receive adequate support and supervision to manage this (item 26, 27, 28, 30, 16 and 17). Exclusion rates are reflective of inclusive practice, but I acknowledge the benefits of behavioural approaches and exclusion, particularly the latter forming behaviour policies as well as serving a purpose of conserving wellbeing and safeguarding CYP (item 33, 37, 52 and 38). I recognised the importance of multi-agency collaborative working towards inclusive practice (item 22, 26, and 53). I do not perceive PRUs as any more suited than mainstream schools for meeting the needs of CYP experiencing SEMH difficulties (item 44). Finally, I do view persistent challenging behaviour as a form SEND (item 34 and 7).

#### 4.5.2.4 Consensus statements

There were 15 of the statements that were found to be significant at P> .01, and the remaining 10 statements were significant at P>.05, consensus statements and corresponding z-scores and factor arrays for all PRU viewpoints are found in Appendix Ae.

##### *4.5.2.4.1 External school factors*

There was some agreement that funding and budgetary requirements could hinder inclusive practice (3: -1, 0, +1), contrasting with the notion that inclusion is hindered by inconsistent support in Government policy (49: -3, -5, -4).

#### *4.5.2.4.2 Staff knowledge, understanding and capacity*

There was slight agreement that inclusion was heavily dependent on senior leadership (2: +1, -2, +1). Whilst a stronger agreement related to staff having a good understanding of the child's needs in order to provide support (20: +4, +3, +1). Inclusion was not viewed as being dependent on staff wellbeing and capacity (23: -2, -2, 1).

*"Senior leadership should ensure all policies and procedures support inclusion. This should be role modelled and embed into the ethos of the school"* (Participant NB001)

*"As it states 'one size' does not fit all. Pupils should be assessed on their individual needs"* (Participant NB007).

#### *4.5.2.4.3 Curriculum and adaptation*

The curriculum was viewed as needing to be adapted to meet the needs of CYP experiencing SEMH difficulties (5: +3, +2, 0) as well as needing a focus on social and emotional wellbeing in addition to academic knowledge (6: +4, +2, 0). There was also strong agreement that those CYP who experience SEMH difficulties need targeted support for this area of difficulty (17: +5, +3, +1).

*"The curriculum is outdating and the same lessons/learning has been going on for 20+ years. Doesn't reflect modern world of young people."* (Participant NB008)

*"Young people with SEMH <u>need</u> more targeted support."* (Participant NB009)

#### *4.5.2.4.4 Relational vs behavioural approaches*

The need for CYP experiencing having access to a nurturing key adult (9: +3, +3, -1) and positive peer relationships (27: +1, +2, +2) was agreed with. However, behavioural approaches were viewed as somewhat effective even without the presence of relational approaches (52: -1, 0, -3), but a zero-tolerance approach was not supportive (32: -2, -1, -1). There was also an agreement regarding the importance of pupil involvement in decision making (14: 0, +3, +2).

*"Empathy in mainstream schools."* (Participant NB007)

#### *4.5.2.4.5 Environmental factors*

There was an agreement that parent engagement was crucial in support CYP at risk of PEx (12: +2, +1, -1) as well as clear communication across all stakeholders (19: +3, +3, -1) but equally there were still options of support if parents were not onboard (29: -4, -5, -6). There was also some agreement that those CYP at risk of exclusion were often living in poverty (18: 0, +2, +3).

*"Family is an important element but inclusion and learning can still take place without it. Just needs to be looked at more creatively, some CYPIC succeed."* (Participant NB008)

#### *4.5.2.4.6 Purpose and outcomes of exclusions*

There was significant disagreement that exclusions should not form part of behaviour policies (33: -5, -5, -5) and that they do not serve a constructive purpose for enhancing wellbeing (36: -5, -2, -5). There was some agreement that CYP should be offered a fresh start when starting at a new setting following PEx (54: 0, 0, 0).

*"Exclusions, when used correctly, can form part of an effective behaviour policy. For some young people, it can be an effective measure to deter repeat behaviours."* (Participant NB001)

#### *4.5.2.4.7 Mainstream vs PRU*

There was little agreement that PRUs were set up to support CYP experiencing SEMH difficulties better than mainstream settings (44: 0, 0, -2) whilst some disagreement that mainstream settings can provide opportunities for small group and personalised curricula (45: -3, +1, -2). Low exclusions rates were not observed as indicative of inclusion (57: -4, -4, -4) and disagreement that inclusive practice was not realistic in mainstream settings (59: -3, -3. -6).

*"Inclusion can happen in my setting, it's a choice whether it is or not."* (Participant NB008)

#### 4.5.2.5 Non-significant and confounding Q-sorts

There was only one Q-sort (NB004) who did not load significantly onto the overarching factor or its alternate manifestations, their factor loadings can be found in Table 21, they did not provide any demographic information or post Q-sort information.

**Table 21.**

*Q-sort NB004 factor loadings*

| | Factor solution | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Q-sort | Factor 1 | Factor 1a | Factor 1b |
| NB004 | 0.0108 | 0.1261 | -0.0430 |

Q-sort NB004 was not near to loading onto overarching factor or its alternate manifestations in this factor solution. This Q-sort strongly viewed exclusions served a purpose for supporting the needs of CYP experiencing SEMH difficulties (37: +6) and were necessary to safeguard other children (38: +5) and that the occurred due to within-child factors such as disaffection and motivation (39: +6). This Q-sort did not believe budget and funding hindered exclusions (3: -6) and that there were supports that could be offered for CYP experiencing SEMH needs even if parents were not onboard (29: -6).

This Q-sort (and the presence of the one significant loading Q-sort on Viewpoint 1b) indicated that there may be further viewpoints that were not captured within this one-factor solution and alternate manifestations, if the sample size within this population were larger or if the two participants data, whose data was not used in this study, could have been used this may have revealed further viewpoints.

#### 4.5.2.6 Participant NB003

Participant NB003's data was not included in the factor analysis because they had recorded two items twice resulting in a further two items being missed from their recorded Q-sort, they also had not filled out the demographic or post Q-sort questionnaire, so this information was not available for interpretation. The items which were duplicated were items 3 (-6 and +1), which pertained to inclusion being hindered by funding and budgetary constraints, and 38 (-6 and -3), which related to exclusions being necessary to safeguard the needs and rights of other children. The items missed were item 34 (consistently poor behaviour indicates SEND) and 37 (exclusions are necessary to support the needs of CYP experiencing SEMH difficulties).

Although they were not included in the factor analysis procedure, I was able to draw some comparisons from NB003's raw data with the final one-factor solution with alternate manifestations produced for the PRU data set. I found NB003's Q-sort to be most similar to PRU viewpoint 1 where they had ranked 25 items similarly. I judged rankings to be similar if they were ranked at the same point or within 2 points, for example if NB003 ranked item 3 at -6 and viewpoint 1 had ranked it at -4 it was perceived to be similar.

They had ranked items 44 and 48 at +6 indicating strong agreement. These items suggest NB003 subscribed to the viewpoint that PRUs are better set up to support the needs of CYP experiencing SEMH difficulties than mainstream settings and that supporting these CYP place immense strain and pressure on teaching staff. It is difficult to comment on the placement of statements on the opposite pole (-6) because these are the items, they duplicated so I cannot be certain they had intended for them to be placed there. NB003 ranked statements similarly to the consensus statement sections outlined in the Table 22.

**Table 22.**

*NB003 statement rankings which were similar to the consensus statements from the three-factor solution.*

| Consensus statement section | Item number and factor ranks | NB003 ranking |
|---|---|---|
| 4.5.2.4.2 – Staff knowledge, understanding and capacity | 2 (+1, -2, +1). | -2 |
| | 20 (+4, +3, +1) | +3 |
| | 23 (-2, -2, 1) | -4 |
| 4.5.2.4.3 – Curriculum and adaptation | 5 (+3, +2, 0) | 0 |
| | 6 (+4, +2, 0) | +2 |
| | 17 (+5, +3, +1) | +5 |
| 4.5.2.4.4 – Relational vs. Behavioural approach | 9 (+3, +3, -1) | +1 |
| | 27 (+1, +2, +2) | -1 |
| | 52 (-1, 0, -3) | -3 |
| | 32 (-2, -1, -1) | -1 |
| | 14 (0, +3, +2) | 0 |
| 4.5.2.4.5 – Environmental factors | 12 (+2, +1, -1) | 0 |
| | 19 (+3, +3, -1) | +5 |
| | 29 (-4, -5, -6) | -4 |

# 5 Discussion

## 5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the findings presented in the previous chapter, drawing comparisons between the two dataset's results before moving onto linking findings to pre-existing literature. It then considers both the strengths and limitations of this research study before discussing implications for EPs, school staff and policy.

## 5.2 Summary of research findings

It proposed, as cited in Watts and Stenner (2012) that good Q-methodological research is based on whether participants can answer the research questions, good Q-methodological research questions are suggested as seeking to represent subject matters, understand it and perform in relation to it (Curt, 1994). Based on these suggestions my research questions aimed to represent a subject matter and attempt to understand it. This research set out to answer three research questions:

1) What are the views of inclusion and inclusive practice held by:
    a) staff members working in PRUs; and
    b) staff from mainstream schools from which pupils have been excluded (and in at least one case, subsequently placed in a PRU) since September 2019?
2) What do staff from the two types of educational setting (mainstream school and PRU) identify as the principal threats to viable / effective inclusive mainstream education for those CYP at risk of / who go on to experience exclusion from their mainstream school?
3) What factors do staff identify as contributing to the improved inclusive mainstream education for those CYP at risk of / who go on to experience exclusion needs from their mainstream school?

A by-person factor analysis was selected to produce answers for these questions and for each dataset (mainstream and PRU), one factor solution with two alternate manifestations were

produced. As I mentioned in chapter 4, the use of four statistical tests alongside Webler et al.,'s (2009) criteria for a good factor solution were used to identify the factor solutions as sound. The one factor solution with two alternate manifestations produced for the mainstream and PRU dataset are presented in Table 23 and 24.

These viewpoints present as answers to the first research question of this study. The next section of this chapter draws qualitative comparisons between these two factor solutions before discussing the findings' relevance to pre-existing literature, providing answers for the final two research questions posed.

## 5.3 Comparisons between the two groups

It is stipulated that Q-methodology does not serve the purpose of testing for difference it is used to explore "expressions of personal viewpoints" (Watts & Stenner, 2012, p. 53). Alternatively, if the aim is to compare viewpoints between two groups this is possible, first viewpoints would need to be explored separately between each group, in the case of this research the mainstream group and PRU group, using the same Q-set and procedure (Watts & Stenner, 2012). This can be achieved through a qualitative comparison, use of quantitative comparison or through second-order factor analysis (Watts & Stenner, 2012). The qualitative comparison was viewed as the most feasible and appropriate for the research purpose. I outline the four overarching areas I viewed as similar between the two groups factor solutions, based on the factor arrays for each viewpoint as well as any overlapping items presented in each factor solution consensus items.

### *5.3.1 Persistent challenging behaviours and SEND*

The first viewpoint I found was shared across the two groups related to not perceiving all persistent challenging behaviours as a form or indicator of SEND (item 34).

**Table 23.**

*The one factor solution with two alternate manifestations produced for the mainstream dataset with overview of differing and consensus statements*

| One factor solution with two alternate manifestations | Areas of difference | Areas of consensus |
|---|---|---|
| 1. School systems are accountable for inclusion and there cannot be a "one size fits all" approach<br><br>1a. Inclusion is influenced both by factors inside and outside of the school system<br><br>1b. Systemic factors inhibit inclusion for all | - Whether it is systemic, individual or external factors that more heavily influences inclusion<br>- How important support from external services and parents/families are on improving inclusive practice | - The value of relational and person-centred approaches in addition to behaviour approaches in meeting the needs of CYP experiencing SEMH and/or at risk of PEx<br>- The value of relational and person-centred approaches in addition to behaviour approaches in meeting the needs of CYP experiencing SEMH and/or at risk of PEx<br>- The use of exclusions having a place withing school policy and in certain circumstances necessary |

**Table 24.**

*The one factor solution with two alternate manifestations produced for the PRU dataset with overview of differing and consensus statements.*

| One factor solution with two alternate manifestations | Areas of difference | Areas of consensus |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Relational and holistic approaches are fundamental to inclusion<br><br>1a. 'Within child' factors and external influences jeopardise inclusion<br><br>1b. Inclusion is a choice | - Factors that hinder inclusion, including external influences through crime and SEN<br>- Value placed on external support services<br>- The impact of internal school factors such as curriculum and staff competency on inclusive practice | - Greater understanding of what may be contributing to a child's presenting behaviour<br>- Focus on adapting the curriculum to meet the needs of CYP experiencing SEMH difficulties and at risk of PEx.<br>- The effectiveness of behavioural approaches but appreciation of the benefits of relational approaches |

The two viewpoints and the four alternate manifestations produced, five had item 34: *CYP whose behaviour is consistently poor have special educational needs* ranked either at -6 or -5 in the factor arrays. The only factor array that did not have it ranked at -6 and -5, instead ranked at +6 was the Viewpoint 1b of the PRU dataset, which was only representative of one significant loading. Both mainstream staff and PRU staff overwhelmingly agreed that consistently poor behaviour was not indicative of a child experiencing SEND. However, the presence of it being ranked +6 on the single loading viewpoint, meaning that they agreed challenging behaviour was indicative of SEND, implies somewhat that not every individual within these groups held the view that it is not a product of SEND.

### *5.3.2 Systemic factors*

There was consensus across both factor solutions that a whole school community approach to inclusion was needed (item 21). Viewpoint 1 from both the mainstream and PRU data rated it at +6 indicating strong agreement, whereas the other four viewpoints agreed somewhat with the notion. All the viewpoints disagreed there was little school staff could do if parents were not onboard (item 29), suggesting they believed school staff could still evoke change and support the CYP's presenting needs. This demonstrates both groups believe a whole school community approach to inclusion is beneficial, but equally if all those involved in the school community are not onboard there is still support school staff can offer.

Furthermore, both groups did not significantly agree with the concept that PRUs were better set up to support the needs of CYP experiencing SEMH difficulties and at risk of PEx (item 44). In contrast, both groups also somewhat disagreed that mainstreams were able to provide small group and targeted support (item 45). Generally, there was disagreement with the notion that inclusion in a mainstream was a valid ideal but unrealistic, indicating both groups believed it to be achievable in mainstream settings (item 59). This seems to suggest both groups believe that inclusion is

achievable within mainstream settings but recognise there may be difficulties within the mainstream system that can act as a barrier.

### *5.3.3 Purpose of exclusion*

The final overarching theme I felt shared consensus across the two groups related to the purpose of exclusions. Both groups overwhelmingly agreed there was still a place for exclusions within behaviour policies (item 33), with most factor arrays recording this statement towards the -6 pole. Furthermore, exclusions not serving as a constructive purpose in enhancing wellbeing for CYP experiencing SEMH difficulties was somewhat disagreed with across all viewpoints (item 36). Finally, all bar one viewpoint agreed that exclusions served a purpose for safeguarding other children (item 38). This demonstrates, despite the different settings in which school staff work, both groups view exclusions as having a purpose within educational settings.

## 5.4 Links to pre-existing literature

The outcomes of this research coincide with the conclusions made within the literature review chapter of this volume, namely there are multitudes of factors that contribute to PEx and in turn hinder inclusive practice (Atkinson & Rowley, 2019; Gillies & Robinson, 2012; Jenson & Bender, 2014; McCluskey et al., 2019; Murphy, 2022; Solomon & Rogers, 2001). It provides an insight into the range of viewpoints held across mainstream schools and PRUs within the English context, however it should be noted it is not representative of all views, this is not the aim of Q-methodological research.

### *5.4.1 Systemic factors*

The pre-existing literature highlighted the presence of systemic factors as having implications for inclusive practice in relation to CYP PEx and/or experiencing SEMH difficulties. These factors related to there being a whole school ethos regarding whether inclusion is realistic and attainable

(Culham, 2003; Hunt, 2011; Malmqvist, 2016; Runswick-Cole, 2008), school staff's ability to understand and unpick individual needs (Caslin, 2021; Jenson & Bender, 2014; Murphy, 2022; Pirrie & Macleod, 2009; Thompson et al., 2021), the impact of parental involvement (Atkinson & Rowley, 2019; Culham, 2003; Department for Education, 2019b; Gillies & Robinson, 2012), access to support and/or ability to utilise relational and holistic approaches (Gazeley et al., 2013; Gidlund, 2018; Greer, 2020; McCluskey et al., 2019; McKenna et al., 2019), and the impact of the presence of PRUs (Duffy et al., 2021; McCluskey et al., 2019; Meo & Parker, 2004; Thompson et al., 2021).

Literature suggested that a whole school ethos is key to inclusion and inclusive practice (Culham, 2003; Hunt, 2011; Malmqvist, 2016; Runswick-Cole, 2008). There was differentiation between the viewpoints regarding the impact of other systemic factors such as role of government policy, budget and funding, relational approaches, access to support, impact of those involved in the school community i.e., senior leaderships, parents and families, peers, etc. Both the mainstream and PRU Viewpoint (PV) 1 agreed with the statement relating to inclusion needing to be a whole school approach more significantly than any of the other viewpoints (item 21: +6, +6). The mainstream Viewpoint (MV) 1 views inclusion of CYP at risk of PEx and/or those who have been PEx as being heavily dependent on the school's ethos and whether there is consistency across approaches from staff. Additionally, the PV 1 expressed CYP should feel a sense of belonging within their school community, and these approaches need to be a part of the whole school ethos, with all members of the school community being onboard and subscribing to this viewpoint, senior leadership is pivotal for this. Both of these viewpoints are supported by previous literature which stipulated inclusive practice is only achievable if there is a systemic shift in practice and ethos, in relation to schools this would relate to the school systems ethos (Cole et al., 2019; Hunt, 2011; McCluskey et al., 2019), with parents reportedly indicating CYP's access to inclusion was hindered by the mainstream ethos often being inflexible (Runswick-Cole, 2008).

Interestingly, all but one viewpoint across the two groups disagreed that inclusion was a valid ideal but often unrealistic in mainstream schools, with MV 1a and PV 1b displaying stronger disagreement (item 59: -5, -6). The PV 1b viewed inclusion as a choice, that inclusive practice is heavily influenced by the school system and structure, not "within-child" factors, inclusion is a valid ideal that is dependent on senior leadership, with MV 1a emphasising the need for consistency across the whole school community for inclusion to work. Although the fluctuation between strength of agreement/disagreement, as well as the reasons why for these positions, further supports the notion that there is not a consistent perspective as to whether inclusion is attainable and achievable, particularly within mainstream settings (Culham, 2003).

Another systemic factor, related to school staff knowledge, understanding and capacity. Previous research highlighted the difficulty in understanding the needs of CYP at risk of PEx and/or experiencing SEMH difficulties. It was argued the largest challenge to school systems was SEMH needs being pitched as behavioural difficulties rather than emotional difficulties which in turn generates difficulty for school staff to understand what may be contributing to a CYP presenting need or why it may be occurring (Caslin, 2021; Jenson & Bender, 2014; Murphy, 2022; Pirrie & Macleod, 2009; Thompson et al., 2021). Four of the viewpoints (MV 1, all PVs) agreed with the notion that teaching staff must have a good understanding of what the child may be experiencing (item 20), whilst there was mixed opinion about whether staff should have specialist training, knowledge, and skills in order to be able to meet the needs of CYP experiencing SEMH difficulties (item 24). However, four of the viewpoints (both MV and PV 1 and 1a) agreed somewhat that training and CPD opportunities, particularly relating to trauma, attachment, and nurture (item 8), were important for enabling all staff to understand and support the needs of CYP experiencing SEMH difficulties, which may suggest training on trauma, attachment and nurture were not perceived as specialist training. Despite the challenging nature of understanding factors that may be

contributing to CYP's presenting needs, there is agreement across the viewpoints that this is an important aspect of supporting CYP.

Another factor influencing inclusion is parental involvement (Atkinson & Rowley, 2019; Carlile, 2011; Gillies & Robinson, 2012). On one hand parental involvement was viewed as valuable to their CYP in a few studies (Atkinson & Rowley, 2019; Gillies & Robinson, 2012), on the other hand, literature highlighted the view that parents/family contribute to the presentation of CYP's difficulties insofar as teachers believe they compensate for poor parenting whilst others highlighted parents as being faced with making decisions within a context where unchallenged political concepts of tolerance and inclusion are constantly competing, resulting in inter-professional conflict (Carlile, 2011). Four of the viewpoints agreed that parental engagement and support are crucial for the inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties (item 12), particularly those at risk of PEx demonstrating parental support is valued within the context of PEx, however all of the viewpoints disagreed that they cannot support CYP if parents are not onboard (item 29). The nature of the viewpoints presenting as contradictory, further supports the literature that suggests parental involvement is valuable but that some teachers believe themselves to compensate for poor parenting, ergo they are able to support CYP even without parent engagement. Despite this, there was agreement across most of the viewpoints that both clear communication and collaborative working across the school community, parents included, was important for inclusive practice for CYP experiencing SEMH difficulties (item 19; 26). Research suggests school staff view poor parenting as contributing towards SEMH whereas parents question whether school staff are working for the best interest of their CYP, suggesting labels made by school staff perpetuate SEMH difficulties (Gillies & Robinson, 2012; Thomas, 2015), whilst parents are identified as a factor that supports reintegration following a PEx (Atkinson & Rowley, 2019). This research provides an

insight into school staff's perspectives, but not parents, posing the question as to what viewpoints would have been uncovered if this research was completed with this group.

The use of holistic and relational approaches was also raised in pre-existing literature. Studies have highlighted concern regarding the gap between theory and practice, indicating there is not enough support or interventions for CYP experiencing SEMH difficulties (Gidlund, 2018; McCluskey et al., 2019; McKenna et al., 2019). The use of relational and empathic approaches being emphasised by educationalists and psychologists rather than the sole use of behavioural approaches such as sanctions and punishments (Cole et al., 2019; Greer, 2020; McCluskey et al., 2019). Statements relating to the importance of relationships between adults and peers (item 16), the need for targeted social emotional support (item 17), and a person-centred approach (item 30) were all ranked quite highly in terms of agreement by at least four of the viewpoints across each area. However, statements relating to behavioural approaches remaining ineffective without the use of relational approaches highlighted mixed viewpoints across both groups, some viewpoints agreed there needed to be a combination (MV 1 – item 52: +3), whereas there was indication some viewpoints disagreed with this leading to the interpretation they felt behavioural approaches were suffice (PV 1b – item 52: -3). Highlighting, that viewpoints agreed there was value in the use of relational and holistic approaches, but they were not a necessity in terms of evoking positive change in CYP.

Finally, there has been indication in the literature that the very presence of PRUs deters mainstream schools from inclusive practice (Meo & Parker, 2004; Thompson et al., 2021). Research argued that PRUs encourage exclusionary practice (Meo & Parker, 2004), whilst the increased use of alternative provision, opens the market for mainstream schools to outsource CYP displaying challenging behaviours and enables them to be removed from mainstream settings (Thompson et al., 2021). Again, emerging viewpoints were mixed in terms of their agreement as to whether PRUs were better set up to support the needs of children and young people experiencing SEMH

difficulties than what is viable in mainstream secondary schools (item 44), MV 1a had the strongest disagreement out of all the viewpoints, whilst MV 1b had the strongest agreement (item 44: -3, +1). Interpreting this in the context of viewpoints agreeing inclusion being a valid and realistic ideal in mainstream setting could display the recognition that although inclusion is attainable in the viewpoints of those participating in this study, there may be more appropriate settings that could better meet the need of CYP at risk of PEx and/or experiencing SEMH difficulties.

To provide a brief summary of this section, a vast majority of viewpoints believe inclusion is realistic and attainable within mainstream settings, however how this is obtained presents with mixed views, which is consistent with the previous literature. Viewpoints explored indicated inclusion needs to be a whole community ethos, providing further evidence for literature stating inclusion must also be an ethos not just legislation, whilst also recognising there are factors such as family involvement, relational approaches, and presence of PRUs that can either support or hinder inclusive practice, again further strengthening literature that outline these factors as influencing inclusive practice.

### *5.4.2 Purpose of exclusions*

The purpose and aims of exclusion are another theme presented in the literature review. Research indicated exclusions do not serve the wellbeing of CYP with some researchers going as far as to say the use of PEx demonstrates a failure on the behalf of the school system (Caslin, 2021; Culham, 2003; Solomon & Rogers, 2001). Furthermore, research has also indicated that exclusions do not only occur because CYP are disaffected or demotivated by the school curriculum, but it may also be due to the lack of access to appropriate support (Cole et al., 2019; Gazeley et al., 2013; Meo & Parker, 2004; Solomon & Rogers, 2001).

Five of the viewpoints (MV 1, 1a, 1b; PV 1, 1b) agreed that exclusions were necessary to safeguard other children (item 38) and four viewpoints believed were necessary to support the needs of CYP experiencing SEMH difficulties (item 37) (MV 1, 1a; PV 1, 1a). It is interesting to reflect on the necessity to safeguard other children, and whether this viewpoint is influenced by the knowledge that children could only be PEx if every possible resource had been used to avoid it, unless it endangered the safety of others (Visser & Stokes, 2003), I would argue this would somewhat influence this viewpoint. Five viewpoints disagreed (MV 1a, 1b; PV 1, 1a, 1b) that exclusions did not serve a constructive purpose for CYP's wellbeing (item 36). There were mixed responses to whether exclusions occur because CYP are unmotivated or disaffected from their learning (item 39), with MV 1 having the lowest ranking of -5 whereas PV 1a had the highest ranking at +1. All of the viewpoints disagreed quite strongly that exclusions do not have a place within behaviour policy (MV; PV – item 33: -5, -3, -6; -5, -5, -5). Demonstrating all views believed exclusions had a place within school systems.

Furthermore, items relating to whether lower exclusions indicated more inclusive practice (item 57) was agreed with across five of the viewpoints (MV 1, 1a; PV 1, 1a, 1b), indicating that they viewed exclusion rates as potential indicators of inclusion. One participant reported in the post Q-sort question *"As such exclusions should be seen as a failure of schools to intervene appropriately on SEMH"* (Participant CK001). This links directly with research that also presents exclusions demonstrating a failure within the school system (Carlile, 2012; Caslin, 2021; Culham, 2003) as well as research that demonstrated more inclusive schools had lower exclusion rates (Malmqvist, 2016). Despite research indicating exclusions may not only be because of disaffection/ motivation or for the best interest of the child, the viewpoints produced in this research show agreements across these statements. Exclusions are still viewed as necessary to school systems, particularly in terms of behaviour management and policy. This is not surprising, particularly as government legislation

advocates for a more punitive approach (Caslin, 2021; Greer, 2020; McCluskey et al., 2019), as demonstrated in the "Behaviour and Discipline in schools" document (DfE, 2020).

### *5.4.3 Pupil voice*

Research has discussed the importance of pupil voice, particularly in relation to decision making processes that relate to support for them arguing children's viewpoints are important and should form part of any research and reforms in education, to ignore their views is to deny inclusion (de Leeuw et al., 2019), which is supported by the United Nations Convention Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1990). Whilst legislation outlines the rights of the child to inclusive education, there is no specific law stating the child has a right to inclusive education, only a duty of the LEA (Visser & Stokes, 2003). Five of the viewpoints (MV 1, 1a, 1b; PV 1, 1b) agreed CYP's wishes, and perspectives are important and should always be considered (item 56), with MV 1 ranking it at +6. However, there were mixed views in relation to whether CYP at risk of PEx should participate in decision-making processes (item 14), particularly processes relating to identifying the support they need, with MV1 expressing agreement (+3) whereas MV 1b expressed somewhat of a disagreement with this statement (-2). This indicates that school staff value CYP wishes and aspirations, but this does not mean they should always be involved in decision making processes, which contravenes to some extent what pre-existing literature is suggesting and/or recommending (Atkinson & Rowley, 2019; de Leeuw et al., 2019).

### *5.4.4 Socio-economic status*

Socio-economic status has been highlighted as a factor contributing to exclusion, with PEX being viewed as "state power" that prejudices certain types of groups, likely applicable to working class students (Carlile, 2012; Gazeley et al., 2013; Trotman et al., 2015), with a study suggesting school staff believe white working-class boys to be at greater risk of exclusion (Gillies & Robinson, 2012). Statistics further supports this notion, explaining CYP receiving pupil premium are four times more

likely to be excluded (Stanforth & Rose, 2020) with CYP receiving FSM accounting for nearly half of the exclusions in the examined sample (No More Exclusions, 2021). However, there was a mixed response across the viewpoints in regard to whether CYP at risk of exclusion disproportionately live-in poverty (item 18), PV 1a had the strongest agreement (+3) and MV 1 had the lowest ranking (-3). Further supporting this, is the disagreement across five viewpoints (MV 1, 1a; PV 1, 1a, 1b) that mainstream schools which have lower exclusion rates tend to serve less diverse, socially and/or economically deprived or complex communities (item 58). These viewpoints, however, seem to conflict with pre-existing research and statistics that would argue those living in poverty or from a low socio-economic status (SES) are disproportionately excluded (No More Exclusions, 2021).

### *5.4.5 SEND*

Research again highlights the disproportionate rates of CYP experiencing SEND who are PEx (Department for Education, 2019b; No More Exclusions, 2021; Stanforth & Rose, 2020), despite CYP with SEND representing a minority within English schools, they account for nearly half of all exclusions (Caslin, 2021; Cole et al., 2019; Thompson et al., 2021). Research suggests those who have been excluded are likely to be identified as having potentially unsupported SEND (Department for Education, 2019b; Gillies & Robinson, 2012; Murphy, 2022; Thompson et al., 2021), with other studies raising discussions as to whether EBD/SEMH was SEND, presenting the biggest challenge to school systems (Pirrie & Macleod, 2009). There were five viewpoints who disagreed persistent challenging behaviour was SEND (item 34), with the majority of the ranking the statement at -6 or -5. It was the nuanced PV 1b which had only a single loading that ranked the statement +6 sharing in their post Q-sort *"I believe that special needs is anyone who struggles with learning in anyway. Spectrum"* (Participant NB008), demonstrating that although all of the shared viewpoints disagreed it was SEND, there are individuals who may not subscribe to this viewpoint. Despite this all of the viewpoints agree somewhat that a child's presenting behaviour is a form of communication, which

may indicate they have an unmet need (item 7), PV 1a ranked this the highest (+5). This suggests that persistent challenging behaviour is not viewed as a form of SEND, but it is seen as communicating unmet need, which sounds contradictory, but the "unmet need" may not be educational in nature, it could relate to basic needs i.e., hunger, safety, housing, etc., (Maslow & Frager, 1987).

### *5.4.6 Dynamic systems*

In the literature review chapter, I outlined the English education context confliction between integration and inclusive practice as well as "within-child" narratives and adaptations in the school environment, which could act as a barrier to achieving inclusive schools (Caslin, 2021; Parker & Levinson, 2018). Further research implied not only a tension between these dynamic systems but at times a misunderstanding of what SEMH is and how to appropriately support CYP experiencing these difficulties (McKenna et al., 2019), with the use of within-child labels often reinforcing the narrative that the child needs to adapt (Caslin, 2021). Statements relating to these concepts were included in the Q-set, with five of the viewpoints disagreeing that the biggest barriers to the inclusion of CYP who experience SEMH difficulties relate to 'within-child' factors such as motivation and disaffection (item 5) (MV 1, 1a, 1b; PV 1, 1b). Whilst there were mixed viewpoints in relation to a "one size fits all" approach to inclusion (item 13), where individual cases and contexts needed to be considered, PV 1 agreed most with a +6 ranking, whilst MV 1b had the lowest ranking at -4. There were also mixed viewpoints in relation to whether external factors were the most significant in placing CYP at risk of PEx (item 47), with PV 1b ranking the highest (+4), whilst PV 1 and MV 1 ranked the lowest (-2). This would indicate that, there is at times, conflicting interactions between these dynamic systems, with a recognition that barriers to inclusion is not solely blamed on "within-child" factors but nor can it be attributed fully to either external factors or

factors relating to the school system. These likely influences the English educational context influencing the viewpoints, emphasising the dynamic systems relevant to this area.

### *5.4.7 Conclusions of links to pre-existing literature*

The findings of this research both contribute to pre-existing literature whilst also providing alternative arguments. School staff across two different educational provisions agreed exclusions have a place within school policy and do serve a purpose, in their view for wellbeing and safety of all CYP. There is a recognition of systemic factors that hinder and support inclusive practice within mainstream settings, as well as a drive for shifts in ethos through the uptake of relational and holistic approaches and supports. However, there were arguably still some alignments with integration, rather than inclusion, through mixed responses as to whether a "one size fits all" approach is appropriate and the influence of external factors on CYP at risk of PEx.

Furthermore, the most surprising viewpoint to emerge, for myself as the researcher, was that persistent challenging behaviour was not viewed as SEND, despite research indicating a nearly half of all CYP excluded were formally identified as experiencing SEND that is likely unmet/ unsupported. Pre-existing literature does suggest that SEMH needs are conflated by the position of 'behavioural' rather than 'emotional' difficulties which could potentially partly account for this viewpoint. Despite this, there was the perspective that behaviour communicates unmet need which I suggested may indicate basic needs (Maslow & Frager, 1987), providing a link to exclusions in relation to poverty/SES and parenting. Viewpoints were mixed in relation to poverty/SES, despite again statistics demonstrating disproportionate representation, whilst parental involvement was valued but not seen as the only recourse to support. I judged this to link to the research that suggested school staff believe poor behaviour to be as a result of poor parenting, this is relevant because low SES parents have been portrayed for a long time as lacking in parenting skills (Cooper, 2021) which in turn could be linked to the notion that viewpoints imply it is basic needs that are

unmet not SEND. These viewpoints have provided insight into what factors both support and hinder inclusion and inclusive practice within English secondary school settings, whilst also providing questions that are relevant to implications for practice and future research, this is discussed later in this chapter.

## 5.5 Strengths and limitations of the research

Further to the four aspects of trustworthiness (Guba, 1981) outlined in the methodology chapter which related to truth value, applicability, consistency and neutrality. These four areas can be applied to Lincoln and Guba (1985) who outlined the qualitative alternatives to the traditional validity, reliability, generalisability, and objectivity (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). In their place Lincoln and Guba (1985) identified credibility/validity (trust value), dependability/reliability (consistency), transferability/generalisability (applicability), confirmability/objectivity (neutrality) (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). This section discusses the strengths and limitations of this research based on the four areas outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

### *5.5.1 Credibility*

Credibility (truth value) relates to whether the research is exploring what it set out to explore (Guba, 1981). Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested using strategies such as peer debriefing and triangulation to ensure credibility of the research. These methods were utilised in the present research. The concourse generation, which led to the Q-set, used triangulation. It was generated by multiple sources including pre-existing literature, news/media articles, my own professional experience as a practitioner within the area, and questionnaire data sent to professionals who work alongside CYP at risk or have been PEx. In addition to this, the Q-set was reviewed by two independent researchers (peer debriefing) as well as my university supervisor to check for appropriateness, ambiguity, and repetition. The feedback received was used to finalise the Q-set. Peer debriefing was also used during the data analysis, where an independent researcher was asked to check at which point the

slope changes in the scree tests indicating the number of factors to extract. The utilisation of these methods increases the credibility of the research.

However, some of statements had double meaning and negatives which could obscure participant interpretation and in turn makes it difficult for the researcher to interpret meaning (Watts & Stenner, 2012). For example, item 59 “inclusion of children and young people with SEMH difficulties is a valid ideal, but often unrealistic in mainstream schools”, if a participant were to disagree with this it could pose the question as to whether they are disagreeing with the whole statement or only part of it. This can reduce the credibility of the research. On the contrary, there were very few statements that contained double meanings/negatives and the ranking of the statements that did contain this were coincided with statements of similar meaning. In addition, despite the research account having made the link between SEMH and risk of PEx using literature, this does not necessarily mean the research participants shared the same view. As the Q-set contained statements relating to both SEMH and PEx this could have obscured participants full ability to interact with the Q-sort. Future research may wish to establish this link more succinctly with participants and/or exploring how participants construe SEMH and PEx before constructing the Q-set.

Furthermore, two of the PRU participants had not recorded their final Q-sort accurately resulting in the loss of their data, whilst one of the participants appeared to not have fully understood how complete the activity, as presented in their post Q-sort questionnaire (Participant NB002). This may have been down to the nature of completing the activity in a large group; participants may not have been comfortable enough to notify they had not understood the instructions correctly, which potentially obscures results and credibility of the findings. The larger group also meant I as the researcher was not able to provide as much and attention to each participant, to ensure they had understood the instructions fully, as I was for smaller group and/or individuals.

The issues identified above may also have been counteracted using the pilot. It was highlighted in the methodology section of this volume that the Q-set was reviewed by two independent researchers, but lay persons were not asked to pilot the methods prior to data collection, which is suggested as an efficient way to ensure the clarity and conciseness in the Q-set. I judged the independent researcher's feedback as sufficient enough to ensure clarity and conciseness (Watts & Stenner, 2012) but on reflection piloting the methods may have identified some of the difficulties mentioned above. It could have allowed me to understand what the optimal number of participants to work with was, understand what may be queried when completing the Q-sort, although there were opportunities within the sessions, and potentially identify any statements with double meanings that the independent researchers missed. It could also potentially have ensured no participants data was lost as a result of recording error.

### *5.5.2 Transferability and dependability*

Transferability (applicability) relates to whether the findings would be present if the research was repeated elsewhere, and dependability (consistency) relates to whether findings being trustworthy and consistent if repeated in another context. The purpose of Q-methodology is not to generalise viewpoints or to seek reliability, it is very clear that viewpoints are only representative of the participant group you are studying (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Nonetheless, Brown (1980) argued there are finite number of viewpoints attributed to a single topic area (Frater, 2021), meaning these findings provide an insight of the viewpoints that can be found in the topic area of PEx. This insight provides a foundation to work upon with the use of quantitative research designs (Frater, 2021; Webler et al., 2009).

The sample size of the research does reduce the transferability of the findings. Although Q-methodology explicitly states there is no minimum participant size, there are recommendations for an optimal sample size which were not reached within the research (Watts & Stenner, 2012). The

sample sizes were quite small, 10 participants across four schools in the mainstream group and 7 participants across one school in the PRU group. There were approximately 20 secondary mainstream schools in the area this research was conducted in if a member of staff from every school would have participated the viewpoints may have changed or loadings may have been different. This has implications for the interpretation of the viewpoints. In the current study, one single viewpoint was uncovered with two additional nuances of that single viewpoint for each dataset. It is plausible to suggest if a larger sample size was obtained, these nuances would be individual and distinct viewpoints in their own right, I judged from the results of this research that the nuances were suggestive of emerging distinct viewpoints which may have developed further with a larger sample.

In addition to this, most of the participants from the PRU were teaching assistants (TAs), whereas most from the mainstream identified as 'other', which typically related to a role that was in addition to being a qualified teacher, again if more teachers were represented in the PRU sample and TAs in the mainstream, results may have differed. This all has implications for both the transferability and dependability of this research. Another area of dispute is that the sample was not representative of race and cultures or genders, relative to the group of children PEx impacts, with most of the participants being women and from a white British background and most CYP who are PEx being male and from an ethnic minority. If the research was repeated with a more representative sample of the PEx population, again viewpoints may have changed.

### *5.5.3 Confirmability*

Confirmability (neutrality) relates to whether research is free from bias, including researcher bias. I had articulated my own professional and personal motivations in the first section of this volume, and it was clear I had my own viewpoints surrounding this topic area before I begun this exploratory study, depicting an element of subjectivity. However, to offset this I utilised

triangulation of data and debriefing, as outlined in the credibility section of this chapter, detailing how steps were taken to ensure data was being interpreted without the influence of researcher bias, as far as possible. In addition to this, Q-methodology involves a statistical element that ensures an element of confirmability/validity, factors are generated based on statistical tests which are objectively measured. On the contrary, Q-methodology is a subjective approach, which explores subjective viewpoints of the participant group, this involves the researcher to apply their own subjective meaning during the factor interpretation process (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Again, emphasising the notion that objectivity is not the true purpose of Q-methodology (Watts & Stenner, 2012).

Despite some of the limitations to this research there have been a number of steps taken to ensure the research has been conducted rigorously and that steps were taken to ensure that analysis and results were free from researcher bias.

### 5.6 Implications

The findings of this research hold significant implications for EPs, LAs, school staff and policy makers who are responsible for incorporating inclusion and inclusive practice. The viewpoints and their nuances indicated that inclusion holds a spectrum of perspectives, with value applied to a variety of factors, as well as recognition of differing factors that can hinder and support inclusive practice within mainstream schools.

The findings highlight the differing perspectives held by school staff working in two types of educational provision, as well as demonstrating some elements of consensus amongst these viewpoints, e.g., value of exclusion in behaviour policy and consistent challenging behaviour as not a form of SEND. This ties in directly with research that suggested the concept of inclusion was not consulted with or developed by schools or teaching staff, leaving little choice to implement

inclusion regardless of their own personal views and access to resources (Gidlund, 2018), I believe the breadth of viewpoints demonstrates this point. The findings emphasise the need to explore further what viewpoints all of those within the school community hold towards inclusion and PEx, including both school staff and parents. Essentially, there should be recognition of this spectrum of viewpoints, paired with 'listening' to the viewpoints of those who are directly responsible for implementing inclusive practice. Without this, inclusion may not be achieved with the fullest intent, as previous research suggested changing legislation means nothing unless attitudes and ethos are changed too (Visser & Stokes, 2003).

### *5.6.1 Implications for mainstream schools, PRUs and alternative provisions*

School systems should also recognise the diversity in viewpoints across their school staff before beginning to implement changes. It is important to a school system that all are onboard with any suggested changes to practice, as evidenced through organisational cultural models (Fullan, 2020; Schein & Schein, 2016), therefore consideration should be given to explore viewpoints across individual systems, allowing school staff to express and have their opinion listened to. It is suggested from the findings that the encouragement of inclusive practice should be led and modelled by senior leadership, ensuring school staff have the adequate support and supervision to implement suggested changes. The findings also indicated the value of continued engagement with CPD sessions relating to inclusion, exclusion, SEMH difficulties and relative approaches e.g., relational, and person-centred, to ensure continued development of their knowledge and skillset. When considering exclusions and their behaviour policy, it is clear from the findings that staff feel there is a place for exclusions within school systems, but it is suggested these policies should take more of a relational and empathic stance rather than punitive, which has been evidenced as supporting inclusive practice (Cole et al., 2019; McCluskey et al., 2019).

When working with CYP who are at risk of PEx, the findings of this research indicated school systems should encourage collaboratively working within their school community; encouraging parental engagement, attempting to problem solve if there is conflict, seeking support from external agencies to prevent the PEx from taking place and to allow for a more holistic understanding of what is occurring with the CYP, which are factors which are consistent with the literature as supporting inclusive practice (Cole et al., 2019; Department for Education, 2019b; Greer, 2020; McCluskey et al., 2019; Murphy, 2022). It would be beneficial for a planned and targeted support plan to be in place that has input from school staff, parents, and external professionals through co-construction, which covers support for all contexts including school, home, and the wider community. The viewpoints indicated the importance that CYP have the opportunity to both express their wishes and aspirations and the opportunity to input somewhat into decision-making processes that have direct implications for their support.

### *5.6.2 Implications for policy development*

The findings of this research have significant implications for both LA and government policy. Previous research indicated that the English educational context provides conflicting guidance, exacerbating tensions within the dynamic systems within the area of PEx, I would argue the diversity of the viewpoints produced would reflect this sentiment. Previous research suggests to be inclusive there is a need to move towards the recognition it is school systems that need to adapt not the child, and both LA and government policy must reflect this (Barrett et al., 2015; Caslin, 2021; McCluskey et al., 2019). Guidance relating to behaviour and discipline in school needs to be balanced between a behavioural and relational approach, moving away from a punitive ethos, "it is time to understand a little more, and condemn a little less" (Arnold et al., 2009, p. 46), similar to the policies adopted within the Scottish context, where rates of PEx are far lower (Cole et al., 2019; McCluskey et al., 2019). If LA and government policy aligned with what is posited in the

Salamanca statement (UNESCO, 1994) with recognition to the rights of the child (UNCRC, 1990), may result in more inclusive practice (Ainscow et al., 2019).

Furthermore, definitions of inclusion, SEND, and SEMH needs to be operationalised with a clear definition that is co-constructed with those who are involved in the educational system, with a recognition that there is likely to be a wide variety of viewpoints. Findings from this research suggest some contradictions through the viewpoints and nuances produced, indicating interpretation of these terms may confused and/or contradictory. Guidance as to what constitutes of the SEND category of SEMH needs and how this is differentiated from persistently challenging behaviour. The findings would indicate the need for clear processes of support to be identified, with professional bodies who can provide support for CYP experiencing these difficulties clearly recognised. This would be supportive in avoiding "pass the parcel" style support, where agencies refer children and families on as they do not feel the referral is appropriate, this provides further instability for children which in turn can lead to further difficulties with their SEMH needs (Arnold et al., 2009).

### *5.6.3 Implications for EP practice*

These findings have implications for how EPs work more effectively with school staff in mainstream and PRU settings to encourage inclusion and inclusive practice in order to reduce PEx rates. A significant finding of this research is that viewpoints differ both within and between the educational provisions, this is something EPs should consider when engaging with secondary school provisions. The findings would indicate there needs to be a recognition that not all school staff hold the same value to differing aspects of working. This recognition is important because it allows EPs to begin conversations with schools that they are working with, encouraging them to express their perception of inclusive practice of CYP experiencing SEMH needs and/or at risk of PEx before attempting to evoke change.

The EP role relates to consultation and intervention using psychological research, as well as supporting staff development (BPS, n.d.). Combined with the knowledge of these varying viewpoints, EPs can use their specialised skillset to provide mediation (Yates & Hulusi, 2018), supporting school staff to explore their beliefs of inclusion and PEx through co-construction of what inclusion is and what inclusion can look like within their setting, through the use of consultation and emotional containment, which are factors viewed as supporting inclusion elsewhere in the UK (McCluskey et al., 2019). EPs can give consideration to the findings which placed importance on whole school ethos for inclusion, use of relational and person-centred approaches, the need for exclusions to form part of a behaviour policy, challenging behaviour not being perceived as SEND but indicative of unmet need, and parental involvement for CYP at risk of PEx, by providing the following support:

- As evidenced as supportive elsewhere in the UK (Caslin, 2021; McCluskey et al., 2019), EPs can encourage the use of collaborative person-centred and strengths-based approaches such as, but not limited to, 'planning alternative tomorrows with hope' (PATHs), 'making action plans' (MAPs), the SCERTS (social communication, emotional regulation, and transactional supports), appreciative inquiry, multi-element support plans (MESPs), motivational interviewing, etc.
- Findings would suggest offering the facilitation of supervision, peer supervision or coaching sessions to both senior leadership and school staff could be supportive where appropriate, as evidenced by the consistently high ranking of item 30.
- As identified through the research, there are differing views and nuances within these viewpoints, so action research exploring viewpoints of inclusive practice and PEx within school settings, so that support can be tailored towards those specific viewpoints as well as consulting the "people with the problem" (Fullan, 2020)

- Drawing upon community psychology principles and encouraging collaborative working across the school community, including both school staff and parents which both appeared to be valued in the viewpoints as well as previous research indicating its importance (Orford, 1992; Runswick-Cole, 2008).
- Drawing upon systems theory to explore the differing viewpoints between school staff and parents to support potentially conflicting discourse in order to generate collaborative action plans and foster positive and productive relationships
- Supporting school systems to create inclusive behavioural policies that draws on relational and empathetic approaches that safeguard both children and staff, whilst encouraging wellbeing and resiliency. This has been evidenced as being effective elsewhere in the UK (Cole et al., 2019; Duffy et al., 2021; Greer, 2020; McCluskey et al., 2019), whilst also acknowledging viewpoints found in this research.
- Advocating for the rights of the child and their best interest, drawing on psychological research relating to child participation and legislation that directly references the rights of the child. Previous research supports the need for this to be present (Atkinson & Rowley, 2019; de Leeuw et al., 2019; McCluskey et al., 2015; Murphy, 2022), whilst the findings of this current research highlight the appropriateness of considering pupil views and perspectives.

These recommendations are similar to those that are set out in the BPS' position paper (BPS, 2022). EPs work with a range of school settings, external professionals, parents, and the wider community building and forming relationships so are well placed to unpick and bridge potentially conflicting discourses between these systems whilst in keeping with the advocation of the child. The findings of this research are extremely important, particularly focusing upon consensus viewpoints, to the EP profession if we are to reduce exclusions and improve inclusion.

### *5.6.4 Implications for future research*

Despite the merits of this research, which have already been outlined, there are still implications for future research. Firstly, I would recommend this research being repeated across a larger sample size, covering a wider sample of both mainstream and PRU provisions as well as a greater diversity in terms of ethnicity and gender representation. It would also be more beneficial for the research to be conducted on a one-to-one basis or small groups of no more than five, facilitation of a group of nine participants, although saved time, did result in two participants incorrectly recording their final sorts and potentially one participant not being clear on what they had to do. Replication of the research could also utilise a pilot study, to identify any potential issues prior to the formal data collection stage.

The use of second-order factor analysis may be useful to be completed, with the viewpoints produced from both the PRU and mainstream dataset, on the current study's findings in addition to the qualitative comparison to verify the consensus views that were drawn from this research. A step beyond the Q-methodological research would be to present shared viewpoint back to the original participant group and providing them an opportunity to explore and understand the viewpoints and then begin to suggest solutions or actions to encourage inclusive practice within their individual settings, keeping in line with an organisational culture approach. In terms of taking the research area forward, it would be beneficial for parents, external professionals, and primary mainstream and PRU provisions to complete the Q-sort using this Q-set. Shared viewpoints produced from this group could then be used for second-order factor analysis to explore potential viewpoints across all groups. It may also be of interest to explore in another Q-set how those in the school community, including parents, perceive the link between SEMH needs and CYP at risk of PEx.

# 6 Conclusions

The research set out to identify what views mainstream and PRU school staff held on the concept of inclusion and inclusive practice of CYP at risk of PEx, whilst identifying what supported and hindered inclusive practice within mainstream settings. The research addressed all three of these research questions through the generation of a one-factor solution with two additional manifestations of these viewpoints across the two groups. Viewpoints generally believed inclusion was possible but was influenced by a variety of factors relating to systemic factors e.g., whole school ethos, relational approaches, parental engagement etc. Consistently, viewpoints believe exclusions served a purpose directly and indirectly for CYP experiencing SEMH difficulties and had a place within behaviour policy, whilst persistent challenging behaviour was not perceived as always indicative of SEND and that those at risk of exclusion were not always from a low SES background or living in poverty. The research has produced a range of unique perspectives held by mainstream and PRU school staff working in the English context.

The implications for professionals, school staff, LA and Government have been discussed in detail, with a keen focus of first exploring individual school systems viewpoints on this subject matter. There are a number of recommendations that these groups can consider which could lead to greater inclusive practice, aligning more with the concept of inclusion not integration, with a focus on moving away from a punitive ethos in line with what these viewpoints implied were important and of value. I judged the overarching message from this research is how entrenched exclusionary practice is within school systems, which is unsurprising as it is a practice featured throughout history as evidenced in the introduction. This emphasises the need for tighter policies and definitions of both inclusion, exclusion and SEMH that are co-constructed with key stakeholders involved in the process of inclusion, if the aim is to begin to move away from the use of exclusion.

Q-methodology enabled this research to address the research questions posed and produced several shared viewpoints regarding a potentially controversial topic area. There are a number of strengths attributed to this research study as well as limitations relating to diversity, sample size, lack of piloting, and representation that should be addressed in any further research in this area. The research has provided a foundation for research into this area, with the desire that real sustainable change can occur within the English educational context and in turn produce better life outcomes for the CYP at risk of PEx.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A – Information sheet provided to prospective participants.

**Information Sheet for Teachers in Mainstream Schools and PRUs**

**Overview of the planned research:**

As part of my postgraduate professional training as an educational psychologist, and my studies toward the degree and professional qualification of App Ed and Child Psy D at the University of Birmingham, I am required to complete a substantive research study which will be contribute toward my research thesis.

The research will be undertaken in Wolverhampton where, since February 2020, as part of my university training course, I have been undertaking an extended supervised practice placement with the educational psychology service, which will continue until the end of the Summer term of 2022. I am committed toward ensuring that my research will be of practical relevance to the local authority and to staff who work in Wolverhampton schools and other educational setting.

I hope you may be willing to participate in this research project, which aims to elicit a diverse range of teachers' experiences of and beliefs about and inclusion and inclusive practices for children and young people (CYP) who become excluded from mainstream schools. More specifically, I wish to engage education staff who have, since September 2019, worked closely with at least one student who has been excluded from a mainstream school in Wolverhampton, and been offered a place in one of the city's Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) following their exclusion.

The research seeks to elicit the views of both staff who work in the city's Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and staff from mainstream schools from, who have worked closely with one or more student* who has been excluded and subsequently placed in one of the city's PRUs over the last two years.

The research will comprise two sequential stages:

**Phase 1**: individual interviews with teaching staff from mainstream schools and PRUs, who have worked closely with (an) excluded student(s) since September 2019. These interviews will be structured through Q-methodology, which is briefly outlined overleaf; and

**Phase 2**: a single, of several group interviews, each comprising 6-8 of the Phase 1 participants from different schools and PRUs, where the outcomes of the analysis of Phase 1 findings are reviewed and participants endeavour to agree desirable action steps through which better to support students such as these and make best use of the expertise and resources available within the city.

**Please note, the research interviews will <u>not</u> focus on particular students, but upon teachers' more general perceptions and experiences of those students who are judged unable to manage the demands of mainstream school life and so are at high risk of, and / or experience exclusion and transfer to a PRU as a next step.*
*I recognise, of course, that these perception and experiences will be grounded in work with particular students, and have no intention of trying to silence colleagues who make illustrative reference to individuals and / or their life circumstances. However, I will not plan, nor have will I have sought the consent of students or their carers to make inquiries about these students; where reference is made to specific individuals during the research, therefore, I will ask colleagues to try not to use their names and, should they inadvertently do so, I will delete all records of the student's name and substitute a pseudonym in the interview transcript.*

**Phase 1: Q-methodology**

The research has begun with a comprehensive review of a wide range of relevant publications, including academic literature and professional and policy documents. I have harnessed this reading to abstract a number of key themes relevant to the area of study, such as: inclusive special education; the particular needs of students who experience and express significant social, emotional and / or mental health difficulties; the methods, skills and resources necessary to address such needs and enable such CYP to progress in their education and development; principal threats to inclusion; beneficial and adverse consequence of exclusion and / or alternative educational placements.

From identified themes, theoretical propositions are generated to form a bank of statements giving differing subjective perspectives on each theme.

These statements will then be harnessed in a 'Q-sort' activity in Phase 1 of the research, which, as noted above, will comprise a number of individual research interviews with mainstream and PRU staff with direct experience of working closely with permanently excluded students (and in the case of mainstream school staff), of liaison with PRUs, since September 2019.

Each research interview will last approximately 45 minutes, in which each participant is asked to:

- indicate whether s/he agrees or disagrees with each of the donated statements; and then
- rank the statements to indicate the relative strength of her/his agreement or disagreement with each.

Each participant's clustering and ranking of the set of statements can then be subjected to analysis using a published software programme, from which patterns within each participant's responses, patterns within a group of staff responses (e.g. mainstream staff cf. PRU staff; mainstream secondary cf. mainstream primary school staff) can be adduced. These need to be presented as propositions or suggestions of how things might look, rather than as hard facts! Q-Method software (Stephenson, 1953); produced viewpoints fed back to participant group; focus group for action plan moving forward; focus group data analysed using thematic analysis; research write up for Volume 1 of the thesis, see flow chart below.

**Phase 2: Presentation and Discussion of Phase 1 Findings and Joint Action-Planning**

Here, Phase 1 participants will be invited to take part in one of the Phase 2 data-processing, discussion and planning meetings. Each group will, ideally comprise from 6-8 participants. Phase 1 participants would be wholly free to decline to participate in Phase 2, with no requirement to explain why they so preferred.

Each Phase 2 group meeting with last for no more than 90 minutes.

**Reporting the Phase 1 and Phase 2 findings**

A short report will be made available to all participating staff and, for information, to their head teacher and to the executive head teacher of the Wolverhampton PRUs.

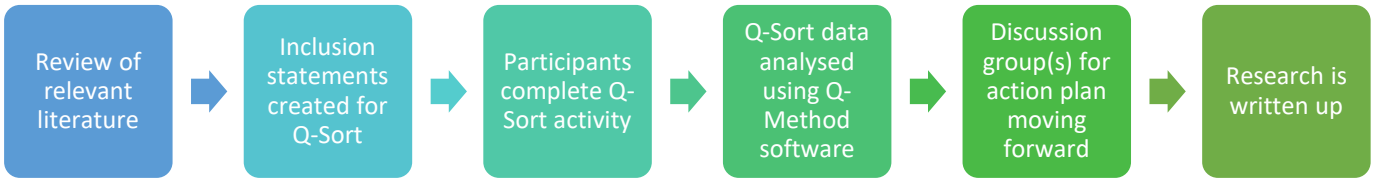
By June 2022, the research will be written more fully to form Volume 1 of my research thesis for the University of Birmingham. Following examination of the thesis in July or August of 2022 and

my completion of any corrections required, the thesis will be made publicly accessible in the University's on-line research repository.

I am likely to be asked to give a presentation of the research process and findings to the city educational psychology service, and may also present the study in relevant professional conferences.

In the thesis and in any communications outside Wolverhampton, the city will not be named and will not be identifiable from information given. Similarly, schools will not be named or identifiable.

**Overview of the Research Process:**




**Your involvement in the project**

Timing:
The research will take place during the Summer and Autumn Terms of 2021.

I recognise the sustained, additional pressures under which schools, PRUs and their teachers have been working since the early days of the Covid-19 pandemic in early March 2020, and that this additional pressure is far more likely to grow than to dissipate over the coming months.

In endeavours to minimise additional pressures associated with participation in this research, I will schedule both the Phase 1 individual interviews and the Phase 2 group meetings flexibly, at times least inconvenient for participating staff. I will ensure that meetings begin and end punctually. Should participants prefer to participate using remote media than to meet face-to-face, this will be accommodated though the Zoom or Microsoft Teams interface.

Ethical Research Practices and Safeguards:

- Consent:

Participation in this research is wholly optional. I will confirm with you and other participants that you are indeed willing to contribute at each stage of the study and that you consent to the recording of the research interview(s), and will ask you to confirm your agreement with your dated signature.

- Declining or withdrawal of consent:

You can withdraw from this research at any point of the **Phase 1** process, simply by advising me of this wish in person, by 'phone or be email, with no obligation to explain your decision.

However once the integrated (multi-participant) Q-sort analysis has begun, it will not longer be feasible for your data to be withdrawn. Your wish for your Phase 1 data to be deleted and excluded from the analysis would therefore have to be received by me within 10 working days of your Phase 1 research interview.

As noted above, you are free to decline to join **Phase 2** of the study.
You would be free to leave the discussion group of which you were a member at any time in the course of the meeting without offering an explanation for this. However, your contributions to the discussion could not then be deleted from the audio-recording or transcription, since it is not possible reliably to identify which participant said what, and also because the sense of the discussion thread may be eroded by selective omission.

- Confidentiality:
  No identifying details of participants will be stored.
  The full confidentiality of all research data will be afforded priority, ensuring that no school, PRU, participant or person about whom s/he speaks could be identified from any record or communication stems from the research project.

  However, it must be noted that, as is always the case in our workplace, confidentiality may need to be waived in circumstances in which there are grounds for concern that any person may be at risk of harm, in which case, local authority safeguarding requirements necessarily take precedence.

- Management of Risk – Including Continuing Adherence to Local Authority Safeguarding Responsibilities:

- Curation and Deletion of Research Data:

Project implementation and reporting are subject to the ethical standards of the British Psychological Society and British Educational Research Association. Care to ensure data security and confidentiality is assured through my full adherence to the core standards of both organisations, and also by the University of Birmingham, alongside Wolverhampton City Council's responsibilities to ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

At all stages of the research, data are stored securely on password-protected, encrypted software from which it is transferred at the first opportunity to the University of Birmingham's secure, electronic data storage facility, at which point earlier copies saved on my personal lap-top or recording devices are deleted.

University of Birmingham regulations governing postgraduate research require that raw data are retained for ten years within the University's secure data storage facility, following which data are promptly deleted.

- Confirmation of Participant Rights:

During all the aspects of this research you have the following rights:

  - Your responses will be anonymised, and your contributions will be kept confidential. You will be assigned a numerical ID code for both the Phase 1 Q-sort activity and the Phase 2 group discussion and planning meeting; the code will be used to identify and store your contributions, making them unidentifiable. Only I, as the researcher will have access to these forms and be able to ascertain which response set was derived from which participant.

- Your anonymised responses will be harnessed in the reporting of the research findings to other participants, and in the communication of findings within the local authority, as well as their inclusion in the write-up of my university research thesis. I may later write the research for submission to a professional journal and / or for presentation at professional conferences. In all such publications, all individual responses, participating schools and PRUs will remain unidentifiable, (as will the specific local authority, other than for communications within Wolverhampton)**.**
- You have the right to withdraw from this research at a number of junctures, and/or for your Phase 1 data to be deleted if you notify me within two weeks of the interview, as summarised above.
- A debrief regarding the outcomes of the research project and / or impact of participation can be offered if requested.

- <u>COVID-19 Restrictions:</u>
  - The research can be completed through remote means should COVID- 19 restrictions still remain in place, preventing individuals meeting face-to-face. Both phases can be accommodated via Microsoft Teams and Zoom platforms.
  - If restrictions are lifted enabling face to face practice, participants will be given the option to complete Phase 1 of the research through either face to face or remote means. If restrictions are lifted and face-to-face contact permitted Phase 2 will be completed via face-to-face methods.
  - Participants will have the opportunity to indicate their preference for Phase 1 on the consent form.
  - Confidentiality will be maintained through either face-to-face or remote methods (i.e., Zoom/ Microsoft Teams platforms).

Findings from this research project may be used to help inform developments to local authority and / or school policy and practice.

The experiences, views and beliefs of experienced staff form a rich vein for learning, and from which to develop practice in Wolverhampton.

Your agreement to participate in this research project would be greatly valued.

If you are indeed willing to participate, could I ask you to complete and return the consent slip overleaf?

If you have any further questions relating to the research, do please contact me or my university research supervisor, Sue Morris.

In conclusion, can I offer my thanks for your interest in and assistance with this project.

Paige Garbett (Trainee Educational Psychologist)

Sue Morris, University of Birmingham

## Appendix B – Consent form for participants

Name:

Name of School / Pupil Referral Unit:

Preferred email contact:

1. I have read and understood the information sheet.
2. I understand that the data produced will contribute to Paige Garbett's research for the University of Birmingham and that the research will be written and submitted as her thesis.
3. I understand that the research findings are likely to be communicated orally and in written reports within the local authority to inform developments to policy and / or practice, and that Paige may also present the research at professional conferences and /or for publication in relevant professional journals.
4. I understand what is required of me during each of the two main phases of the research
5. I know that my participation is wholly voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the study should I chose, with no need to offer an explanation, nor risk of any form of reputational or other penalty.
6. I am aware that I can ask for my Phase 1 Q-sort interview responses to be deleted, provided that I contact Paige to ask this within 10 working days of my research interview. I understand that I would not be able to seek deletion of Phase 2 group interview contributions, however.
7. I have received assurances that a high standard of care will be exercised to safeguard the confidentiality of my own and other participants' contributions to this research and to ensure that neither I, nor any other participant or her/his school/workplace is identifiable.
8. I appreciate that, as is always the case within my workplace, confidentiality may need to be waived in circumstances in which there were grounds for concern that I or any other person may be at risk of harm, in which case, local authority safeguarding requirements would take precedence.
9. I have been assured that a high standard of care will be exercised to safeguard the secure storage of all research data and their deletion from the University of Birmingham's secure electronic data storage systems after ten years have elapsed.
10. I have had the opportunity to ask questions to inform my decision about participation in this study

I agree with the above statements, and I give my consent to participate in this research project. Should National and Regional COVID-19 restrictions permit face-to-face contact, my preference for completing Phase 1 of the research is the following:

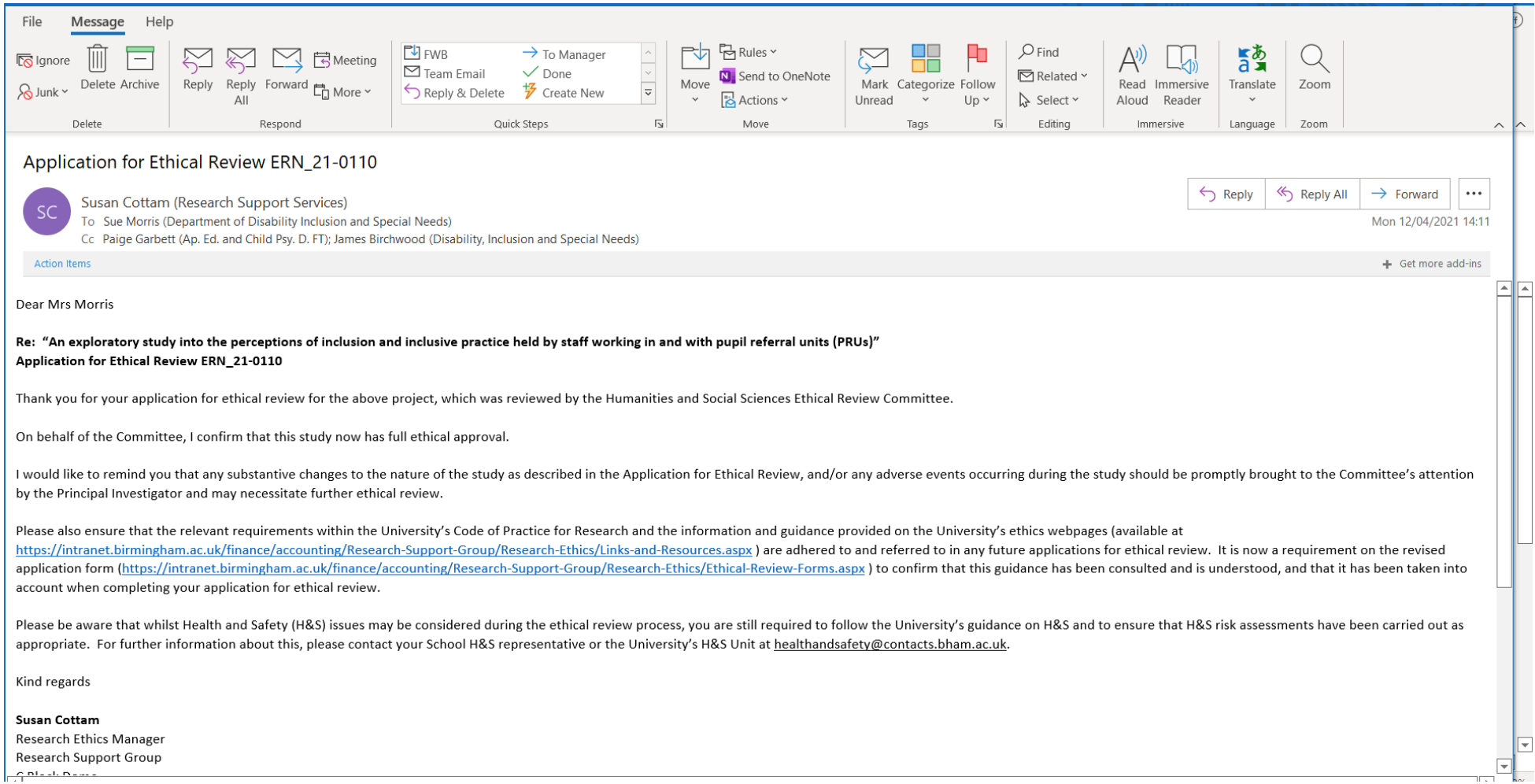
☐Face-to-face

☐Remotely

Signed: Date:

Thank you for completing this form.
Please now return it to me, Paige Garbett at [redacted] also returning a copy, for information, to your head teacher (and, if you work in a PRU, to the executive head teacher of the city's PRUs)

# Appendix C – Email correspondence confirming ethical approval



File Message Help

Ignore Junk Delete Archive | Reply Reply All Forward Meeting More | FWB Team Email Reply & Delete To Manager Done Create New | Move Rules Send to OneNote Actions | Mark Unread Categorize Follow Up | Find Related Select | Read Aloud Immersive Reader | Translate | Zoom

Delete Respond Quick Steps Move Tags Editing Immersive Language Zoom

Application for Ethical Review ERN_21-0110

SC

Susan Cottam (Research Support Services)

To Sue Morris (Department of Disability Inclusion and Special Needs)

Cc Paige Garbett (Ap. Ed. and Child Psy. D. FT); James Birchwood (Disability, Inclusion and Special Needs)

Reply Reply All Forward

Mon 12/04/2021 14:11

Action Items

Get more add-ins

Dear Mrs Morris

**Re: "An exploratory study into the perceptions of inclusion and inclusive practice held by staff working in and with pupil referral units (PRUs)"**
**Application for Ethical Review ERN_21-0110**

Thank you for your application for ethical review for the above project, which was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee.

On behalf of the Committee, I confirm that this study now has full ethical approval.

I would like to remind you that any substantive changes to the nature of the study as described in the Application for Ethical Review, and/or any adverse events occurring during the study should be promptly brought to the Committee's attention by the Principal Investigator and may necessitate further ethical review.

Please also ensure that the relevant requirements within the University's Code of Practice for Research and the information and guidance provided on the University's ethics webpages (available at https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/finance/accounting/Research-Support-Group/Research-Ethics/Links-and-Resources.aspx ) are adhered to and referred to in any future applications for ethical review. It is now a requirement on the revised application form (https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/finance/accounting/Research-Support-Group/Research-Ethics/Ethical-Review-Forms.aspx ) to confirm that this guidance has been consulted and is understood, and that it has been taken into account when completing your application for ethical review.

Please be aware that whilst Health and Safety (H&S) issues may be considered during the ethical review process, you are still required to follow the University's guidance on H&S and to ensure that H&S risk assessments have been carried out as appropriate. For further information about this, please contact your School H&S representative or the University's H&S Unit at healthandsafety@contacts.bham.ac.uk.

Kind regards

**Susan Cottam**
Research Ethics Manager
Research Support Group

## Appendix D – Ethical considerations and steps I took to address them

| Ethical Considerations | How I addressed these |
|---|---|
| Informed Consent | Freely given, informed consent was sought from all participants. Participants received an information sheet (see Appendix A) detailing the focus and purpose of the research, what is required of them, their rights during and following the research, key contacts for the research, and how the research will be written up and communicated. Participants were given my contact details and those of my research supervisor at the university, so that they were able to ask any questions prior to committing themselves to the research. Participants were asked to read and sign a consent form (see Appendix B), confirming that they had read and understood the information sheet, read and understood their rights within the research, had an opportunity to ask questions, and understood how the research findings would be harnessed and how the research would be reported and communicated in the longer term. When I met participants prior to the Q-sort-mediated interviews, I orally recapitulated the information and asked the participant orally to confirm their consent. |
| Right to withdraw | All participants were advised that participation was voluntary and that they may withdraw, without explanation of concern about the consequences of withdrawal, at any time, should they wished to do so.<br>Their right to withdraw from the research was reiterated in all written and oral communications at every stage of the research. Participants were assigned a numerical ID code at the time confirmation of their initial consent is given. Their consent forms and Q-sort interview |

| Ethical Considerations | How I addressed these |
|---|---|
| | responses were labelled with their ID code. If they communicated their wish to withdraw prior to, during or following q-sort interviews their responses could have been identified and removed, if it was received no later than two weeks following their interview. This information was made explicit in the information sheet and consent form. Staff members were able to contact me directly by phone or email, should they have wished to withdraw. |
| Confidentiality | Participant anonymity could not be offered. Instead, a numerical ID code was assigned to all participants. At the start of the q-sort individual interview, prior to completing the Q-sort interview activity, each participant was asked to complete a short autobiographical information sheet (see Appendix ), confirming her/his sex/gender, age band, ethnic self-categorisation, job role, and overall number of years' qualified teaching experience. Information sheets and consent forms were each labelled with the participant's ID code. Unless any unexpected need arose to identify any participant by name, this document linking participant identity to research ID code was used exclusively for withdrawal requests |
| Security/ Data storage/ GDPR | All data gathered from the research was stored in a password-protected folder in the UoB's blueBEAR portal, which was previously the BEAR DataShare. |

| Ethical Considerations | How I addressed these |
|---|---|
| | Hard copies of the signed and dated consent forms, participant autobiographical summaries and Q-sort responses, were scanned to pdf, and saved on my encrypted personal laptop in password-protected documents. Once hard copies have been inputted electronically, they were disposed of appropriately through secure shredding and confidential waste disposal procedures.<br>As soon as is viable, these data will be transferred for storage in a password-protected folder in the UoB's blueBEAR portal, and subsequently destroyed.<br>Information from the Q-sort activities will be stored on an online platform such as the PQMethod software PQMethod Download for Windows (schmolck.org). This software will be downloaded directly onto my password-protected laptop. I have used this software previously; it did not require identifying data to be entered. All that was required was the Q-sort statements and response pattern of each participant. The software allowed entry of each participant's numerical ID code to identify their data, allowing responses to be traced should participants have wished to withdraw within the two-week 'window' before aggregation and comparison of response profiles began. |
| Avoidance of psychological harm | As in all social research in schools during and following the changes made to accommodate the different stages of the Covid-19 pandemic, invitations to participate in the current study inevitably constituted a further demand on staff time and potential stressor.<br>This risk was moderated by: |

| Ethical Considerations | How I addressed these |
|---|---|
| | • the wholly voluntary nature of participation and reiterated opportunities for participants to decline to continue, should they so prefer;<br>• the cumulatively low overall time demands, with very high flexibility in scheduling the Q-sort interviews; and, I believe<br>• by the intrinsic interest and high professional relevance of the study content and processes. |
| Debrief | A debrief regarding the outcomes of the research project and / or impact of participation was offered if requested by participants.<br>Participants will also receive an executive summary of the research. |

## Appendix E – Questionnaire filled out by professionals working with CYP, permanently excluded or at risk of, to generate the concourse for Q-methodology

**Inclusive practice**

1. Based on your professional experience, how would you define inclusive practice for CYP with significant SEMH needs?
2. Based on your professional experience, what do you believe supports the inclusion of CYP with significant SEMH needs in mainstream settings?
3. Based on your professional experience, what do you believe hinders the inclusion of CYP with SEMH needs in mainstream settings?

**Preventing permanent exclusion**

4. Based on your professional experience, when a young person is at high / imminent risk of permanent exclusion, what actions or other factors can make the difference in preventing this?
5. Based on your professional experience, when a young person is at high / imminent risk of permanent exclusion, what are the main factors that finally tip the balance, resulting in the decision to permanently exclude?

**Reintegration**

6. Based on your professional experience, how do Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) facilitate and support the needs of young people who have been permanently excluded?
7. Based on your professional experience, what facilitates successful and sustained transition from a PRU back into a mainstream setting for a young person?
8. Based on your professional experience, what hinders a successful and sustained transition from a PRU back into a mainstream setting for a young person?

**Appendix F – Original 60 item Q-set prior to being checked by two independent researchers and the research supervisor**

1. Children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties in mainstream classes disrupt the education of other children.
2. Inclusion and inclusive practice in schools is heavily dependent on senior leadership
3. Inclusion of children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion is hindered by funding and budgets
4. Inclusion of children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion can be achieved with adequate resources and adaptations i.e., differentiated curriculum
5. The curriculum should be adapted and motivating for children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties
6. The curriculum should have a focus on social and emotional wellbeing as well as academia
7. A child's presenting behaviour is a form of communication, typically indicating they have an unmet need
8. Training and CPD opportunities, particularly relating to trauma, attachment, and nurture, are important in meeting the needs of child and young people who experience SEMH difficulties
9. Children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties need access to nurturing key adult, particularly those at risk of permanent exclusion or who have already been permanently excluded
10. Government targets and pressure make inclusive practice of children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties difficult
11. External influences such as peers, crime and gangs can prevent the inclusion of children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties
12. Parental engagement and support are crucial for the inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties, particularly those at risk of permanent exclusion
13. There cannot be a "one size fits all" approach to inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties, individual cases and contexts need to be considered
14. It is important that the child and young person participates in any decision-making processes, particularly when relating to support they need
15. The biggest barriers to the inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties relate to within child factors such as motivation and disaffection
16. Positive relationships between adults and children that are consistent can prevent children and young people from being permanently excluded
17. Children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties need more targeted support relating to their emotions, emotional regulation, and social interaction
18. Children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion tend to live in poverty
19. Time constraints and availability tend to hinder teaching staffs' ability to include children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties

20. Clear open communication between all stakeholders, i.e., child, parent, school staff, external professionals, etc., supports inclusion and inclusion practice for children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties
21. In order to support the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties, teaching staff must have a good understanding of what the child may be experiencing
22. For inclusion to work it must be a whole school approach where everyone within the school community, including SLT, subscribe to the inclusive ethos
23. The support from external and specialist services, such as educational psychologists, inclusion team, social workers, etc., are important to support inclusion within mainstream settings
24. Inclusion and inclusive practice of children and young at risk of permanent exclusion depends on school staff wellbeing and capacity
25. School staff need specialist training, knowledge, and skills to meet the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties
26. School policies, particularly behaviour policies, should be inclusive and reflect the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties
27. Collaborative working across all stakeholders, i.e., child, parent, school staff, external professionals, is the key to inclusion working in mainstream schools
28. It is difficult for mainstream schools to meet the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties
29. Positive peer relationships within school can support the inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties
30. Inclusion fails when school staff feel unsupported or are not given adequate support and supervision
31. There is little school staff can do to support children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion if parents/family are not onboard
32. A person-centred approach is the best way to support children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties
33. The curriculum isn't designed for children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties
34. A zero-tolerance approach to behaviour does not support inclusive practice in mainstream schools
35. In order for mainstream schools to be inclusive, exclusions should not form part of their behaviour policies
36. Children and young people who demonstrate consistent poor behaviour have special educational needs
37. To properly support children and young people's SEMH needs we must first fully understand what is contributing to them and then plan support accordingly
38. Exclusions do not serve a purpose for the wellbeing of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties
39. Exclusions are necessary to support the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties
40. Exclusions occur because children and young people misbehave, are unmotivated and disaffected from their learning

41. Excluding children and young people only leads them to a life of crime and/or poor outcomes
42. When a child or young person has been permanently excluded support should be around reintegration into mainstream schools and preparation for adulthood
43. When a child or young person has been permanently excluded, they should be able to return to a mainstream school not a specialist setting
44. For inclusion to be successful all children and young people will feel as though they belong within the school system
45. Pupil referral units are set up better to support the needs of children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties
46. Mainstream schools can provide opportunities for small group working and personalised curriculums to support children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties
47. Inclusion and inclusive practice of all children, including those experience SEMH difficulties, should be fundamental to pedagogic practice
48. External factors are what cause children and young people to be at risk of permanent exclusion, not the child themselves
49. Supporting the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties places immense strain and pressure on teaching staff
50. For inclusion of children and young people with SEMH difficulties to succeed it needs to be supported by Government policy
51. Children and young people are often permanently excluded because school systems are not willing to adapt to support their needs
52. Behaviourist approaches to SEMH needs are the most effective way of supporting misbehaviour in mainstream schools
53. Behaviourist approaches to SEMH needs will remain mostly ineffective without the use of relational approaches i.e., nurture, empathy, attentiveness, PACE
54. Mainstream school staff should always seek the support of external agencies, i.e., educational psychologist, inclusion, etc., for children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion
55. Following a permanent exclusion, children and young people should always be offered a fresh start in their new school setting
56. Children and young people continue to misbehave because they experience feelings of rejection and/or are often labelled as “naughty”
57. Children and young people’s voice are important and should always be considered
58. Mainstream schools who have lower exclusion rates tend to be more inclusive
59. Inclusion of children and young people with SEMH difficulties is ideal but often unrealistic in mainstream schools
60. There is not enough support, funding, and/or training for mainstream schools to practice inclusion, particularly with children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties

**Appendix G – Final 60 item Q-set after being checked by two independent researchers and the research supervisor**

1. Children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties in mainstream classes disrupt the education of other children.
2. Inclusion and inclusive practice in schools, particularly for children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion, is heavily dependent on senior leadership
3. Inclusion of children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion is hindered by funding and budgetary constraints
4. Inclusion of children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion can be achieved with adequate resources and adaptations i.e., differentiated curriculum
5. The curriculum should be adapted and motivating for children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties
6. The curriculum should have a focus on social and emotional wellbeing as well as academic knowledge and skills
7. A child's presenting behaviour is a form of communication, which may indicate they have an unmet need
8. Training and CPD opportunities, particularly relating to trauma, attachment, and nurture, are important in enabling all staff to meet the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties
9. Children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties – and particularly those at risk of permanent exclusion or who have already been permanently excluded - need access to a nurturing key adult
10. Government targets and pressure make inclusion of children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties difficult
11. Influences outside school - such as peers, crime and gangs in the community can jeopardise the inclusion of children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties
12. Parental engagement and support are crucial for the inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties, particularly those at risk of permanent exclusion
13. There cannot be a "one size fits all" approach to inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties and are at risk of exclusion: individual cases and contexts need to be considered
14. It is important that the child and young person, who are at risk of permanent exclusion, participates in decision-making processes, particularly processes relating to identifying the support they need
15. The biggest barriers to the inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties relate to 'within-child' factors such as motivation and disaffection
16. Positive, consistent relationships between adults and children can prevent children and young people from being permanently excluded
17. Children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties need more targeted support for their emotional expression and regulation, and social interaction
18. Children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion often (disproportionately, compared with other students), live in poverty

19. Clear open communication between all stakeholders, i.e., child, parent, school staff, external professionals, etc., supports inclusion and inclusive practice for children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties
20. In order to support the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties, teaching staff must have a good understanding of what the child may be experiencing
21. For inclusion to work it must be a whole school approach, where everyone within the school community, including SLT, subscribes to the inclusive ethos
22. The support from external and specialist services, such as educational psychologists, inclusion team, social workers, etc., is important to support inclusion within mainstream settings
23. Inclusion and inclusive practice of children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion depends on school staff wellbeing and capacity
24. School staff need specialist training, knowledge, and skills to meet the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties
25. School policies, particularly behaviour policies, should be inclusive and reflect the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties
26. Collaborative working across all stakeholders, i.e., child, parent, school staff, external professionals, is the key to inclusion working in mainstream schools
27. Positive peer relationships within school can support the inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties
28. Inclusion fails when school staff feel unsupported or are not given adequate support and supervision
29. There is little school staff can do to support children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion if parents/family are not onboard
30. A person-centred approach is the best way to support children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties
31. The curriculum isn't designed for children and young people who experience severe SEMH difficulties
32. A zero-tolerance approach to poor behaviour does not support inclusive practice in mainstream schools
33. In order for mainstream schools to be inclusive, exclusions should not form part of their behaviour policies
34. Children and young people whose behaviour is consistently poor have special educational needs
35. To support children's and young people's SEMH needs properly, we must first fully understand what is contributing to these needs and then plan support accordingly
36. Exclusions do not serve a constructive purpose in enhancing the wellbeing of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties
37. Exclusions are necessary to support the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties
38. Exclusions are sometimes necessary to safeguard the needs and rights of other children and young people in their teaching groups / the school.
39. Exclusions occur because children and young people misbehave, are unmotivated and disaffected from their learning
40. Excluding children and young people risks leading them to a life of crime and/or poor outcomes

41. When a child or young person has been permanently excluded support should focus on reintegration into mainstream schools and preparation for adulthood
42. When a child or young person has been permanently excluded, they should be able to return to a mainstream school, rather than transferring to a specialist setting
43. Where inclusion is successful, all children and young people feel that they belong within their school
44. Pupil referral units are set up to support the needs of children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties better than is viable in mainstream secondary schools
45. Mainstream schools can provide opportunities for small group working and personalised curricula to support children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties
46. Inclusion and inclusive practice for all children, including those experience SEMH difficulties, should be fundamental to pedagogic practice
47. External factors are the most significant in placing children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion, rather than attributes of the children themselves
48. Supporting the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties places immense strain and pressure on teaching staff
49. For inclusion of children and young people with SEMH difficulties to succeed, requires consistent support within Government policy
50. Children and young people are often permanently excluded because school systems are inflexible, with a marked reluctance to adapt to support students' needs
51. Behaviourist approaches to SEMH difficulties are the most effective way of addressing and reducing misbehaviour in mainstream schools
52. Behaviourist approaches to SEMH difficulties will remain mostly ineffective without the use of relational approaches which offer nurture, empathy, attentiveness, PACE
53. Mainstream school staff should always seek the support of external agencies, e.g. educational psychologist, inclusion, for children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion
54. Following a permanent exclusion, children and young people should always be offered a fresh start in their new school setting
55. Children and young people continue to misbehave because they experience feelings of rejection and/or have been labelled as "naughty"
56. Children and young people's wishes and perspectives are important and should always be considered
57. Mainstream schools which have lower exclusion rates tend to be more inclusive
58. Mainstream schools which have lower exclusion rates tend to serve less diverse, socially and/or economically-deprived or complex communities
59. Inclusion of children and young people with SEMH difficulties is a valid ideal, but often unrealistic in mainstream schools
60. There is not enough support, funding, and/or training for mainstream schools to practise inclusion, particularly with children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties

## Appendix H – Q-sort instructions provided to participants when completing the Q-sort

Thank you for taking the time to participate in my research project.

During the Q-sort activity you will be asked to "sort" statements which relate to inclusive education and, specifically, to the ease and success with which the needs of children and young people who have been permanently excluded and/or who experience significant social emotional mental health difficulties which place them at high risk of permanent exclusion, can be met in mainstream secondary schools.

Your responses should be based upon the knowledge, understanding and beliefs you have formed as a result of your own professional experience.

In this sorting activity, you will be asked to reflect upon a number of statements, each of which is presented on a card, and to consider whether, and how strongly you agree (or disagree) with each statement.

Based upon the strength of your agreement or disagreement, you are then asked position the card on a grid which is provided for this purpose.

There are 60 statements in total.

**When considering each statement, frame it thus: "*On the basis of my professional experience as a member of staff in my current school, I agree/disagree that*…(statement on the cue card)".**

As a first step, some colleagues have found it easier to sort all the statements into three broad categories:

i) agree;

ii) disagree; or

iii) unsure/neither disagree nor agree.

Then, as a second step, they rank all the 'agree' statements from those with which the participant agrees most strongly – to -least strongly, and similarly, those with which s/he disagrees most / least strongly, finally, returning to the 'undecided / don't know' cue cards, and endeavouring to rank order these, from those with which there is *some* agreement, to some, mild disagreement.

The third steps is then to place the cue cards on the grid, as illustrated in the image to the right.

Place the two statements with which you agreed most strongly in the two boxes in the column headed with the numeral "6".

Place the two statements with which you disagreed most strongly in the two boxes in the column headed "-6".

You can then progress to placing the next three cards in each of columns "5" and "-5"; four cards each in columns "4" and "-4" …..and so on until the grid is completed, at the point at which you add the final eight cards to the "0" column.

Once you have completed the card-sorting task, and all statements have been placed in the available spaces on the grid, you are asked to complete an A4-page record of the statement number which you placed in each cell of your grid.

Please also indicate the point at which you stopped having any agreement with statements and started to disagree, by drawing a line underneath the statement (card 16 and 36 in the example presented below).

Figure 1 provides an example of what a completed A4 record sheet might look like.

Figure 1: Illustrative example of completed Q-sort record sheet

| Greatest disagreement ⟵ | | | | | | | | | | ⟶ Highest agreement | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **-6** | **-5** | **-4** | **-3** | **-2** | **-1** | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** |
| 1 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 14 | 20 | 27 | 35 | 41 | 47 | 52 | 56 | 59 |
| 2 | 4 | 7 | 10 | 15 | 21 | 28 | **36** | 42 | 48 | 53 | 57 | 60 |
| | 5 | 8 | 11 | **16** | 22 | 29 | 37 | 43 | 49 | 54 | 58 | |
| | | 9 | 12 | 17 | 23 | 30 | 38 | 44 | 50 | 55 | | |
| | | | 13 | 18 | 25 | 31 | 39 | 45 | 51 | | | |
| | | | | 19 | 26 | 32 | 40 | 46 | | | | |
| | | | | | | 33 | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | 34 | | | | | | |

## Appendix I – Acronym checklist provided to participants during the Q-sort activity

***Behaviourist approaches*** – to discipline and pupil management:

Approaches which harness concepts of differential reinforcement to shape student behaviour by:

- making positive reinforcers ('rewards') contingent upon positive behaviour (keeping to the rules), in order to increase the frequency of such behaviour; and
- making sanctions contingent on poor / non-compliant behaviour, so reducing the probability of such behaviour recurring.

(Within the theory, sanctions should be framed as negative reinforcement, which aims to teach students to avoid their imposition by reducing the probability that such behaviour will recur. The intention should **not** be to punish; behavioural psychology clearly demonstrates that punishment is ineffective, and indeed, often counter-productive in contributing to behaviour change).

Behavioural approaches often assume that students make a choice about whether or not to comply with rules / expectations, and do not give consideration to students' emotional needs or other factors which may make settled, compliant behaviour challenging for the student.

***Capacity –*** in this context when staff capacity is mentioned this will relate to whether a staff member feels they have the time, energy, or knowledge to deal with certain situations

***CPD*** – Continuing Professional Development

***Inclusion*** – the following definition has been taken from "implementing inclusive education" which can be found on the government's website:

"According to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN 2016), inclusive education means:

- A fundamental right to education
- A principle that values students' wellbeing, dignity, autonomy, and contribution to society
- A continuing process to eliminate barriers to education and promote reform in the culture, policy, and practice in schools to include all students."

***PACE –*** stands for Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy as key features of adults' orientation to students, within a relational approach developed by Daniel Hughes.

***Person-centred*** – refers to assessment and intervention goals and methods in which the person's preferences, needs and values guide professional decision-making and practice, ensuring that provisions are acceptable and responsive to, and respectful of the young person's ascertainable wishes and feelings.

***SEMH*** – Social, Emotional, Mental Health

***SLT –*** Senior Leadership Team

***Within-child*** – factors that are related to the child and can be explained as characteristics of the child for example temperament, cognitive ability, values, beliefs etc.

## Appendix J – Post Q-sort questionnaire participants were asked to complete following completion of their Q-sort

1. Why did you place the two statements in the "6" column as those with which you agreed most strongly?
2. …. and why did you place the two statements in the "-6" column as those with which you agreed the least?
3. Were there any statements/topics/areas that were not covered in the card-sort that you believe either facilitate and hinder inclusion and inclusive practice for children and young people who are permanently excluded and/or experiencing SEMH difficulties?
4. Any other comment:

## Appendix K – Demographics questionnaire participants were asked to complete following completion of their Q-sort

Numerical ID:

Sex:

☐ Male

☐ Female

☐ Prefer not to say

Age:

☐ 18 – 24

☐ 25 - 34

☐ 35 – 50

☐ 51 – 60

☐ 60+

Ethnicity:

**White**

☐ English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British

☐ Irish

☐ Gypsy or Irish Traveller

☐ Any other White background

**Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups**

☐ White and Black Caribbean

☐ White and Black African

☐ White and Asian

☐ Any other Mixed or Multiple ethnic background

**Asian or Asian British**

☐ Indian

☐ Pakistani

☐ Bangladeshi

☐ Chinese

☐ Any other Asian background

**Black, African, Caribbean or Black British**

☐ African

☐ Caribbean

☐ Any other Black, African or Caribbean background

**Other ethnic group**

☐ Arab

☐ Any other ethnic group

Job Role:

☐ Teacher

☐ Teaching Assistant

☐ Other, please specify:

Years' experience:

☐ 0 – 5 years

☐ 6 – 10 years

☐ 11 – 15 years

☐ 16 – 20 years

☐ 21+

**Appendix L – The "magic" 7 unrotated factors, eigenvalues and explained variance for the mainstream dataset**

| Q-sorts | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **ASP001** | 0.4107 | -0.3500 | 0.1305 | -0.1860 | 0.0504 | 0.1958 | -0.3065 |
| **ASP002** | 0.5743 | 0.0710 | 0.0091 | -0.2442 | 0.0839 | -0.0734 | 0.0910 |
| **CK001** | 0.5062 | 0.0049 | 0.0002 | 0.3933 | 0.1434 | -0.3564 | 0.0405 |
| **EA001** | 0.0992 | -0.3560 | 0.1364 | 0.5201 | 0.3426 | 0.1595 | 0.3280 |
| **EA002** | 0.5562 | 0.0752 | 0.0100 | 0.1228 | 0.0057 | 0.5783 | 0.0444 |
| **RS001** | 0.4037 | 0.4040 | 0.2728 | -0.3546 | 0.1849 | -0.1116 | -0.1144 |
| **RS002** | 0.7028 | 0.0228 | 0.0021 | 0.2762 | 0.0578 | -0.2580 | -0.0180 |
| **RS003** | 0.5804 | 0.1549 | 0.0348 | -0.0048 | 0.0004 | 0.0144 | 0.2151 |
| **RS004** | 0.2597 | 0.3257 | 0.1555 | -0.1881 | 0.0514 | 0.0695 | -0.1201 |
| **RS005** | 0.5023 | -0.4010 | 0.1882 | -0.2591 | 0.0941 | -0.1280 | 0.1390 |
| **Eigenvalues** | **2.3874** | **0.7146** | **0.1710** | **0.8390** | **0.1966** | **0.6311** | **0.3069** |
| **% Explained Variance** | **24** | **7** | **2** | **8** | **2** | **6** | **3** |

**Appendix M – The "magic" 7 unrotated factors, eigenvalues and explained variance for the PRU dataset**

| Q-sorts | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **NB001** | 0.7526 | 0.3512 | 0.1336 | -0.1926 | 0.0969 | -0.1553 | 0.0340 |
| **NB002** | 0.4036 | -0.3700 | 0.2140 | -0.0711 | 0.0127 | 0.1148 | 0.0428 |
| **NB004** | 0.0589 | -0.1180 | 0.0214 | -0.2216 | 0.1408 | -0.0866 | 0.0057 |
| **NB006** | 0.6347 | -0.0740 | 0.0096 | 0.2055 | 0.0853 | 0.0962 | 0.0310 |
| **NB007** | 0.5203 | -0.3541 | 0.1907 | -0.0222 | 0.0017 | 0.1177 | 0.0448 |
| **NB008** | 0.2350 | 0.4799 | 0.3550 | 0.2625 | 0.1841 | -0.2742 | 0.2792 |
| **NB009** | 0.6878 | 0.1329 | 0.0124 | 0.0624 | 0.0047 | 0.1336 | 0.0573 |
| **Eigenvalues** | **1.9346** | **0.6530** | **0.2267** | **0.2068** | **0.0706** | **0.1609** | **0.0872** |
| **% Explained Variance** | **28** | **9** | **3** | **3** | **1** | **2** | **1** |

## Appendix N – Statistical tests conducted for factor retention of the mainstream dataset

1. Kaiser-Guttman Criterion

The Kaiser-Guttman criterion therefore indicates that only factors with EV more than 1 should be retained (Watts & Stenner, 2012). For the mainstream data set only one factor fulfilled this criterion.

2. Significantly Loading Q-sorts

In addition to the magic number seven, Brown (1980) outlined a further two statistical methods to indicate retention (Watts & Stenner, 2012). One of these related to whether a factor had two or more significant loadings (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Brown (1980) proposed the following equation to identify where a loading was significant at 0.01 level (Watts & Stenner, 2012).

$$2.58\ x\ (1 \div \sqrt{no.of\ items\ in\ a\ Q\ set})$$

There were 60 items used in the Q-set used in this research, the equation below demonstrates its application to this research:

$$2.58\ x\ (1 \div \sqrt{60}) = 0.3331$$

$$\text{Rounded up to } \pm 0.33$$

Based on this statistical test, three factors were indicated as needing to be retained for the mainstream data.

3. Humphrey's Rule

Brown (1980) also outlined Humphrey's rule as a statistical test to indicate retention. This method related to whether the cross product of the two highest factors loadings were higher than the standard error (Brown, 1980; Watts & Stenner, 2012). The following equation was again outlined by Brown (1980) to calculate the standard error (Watts & Stenner, 2012):

$$1 \div \sqrt{no.of\ items\ in\ Q - set}$$

$$1 \div \sqrt{60} = 0.1290$$

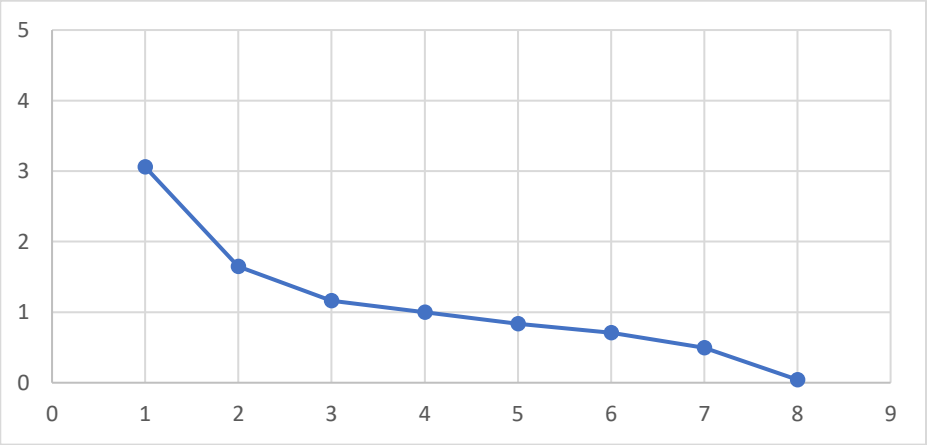
$$\text{Rounded up to } \pm 0.13$$

| Factor number | Did it comply with Humphrey's rule? Y or N |
|---|---|
| 1 | Yes – cross product of two highest loadings = 0.41 |
| 2 | Yes – cross product of two highest loadings = 0.13 |
| 3 | No – cross product of two highest loadings = 0.05 |
| 4 | No – cross product of two highest loadings = 0.20 |
| 5 | No – cross product of two highest loadings = 0.06 |
| 6 | No – cross product of two highest loadings = 0.11 |
| 7 | No – cross product of two highest loadings = 0.07 |

Humphrey's rule indicated two factors should be retained for factor rotation for the mainstream data.

4. Scree Test

The final statistical test relates to the Scree test (Cattell, 1966). This is used frequently within factor analysis but was only designed to be used in the perspective of PCA, not CFA (Watts & Stenner, 2012). For the purposes of the scree test I also ran a PCA on my mainstream dataset.




The scree test will plot the EV of each factor on a graph and indicates the number of factors to retain based on when the line changes slope (Watts & Stenner, 2012). I found that the line changes slope after the third factor although this can be arbitrary task, or arguably subjective when the statistical test in nature is objective. To address this, I had an independent researcher observe the scree test and they also agreed the

line changes slope after the third factor. This indicated that there were three factors needed to be retained for rotation for the mainstream data set.

## Appendix O – Statistical tests conducted for factor retention of the PRU dataset

1. Kaiser-Guttman Criterion

The Kaiser-Guttman criterion was also applied to the PRU data set. Based on this criterion only one factor was indicated as needing to be retained.

*2.* Significantly Loading Q-sorts

The same Q-set was used for both the mainstream and PRU data set, so the following equation is still relevant for this group: There were 60 items used in the Q-set used in this research, the equation below demonstrates its application to this research:

$2.58\ x\ (1 \div \sqrt{60}) = 0.3331$

Rounded up to $\pm\ 0.33$

Based on this statistical test, two factors were indicated as needing to be retained for the PRU dataset.

3. Humphrey's Rule

Again, the same number of Q-sets were used for the PRU data set so the following equation is relevant:

$1 \div \sqrt{60} = 0.1290$

Rounded up to ±0.13

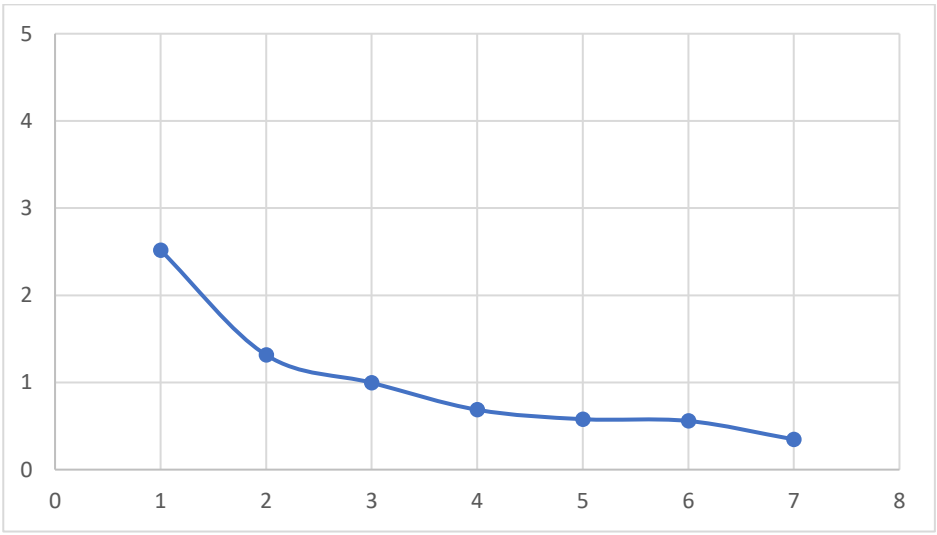
| Factor number | Did it comply with Humphrey's rule? Y or N |
|---|---|
| 1 | Yes – cross product of two highest loadings = 0.52 |
| 2 | Yes – cross product of two highest loadings = 0.17 |
| 3 | No – cross product of two highest loadings = 0.08 |
| 4 | No – cross product of two highest loadings = 0.05 |
| 5 | No – cross product of two highest loadings = 0.03 |
| 6 | No – cross product of two highest loadings = 0.02 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 7 | No – cross product of two highest loadings = 0.02 | |

Humphrey's rule indicated two factors should be retained for factor rotation for the PRU data.

4. Scree Test

Again, for the purposes of the scree test I also ran a PCA on my PRU dataset.




I found that the line changes slope after the third factor, again I repeated consulting an independent researcher who agree the line changed slope after the third factor. This indicated that there were three factors needed to be retained for rotation for the PRU data set.

**Appendix P – Z-scores and Factor arrays for the one-factor solution and alternate manifestations produced from the mainstream dataset**

| Statements | Factor 1 | | Factor 1a | | Factor 1b | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Z-scores | Ranking | Z-scores | Ranking | Z-scores | Ranking |
| 1. Children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties in mainstream classes disrupt the education of other children. | -1.231 | -4 | 1.069 | 3 | -1.439 | -5 |
| 2. Inclusion and inclusive practice in schools, particularly for children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion, is heavily dependent on senior leadership | -0.890 | -2 | 0.002 | 0 | -1.941 | -6 |
| 3. Inclusion of children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion is hindered by funding and budgetary constraints | -0.226 | -1 | 1.429 | 5 | -0.752 | -3 |
| 4. Inclusion of children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion can be achieved with adequate resources and adaptations i.e., differentiated curriculum | -0.258 | -1 | -0.937 | -3 | -0.364 | -1 |
| 5. The curriculum should be adapted and motivating for children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties | 0.688 | 3 | 1.282 | 4 | -0.501 | -2 |
| 6. The curriculum should have a focus on social and emotional wellbeing as well as academic knowledge and skills | 0.919 | 4 | 0.371 | 1 | -0.113 | 1 |
| 7. A child's presenting behaviour is a form of communication, which may indicate they have an unmet need | 0.677 | 3 | 0.322 | 1 | 0.025 | 1 |
| 8. Training and CPD opportunities, particularly relating to trauma, attachment, and nurture, are important in enabling all staff to meet the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties | 0.463 | 1 | -0.633 | -3 | -0.113 | 0 |
| 9. Children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties – and particularly those at risk of permanent exclusion or who have already been permanently excluded - need access to a nurturing key adult | -0.353 | -2 | 0.688 | 2 | -0.364 | -1 |
| 10. Government targets and pressure make inclusion of children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties difficult | -1.313 | -5 | 0.246 | 0 | -0.752 | -3 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11. Influences outside school - such as peers, crime and gangs in the community can jeopardise the inclusion of children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties | -0.025 | 0 | 2.137 | 6 | -0.501 | -2 |
| 12. Parental engagement and support are crucial for the inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties, particularly those at risk of permanent exclusion | 0.573 | 2 | 1.283 | 4 | -0.752 | -3 |
| 13. There cannot be a “one size fits all” approach to inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties and are at risk of exclusion: individual cases and contexts need to be considered | 1.313 | 4 | 0.100 | 0 | -1.051 | -4 |
| 14. It is important that the child and young person, who are at risk of permanent exclusion, participates in decision-making processes, particularly processes relating to identifying the support they need | 0.642 | 3 | -0.024 | 0 | -0.388 | -2 |
| 15. The biggest barriers to the inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties relate to ‘within-child’ factors such as motivation and disaffection | -1.176 | -4 | -0.517 | -2 | -.1277 | -4 |
| 16. Positive, consistent relationships between adults and children can prevent children and young people from being permanently excluded | 1.081 | 4 | -0.181 | -1 | -0.275 | 0 |
| 17. Children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties need more targeted support for their emotional expression and regulation, and social interaction | -0.471 | -2 | 1.546 | 5 | -0.275 | -1 |
| 18. Children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion often (disproportionately, compared with other students), live in poverty | -1.090 | -3 | -0.311 | -1 | 0.226 | 1 |
| 19. Clear open communication between all stakeholders, i.e., child, parent, school staff, external professionals, etc., supports inclusion and inclusive practice for children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties | 0.615 | 2 | 1.422 | 5 | -0.138 | 0 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 20. In order to support the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties, teaching staff must have a good understanding of what the child may be experiencing | -.346 | -1 | 1.224 | 4 | -0.275 | -1 |
| 21. For inclusion to work it must be a whole school approach, where everyone within the school community, including SLT, subscribes to the inclusive ethos | 2.665 | 6 | 0.304 | 1 | -0.275 | -1 |
| 22. The support from external and specialist services, such as educational psychologists, inclusion team, social workers, etc., is important to support inclusion within mainstream settings | 0.538 | 2 | 1.546 | 6 | -1.164 | -4 |
| 23. Inclusion and inclusive practice of children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion depends on school staff wellbeing and capacity | -0.200 | -1 | -0.256 | -1 | -0.162 | 0 |
| 24. School staff need specialist training, knowledge, and skills to meet the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties | -0.174 | 0 | 0.995 | 3 | -0.162 | 0 |
| 25. School policies, particularly behaviour policies, should be inclusive and reflect the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties | 1.260 | 4 | 0.295 | 1 | -0.162 | 0 |
| 26. Collaborative working across all stakeholders, i.e., child, parent, school staff, external professionals, is the key to inclusion working in mainstream schools | 0.729 | 3 | 0.313 | 1 | -0.413 | -2 |
| 27. Positive peer relationships within school can support the inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties | 0.459 | 1 | 0.493 | 2 | -0.801 | -3 |
| 28. Inclusion fails when school staff feel unsupported or are not given adequate support and supervision | 0.640 | 2 | -0.164 | -1 | -0.300 | -1 |
| 29. There is little school staff can do to support children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion if parents/family are not onboard | -1.016 | -3 | -1.347 | -4 | -0.953 | -3 |
| 30. A person-centred approach is the best way to support children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties | 0.360 | 1 | 0.239 | 0 | 1.051 | 3 |

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| 31. The curriculum isn't designed for children and young people who experience severe SEMH difficulties | -0.906 | -3 | -1.858 | -5 | -0.452 | -2 |
| 32. A zero-tolerance approach to poor behaviour does not support inclusive practice in mainstream schools | 0.215 | 1 | 0.617 | 2 | 1.326 | 4 |
| 33. In order for mainstream schools to be inclusive, exclusions should not form part of their behaviour policies | -1.526 | -5 | -1.627 | -4 | -2.054 | -6 |
| 34. Children and young people whose behaviour is consistently poor have special educational needs | -2.665 | -6 | -1.684 | -5 | -1.828 | -5 |
| 35. To support children's and young people's SEMH needs properly, we must first fully understand what is contributing to these needs and then plan support accordingly | -0.103 | 0 | 1.110 | 3 | 1.189 | 3 |
| 36. Exclusions do not serve a constructive purpose in enhancing the wellbeing of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties | -0.157 | 0 | -0.376 | -2 | -1.002 | -4 |
| 37. Exclusions are necessary to support the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties | -1.676 | -6 | -1.941 | -6 | -0.088 | 1 |
| 38. Exclusions are sometimes necessary to safeguard the needs and rights of other children and young people in their teaching groups / the school. | 0.534 | 2 | 1.208 | 4 | 1.051 | 3 |
| 39. Exclusions occur because children and young people misbehave, are unmotivated and disaffected from their learning | -1.328 | -5 | -0.436 | -2 | -0.187 | 0 |
| 40. Excluding children and young people risks leading them to a life of crime and/or poor outcomes | -0.987 | -3 | 0.558 | 2 | 1.778 | 5 |
| 41. When a child or young person has been permanently excluded support should focus on reintegration into mainstream schools and preparation for adulthood | 0.119 | 0 | -0.411 | -2 | 1.665 | 5 |
| 42. When a child or young person has been permanently excluded, they should be able to return to a mainstream school, rather than transferring to a specialist setting | 0.343 | 1 | -1.520 | -4 | 1.641 | 4 |

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| 43. Where inclusion is successful, all children and young people feel that they belong within their school | 1.772 | 5 | 0.575 | 2 | 2.078 | 6 |
| 44. Pupil referral units are set up to support the needs of children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties better than is viable in mainstream secondary schools | -0.466 | -2 | -0.856 | -3 | -0.074 | 1 |
| 45. Mainstream schools can provide opportunities for small group working and personalised curricula to support children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties | -1.113 | -4 | -1.192 | -3 | -1.390 | -5 |
| 46. Inclusion and inclusive practice for all children, including those experience SEMH difficulties, should be fundamental to pedagogic practice | 1.867 | 5 | -0.296 | -1 | 1.277 | 4 |
| 47. External factors are the most significant in placing children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion, rather than attributes of the children themselves | -0.659 | -2 | -0.156 | 0 | 1.164 | 3 |
| 48. Supporting the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties places immense strain and pressure on teaching staff | -0.339 | -1 | -0.510 | -2 | -0.840 | -3 |
| 49. For inclusion of children and young people with SEMH difficulties to succeed, requires consistent support within Government policy | 0.267 | 1 | -0.043 | 0 | 1.690 | 5 |
| 50. Children and young people are often permanently excluded because school systems are inflexible, with a marked reluctance to adapt to support students' needs | 0.156 | 0 | -2.178 | -6 | 0.025 | 1 |
| 51. Behaviourist approaches to SEMH difficulties are the most effective way of addressing and reducing misbehaviour in mainstream schools | -1.093 | -3 | 0.279 | 1 | -0.138 | 0 |
| 52. Behaviourist approaches to SEMH difficulties will remain mostly ineffective without the use of relational approaches which offer nurture, empathy, attentiveness, PACE | 0.642 | 3 | -0.197 | -1 | 0.275 | 2 |
| 53. Mainstream school staff should always seek the support of external agencies, e.g. educational psychologist, inclusion, for children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion | 0.512 | 2 | -0,378 | -2 | 1.002 | 3 |

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| 54. Following a permanent exclusion, children and young people should always be offered a fresh start in their new school setting | 1.398 | 5 | 0.649 | 2 | 1.941 | 6 |
| 55. Children and young people continue to misbehave because they experience feelings of rejection and/or have been labelled as “naughty” | -0.087 | 0 | 0.845 | 3 | 0.663 | 2 |
| 56. Children and young people’s wishes and perspectives are important and should always be considered | 2.034 | 6 | 0.813 | 3 | 1.277 | 4 |
| 57. Mainstream schools which have lower exclusion rates tend to be more inclusive | -1.099 | -4 | -0.815 | -3 | 0.614 | 2 |
| 58. Mainstream schools which have lower exclusion rates tend to serve less diverse, socially and/or economically-deprived or complex communities | -0.360 | -2 | -1.307 | -4 | 0.614 | 2 |
| 59. Inclusion of children and young people with SEMH difficulties is a valid ideal, but often unrealistic in mainstream schools | -0.303 | -1 | -1.661 | -5 | 0.251 | 2 |
| 60. There is not enough support, funding, and/or training for mainstream schools to practise inclusion, particularly with children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties | 0.152 | 0 | -0.158 | 0 | 0.889 | 2 |

**Appendix Q – Z-scores and Factor arrays for the one-factor solution and alternate manifestations produced from the PRU dataset**

| Statements | Factor 1 | | Factor 1a | | Factor 1b | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Z-scores | Ranking | Z-scores | Ranking | Z-scores | Ranking |
| 1. Children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties in mainstream classes disrupt the education of other children. | -0.466 | -1 | 1.132 | 4 | -0.963 | -3 |
| 2. Inclusion and inclusive practice in schools, particularly for children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion, is heavily dependent on senior leadership | 0.507 | 1 | -0.516 | -2 | 0.321 | 1 |
| 3. Inclusion of children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion is hindered by funding and budgetary constraints | -0.311 | -1 | 0.028 | 0 | 0.321 | 1 |
| 4. Inclusion of children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion can be achieved with adequate resources and adaptations i.e., differentiated curriculum | 0.036 | 0 | 1.175 | 5 | 0.000 | 0 |
| 5. The curriculum should be adapted and motivating for children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties | 1.025 | 3 | 0.444 | 2 | 0.000 | 0 |
| 6. The curriculum should have a focus on social and emotional wellbeing as well as academic knowledge and skills | 1.144 | 4 | 0.616 | 2 | 0.000 | 0 |
| 7. A child's presenting behaviour is a form of communication, which may indicate they have an unmet need | 0.828 | 2 | 2.121 | 5 | 0.000 | 0 |
| 8. Training and CPD opportunities, particularly relating to trauma, attachment, and nurture, are important in enabling all staff to meet the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties | 0.434 | 1 | 0.974 | 4 | -0.642 | -2 |
| 9. Children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties – and particularly those at risk of permanent exclusion or who have already been permanently excluded - need access to a nurturing key adult | 0.906 | 3 | 0.960 | 3 | -0.321 | -1 |

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| 10. Government targets and pressure make inclusion of children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties difficult | 0.041 | 0 | 0.201 | 1 | -1.606 | -5 |
| 11. Influences outside school - such as peers, crime and gangs in the community can jeopardise the inclusion of children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties | 0.668 | 1 | 2.135 | 6 | 0.000 | 0 |
| 12. Parental engagement and support are crucial for the inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties, particularly those at risk of permanent exclusion | 0.749 | 2 | 0.243 | 1 | -0.321 | -1 |
| 13. There cannot be a “one size fits all” approach to inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties and are at risk of exclusion: individual cases and contexts need to be considered | 1.335 | 5 | 2.135 | 6 | 0.000 | 0 |
| 14. It is important that the child and young person, who are at risk of permanent exclusion, participates in decision-making processes, particularly processes relating to identifying the support they need | 0.153 | 0 | 0.960 | 3 | 0.642 | 2 |
| 15. The biggest barriers to the inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties relate to ‘within-child’ factors such as motivation and disaffection | -0.396 | -1 | 1.161 | 4 | -0.963 | -3 |
| 16. Positive, consistent relationships between adults and children can prevent children and young people from being permanently excluded | 0.470 | 1 | 2.121 | 5 | 0.321 | 1 |
| 17. Children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties need more targeted support for their emotional expression and regulation, and social interaction | 1.496 | 5 | 0.946 | 3 | 0.321 | 1 |
| 18. Children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion often (disproportionately, compared with other students), live in poverty | -0.166 | 0 | 0.788 | 2 | 0.963 | 3 |
| 19. Clear open communication between all stakeholders, i.e., child, parent, school staff, external professionals, etc., supports | 0.946 | 3 | 0.960 | 3 | -0.321 | -1 |

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| inclusion and inclusive practice for children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties | | | | | | |
| 20. In order to support the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties, teaching staff must have a good understanding of what the child may be experiencing | 1.261 | 4 | 0.946 | 3 | 0.321 | 1 |
| 21. For inclusion to work it must be a whole school approach, where everyone within the school community, including SLT, subscribes to the inclusive ethos | 1.648 | 6 | 0.186 | 1 | 0.963 | 3 |
| 22. The support from external and specialist services, such as educational psychologists, inclusion team, social workers, etc., is important to support inclusion within mainstream settings | 0.826 | 2 | -0.373 | -2 | 0.963 | 3 |
| 23. Inclusion and inclusive practice of children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion depends on school staff wellbeing and capacity | -0.701 | -2 | -0.602 | -2 | -0.321 | -1 |
| 24. School staff need specialist training, knowledge, and skills to meet the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties | 1.101 | 4 | -0.215 | -1 | 0.963 | 3 |
| 25. School policies, particularly behaviour policies, should be inclusive and reflect the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties | 0.862 | 3 | -0.401 | -2 | 0.321 | 1 |
| 26. Collaborative working across all stakeholders, i.e., child, parent, school staff, external professionals, is the key to inclusion working in mainstream schools | 1.218 | 4 | -0.201 | -1 | 1.285 | 4 |
| 27. Positive peer relationships within school can support the inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties | 0.674 | 1 | 0.373 | 2 | 0.642 | 2 |
| 28. Inclusion fails when school staff feel unsupported or are not given adequate support and supervision | -0.867 | -3 | -0.745 | -2 | 0.642 | 2 |

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| 29. There is little school staff can do to support children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion if parents/family are not onboard | -1.296 | -4 | -1.347 | -5 | -1.927 | -6 |
| 30. A person-centred approach is the best way to support children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties | 0.944 | 3 | -1.161 | -3 | 1.285 | 4 |
| 31. The curriculum isn't designed for children and young people who experience severe SEMH difficulties | 0.073 | 0 | -0.186 | 0 | 1.927 | 6 |
| 32. A zero-tolerance approach to poor behaviour does not support inclusive practice in mainstream schools | -0.749 | -2 | -0.344 | -1 | -0.321 | -1 |
| 33. In order for mainstream schools to be inclusive, exclusions should not form part of their behaviour policies | -1.809 | -5 | -1.347 | -5 | -1.606 | -5 |
| 34. Children and young people whose behaviour is consistently poor have special educational needs | -2.041 | -6 | -2.121 | -6 | 1.927 | 6 |
| 35. To support children's and young people's SEMH needs properly, we must first fully understand what is contributing to these needs and then plan support accordingly | 1.684 | 6 | -0.0172 | 0 | 1.606 | 5 |
| 36. Exclusions do not serve a constructive purpose in enhancing the wellbeing of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties | -1.421 | -5 | -0.559 | -2 | -1.606 | -5 |
| 37. Exclusions are necessary to support the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties | -0.465 | -1 | -1.189 | -4 | 0.642 | 2 |
| 38. Exclusions are sometimes necessary to safeguard the needs and rights of other children and young people in their teaching groups / the school. | 0.709 | 2 | -0.774 | -3 | 0.642 | 2 |
| 39. Exclusions occur because children and young people misbehave, are unmotivated and disaffected from their learning | -0.787 | -3 | 0.344 | 1 | 0.000 | 0 |
| 40. Excluding children and young people risks leading them to a life of crime and/or poor outcomes | -2.357 | -6 | -0.348 | -1 | -0.642 | -2 |

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| 41. When a child or young person has been permanently excluded support should focus on reintegration into mainstream schools and preparation for adulthood | -0.351 | -1 | 0.587 | 2 | -1.285 | -4 |
| 42. When a child or young person has been permanently excluded, they should be able to return to a mainstream school, rather than transferring to a specialist setting | -0.709 | -2 | 0.974 | 4 | -1.285 | -4 |
| 43. Where inclusion is successful, all children and young people feel that they belong within their school | 1.295 | 5 | 0.429 | 2 | -0.963 | -3 |
| 44. Pupil referral units are set up to support the needs of children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties better than is viable in mainstream secondary schools | -0.197 | 0 | -0.014 | 0 | -0.642 | -2 |
| 45. Mainstream schools can provide opportunities for small group working and personalised curricula to support children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties | -0.786 | -3 | 0.172 | 1 | -0.642 | -2 |
| 46. Inclusion and inclusive practice for all children, including those experience SEMH difficulties, should be fundamental to pedagogic practice | 0.670 | 1 | -0.201 | -1 | 1.285 | 4 |
| 47. External factors are the most significant in placing children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion, rather than attributes of the children themselves | -0.590 | -2 | 0.358 | 1 | 1.285 | 4 |
| 48. Supporting the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties places immense strain and pressure on teaching staff | -1.845 | -5 | -0.028 | 0 | -0.321 | -1 |
| 49. For inclusion of children and young people with SEMH difficulties to succeed, requires consistent support within Government policy | -0.899 | -3 | -1.576 | -5 | -1.285 | -4 |
| 50. Children and young people are often permanently excluded because school systems are inflexible, with a marked reluctance to adapt to support students' needs | -0.666 | -2 | -0.988 | -3 | 1.606 | 5 |

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| 51. Behaviourist approaches to SEMH difficulties are the most effective way of addressing and reducing misbehaviour in mainstream schools | -0.159 | 0 | -1.934 | -6 | -0.963 | -3 |
| 52. Behaviourist approaches to SEMH difficulties will remain mostly ineffective without the use of relational approaches which offer nurture, empathy, attentiveness, PACE | -0.392 | -1 | -0.057 | 0 | -0.963 | -3 |
| 53. Mainstream school staff should always seek the support of external agencies, e.g. educational psychologist, inclusion, for children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion | 0.706 | 2 | -1.333 | -4 | 0.963 | 3 |
| 54. Following a permanent exclusion, children and young people should always be offered a fresh start in their new school setting | 0.421 | 0 | -0.014 | 0 | 0.000 | 0 |
| 55. Children and young people continue to misbehave because they experience feelings of rejection and/or have been labelled as “naughty” | -0.676 | -2 | 0.000 | 0 | -0.642 | -2 |
| 56. Children and young people’s wishes and perspectives are important and should always be considered | 0.785 | 2 | -0.988 | -3 | 1.606 | 5 |
| 57. Mainstream schools which have lower exclusion rates tend to be more inclusive | -1.060 | -4 | -1.203 | -4 | -1.285 | -4 |
| 58. Mainstream schools which have lower exclusion rates tend to serve less diverse, socially and/or economically-deprived or complex communities | -1.417 | -4 | -0.186 | -1 | -0.642 | -2 |
| 59. Inclusion of children and young people with SEMH difficulties is a valid ideal, but often unrealistic in mainstream schools | -0.904 | -3 | -0.802 | -3 | -1.927 | -6 |
| 60. There is not enough support, funding, and/or training for mainstream schools to practise inclusion, particularly with children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties | -1.136 | -4 | -1.533 | -5 | 0.642 | 2 |

**Appendix R – Breakdown of demographics, pole rankings and post Q-sort information for Q-sorts significantly loading onto mainstream Viewpoint 1.**

| Participant ID | Demographic data | Statements ranked at -6 and +6 poles | Post Q-sort information |
|---|---|---|---|
| ASP002 | Female<br>Age: 35 – 50 years<br>Ethnicity: White British<br>Exp: 11 – 15 years<br>Role: Other – Assistant Principal | ***Ranked at +6:***<br>**16** – Positive, consistent relationships between adults and children can prevent children and young people from being permanently excluded<br>**21** – For inclusion to work it must be a whole school approach, where everyone within the school community, including SLT, subscribes to the inclusive ethos<br>**Ranked at -6:**<br>**34** – Children and young people whose behaviour is consistently poor have special educational needs | *"I have seen the impact of strong relationships first hand on numerous occasions (16)"*<br>*"(21) Ethos across all stakeholders has a huge influence here and should be at the core of decisions"*<br>*"1/34 – All children are individuals + have their own needs, whether or not they fall int a 'category' is not always relevant"* |

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| | | **1** – Children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties in mainstream classes disrupt the education of other children. | |
| CK001 | Male<br>Age: 35 – 50 years<br>Ethnicity: Any other Mixed or multiple ethnic background<br>Exp: 16 – 20 years<br>Role: Teacher & Other: SENCo | ***Ranked at +6:***<br>**56** – Children and young people's wishes and perspectives are important and should always be considered<br>**21** – For inclusion to work it must be a whole school approach, where everyone within the school community, including SLT, subscribes to the inclusive ethos<br>***Ranked at -6:***<br>**59** – Inclusion of children and young people with SEMH difficulties is a valid ideal, but often unrealistic in mainstream schools<br>**34** – Children and young people whose behaviour is consistently poor have special educational needs | *"Education is child centric and can only be successful is all staff "buy in""*<br>*"Inclusion is possible in all settings and required under law"*<br>*"Behaviour is not indicative of SEN although in maybe other needs SEN can be a distraction from what is actually going on for the young persons"*<br>*"Exclusions are often too quick and unrestorative so 29 is a good example of where schools fail to* |

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|---|---|---|---|
| | | | *support. As such exclusions should be seen as a failure of schools to intervene appropriately on SEMH"* |
| EA002 | Female<br>Age: 51 – 60 years<br>Ethnicity: White British<br>Exp: 16 – 20 years<br>Role: Teaching assistant | ***Ranked at +6:***<br>**21** – For inclusion to work it must be a whole school approach, where everyone within the school community, including SLT, subscribes to the inclusive ethos<br>**2** – Inclusion and inclusive practice in schools, particularly for children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion, is heavily dependent on senior leadership<br>***Ranked at -6:***<br>**34** – Children and young people whose behaviour is consistently poor have special educational needs<br>**37** – Exclusions are necessary to support the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties | *"School ethos plays the most significant role"*<br>*"I don't think poor behaviour and SEN are always linked"*<br>*"Exclusions are not always in the best interest of the child"* |

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|---|---|---|---|
| RS002 | Female<br>Age: 35 – 50 years<br>Ethnicity: White British<br>Exp: 11 – 15 years<br>Role: Other – Pastoral head of year | ***Ranked at +6:***<br>**21** – For inclusion to work it must be a whole school approach, where everyone within the school community, including SLT, subscribes to the inclusive ethos<br>**13** – There cannot be a "one size fits all" approach to inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties and are at risk of exclusion: individual cases and contexts need to be considered<br>***Ranked at -6:***<br>**2** – Inclusion and inclusive practice in schools, particularly for children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion, is heavily dependent on senior leadership<br>**34** – Children and young people whose behaviour is consistently poor have special educational needs | *"I feel all students should be treated equally and given the same opportunities within their education. For all types of support to be successful consistency is key from all members of school"*<br>*"Inclusion and inclusive practice is dependent on all staff being consistent. Not all poor behaviour is identified due to SEN need there are other contributing factors"* |

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|---|---|---|---|
| RS003 | Female<br>Age: 25 – 34 years<br>Ethnicity: White British<br>Exp: 0 – 25 years<br>Ethnicity: Other – Safeguarding support officer | ***Ranked at +6:***<br>**46** – Inclusion and inclusive practice for all children, including those experience SEMH difficulties, should be fundamental to pedagogic practice<br>**56** – Children and young people's wishes and perspectives are important and should always be considered<br>***Ranked at -6:***<br>**45** – Mainstream schools can provide opportunities for small group working and personalised curricula to support children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties<br>**10** – Government targets and pressure make inclusion of children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties difficult | *"Because we need to listen to the childs views to ensure their needs are met – we shouldn't just prescribe to them"*<br>*"All children such had access to education"* – I believe this to mean "should have access"<br>*"Sometimes mainstream schools are not the most appropriate settings for all pupils and small groups are not always possible"* |

## Appendix S – Mainstream Factor 1: Crib sheet

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| **Items Ranked at +6**<br>**21** For inclusion to work it must be a whole school approach, where everyone within the school community, including SLT, subscribes to the inclusive ethos<br>**56** Children and young people's wishes and perspectives are important and should always be considered. |
| **Items Ranked higher in Factor 1 Array than in other Factor Arrays**<br>**4** Inclusion of children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion can be achieved with adequate resources and adaptations i.e., differentiated curriculum. -1<br>**6** The curriculum should have a focus on social and emotional wellbeing as well as academic knowledge and skills. +4<br>**7** A child's presenting behaviour is a form of communication, which may indicate they have an unmet need. +3<br>**8** Training and CPD opportunities, particularly relating to trauma, attachment, and nurture, are important in enabling all staff to meet the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties. +1<br>**13** There cannot be a "one size fits all" approach to inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties and are at risk of exclusion: individual cases and contexts need to be considered. +4<br>**14** It is important that the child and young person, who are at risk of permanent exclusion, participates in decision-making processes, particularly processes relating to identifying the support they need. +3<br>**16** Positive, consistent relationships between adults and children can prevent children and young people from being permanently excluded. +4<br>**25** School policies, particularly behaviour policies, should be inclusive and reflect the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties. +4<br>**26** Collaborative working across all stakeholders, i.e., child, parent, school staff, external professionals, is the key to inclusion working in mainstream schools. +3<br>**28** Inclusion fails when school staff feel unsupported or are not given adequate support and supervision. +2<br>**29** There is little school staff can do to support children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion if parents/family are not onboard. -3<br>**46** Inclusion and inclusive practice for all children, including those experience SEMH difficulties, should be fundamental to pedagogic practice. +5<br>**52** Behaviourist approaches to SEMH difficulties will remain mostly ineffective without the use of relational approaches which offer nurture, empathy, attentiveness, PACE. +3 |
| **Items Ranked lower in Factor 1 Array than in other Factor Arrays**<br>**9** Children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties – and particularly those at risk of permanent exclusion or who have already been permanently excluded - need access to a nurturing key adult. -2<br>**10** Government targets and pressure make inclusion of children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties difficult. -5<br>**15** The biggest barriers to the inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties relate to 'within-child' factors such as motivation and disaffection. -4<br>**18** Children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion often (disproportionately, compared with other students), live in poverty. -3 |

**20** In order to support the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties, teaching staff must have a good understanding of what the child may be experiencing. -1
**23** Inclusion and inclusive practice of children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion depends on school staff wellbeing and capacity. -1
**24** School staff need specialist training, knowledge, and skills to meet the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties. 0
**32** A zero-tolerance approach to poor behaviour does not support inclusive practice in mainstream schools. +1
**35** To support children's and young people's SEMH needs properly, we must first fully understand what is contributing to these needs and then plan support accordingly. 0
**38** Exclusions are sometimes necessary to safeguard the needs and rights of other children and young people in their teaching groups / the school. +2
**39** Exclusions occur because children and young people misbehave, are unmotivated and disaffected from their learning. -5
**40** Excluding children and young people risks leading them to a life of crime and/or poor outcomes. -3
**47** External factors are the most significant in placing children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion, rather than attributes of the children themselves. -2
**51** Behaviourist approaches to SEMH difficulties are the most effective way of addressing and reducing misbehaviour in mainstream schools. -3
**55** Children and young people continue to misbehave because they experience feelings of rejection and/or have been labelled as "naughty". 0
**57** Mainstream schools which have lower exclusion rates tend to be more inclusive. -4
**60** There is not enough support, funding, and/or training for mainstream schools to practise inclusion, particularly with children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties. 0

**Items Ranked at -6**
**34** Children and young people whose behaviour is consistently poor have special educational need.
**37** Exclusions are necessary to support the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties.

**Additional items considered**
**2** Inclusion and inclusive practice in schools, particularly for children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion, is heavily dependent on senior leadership. -2
**5** The curriculum should be adapted and motivating for children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties. +3
**22** The support from external and specialist services, such as educational psychologists, inclusion team, social workers, etc., is important to support inclusion within mainstream settings. +2
**30** A person-centred approach is the best way to support children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties. +1

**Appendix T – Breakdown of demographics, pole rankings and post Q-sort information for Q-sorts significantly loading onto mainstream Viewpoint 1a.**

| Participant ID | Demographic data | Statements ranked at -6 and +6 poles | Post Q-sort information |
|---|---|---|---|
| ASP001 | Male<br>Age: 35 – 50 years<br>Ethnicity: White British<br>Exp: 11 – 15 years<br>Role: Other – SLT | ***Ranked at +6:***<br>**3** – Inclusion of children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion is hindered by funding and budgetary constraints<br>**10** – Government targets and pressure make inclusion of children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties difficult<br>**Ranked at -6:**<br>**4** – Inclusion of children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion can be achieved with | *"As a member of SLT what you want to do is often, if not always tempered by budget limitations. Ideally the limits would be defined by need but reality in schools is whether the resources including staff are available and can be deployed in a targeted way"*<br>*"I do not feel mainstream schools can be inclusive without limits. While exclusion is a rarely used strategy, schools have limits defined by a lot of other factors not always under their control. Pupil suitability should be* |

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| | | adequate resources and adaptations i.e., differentiated curriculum<br>**33** – In order for mainstream schools to be inclusive, exclusions should not form part of their behaviour policies | *openly discussed. Although resources could be made available this does not guarantee success. Adaptations themselves are not always successful."*<br>*"How practices have changed and what roles associate staff can now fulfil costs for external services are unaffordable long term. Do non-specialist or undertrained staff have a positive or negative effect upon pupils"* – this was in reference to areas not covered in the Q-sort |
| EA001 | Female<br>Age: 51 – 60 years<br>Ethnicity: White British<br>Exp: 16 – 20 years | ***Ranked at +6:***<br>**2** – Inclusion and inclusive practice in schools, particularly for children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion, is heavily dependent on senior leadership | *"(2) – As SLT have the final decision/say – despite knowledge/expertise of staff who actually know the student"*<br>*"(22) – without external support/advice – more exclusions"* |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Role: Other: SEND Lead Professional | **22** – The support from external and specialist services, such as educational psychologists, inclusion team, social workers, etc., is important to support inclusion within mainstream settings<br>***Ranked at -6:***<br>**31** – The curriculum isn't designed for children and young people who experience severe SEMH difficulties<br>**37** – Exclusions are necessary to support the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties | *"(31) – Curriculum not always accessible for our student with SEMH – need more practical lessons/subjects."*<br>*"(37) Exclusions – quick/easy solution 'out of sight out of mind!'"* |
| RS005 | Female<br>Age: 18 – 24 years<br>Ethnicity: White British<br>Exp: 0 – 5 years | ***Ranked at +6:***<br>**11** – Influences outside school - such as peers, crime and gangs in the community can jeopardise the inclusion of children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties | *"I believed these statement stood out to me personally with regards to including all diverse needs, as I believe everyone should be treated equally no matter their ability."* |

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| Role: Other: SSL/ head of year | **55** – Children and young people continue to misbehave because they experience feelings of rejection and/or have been labelled as “naughty”<br>***Ranked at -6:***<br>**50** – Children and young people are often permanently excluded because school systems are inflexible, with a marked reluctance to adapt to support students’ needs<br><br>**42** – When a child or young person has been permanently excluded, they should be able to return to a mainstream school, rather than transferring to a specialist setting | *“1 bad choice should be held against you for the rest of their school time/ life”* |

## Appendix U – Mainstream Factor 1a: Crib Sheet

**Items Ranked at +6**

**11** Influences outside school - such as peers, crime and gangs in the community can jeopardise the inclusion of children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties.

**22** The support from external and specialist services, such as educational psychologists, inclusion team, social workers, etc., is important to support inclusion within mainstream settings.

**Items Ranked higher in Factor 1a Array than in other Factor Arrays**

**1** Children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties in mainstream classes disrupt the education of other children. +3

**2** Inclusion and inclusive practice in schools, particularly for children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion, is heavily dependent on senior leadership. 0

**3** Inclusion of children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion is hindered by funding and budgetary constraints. +5

**5** The curriculum should be adapted and motivating for children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties. +4

**9** Children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties – and particularly those at risk of permanent exclusion or who have already been permanently excluded - need access to a nurturing key adult. +2

**10** Government targets and pressure make inclusion of children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties difficult. 0

**12** Parental engagement and support are crucial for the inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties, particularly those at risk of permanent exclusion. +4

**17** Children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties need more targeted support for their emotional expression and regulation, and social interaction. +5

**19** Clear open communication between all stakeholders, i.e., child, parent, school staff, external professionals, etc., supports inclusion and inclusive practice for children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties. +5

**20** In order to support the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties, teaching staff must have a good understanding of what the child may be experiencing. +4

**24** School staff need specialist training, knowledge, and skills to meet the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties. +3

**27** Positive peer relationships within school can support the inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties. +2

**33** In order for mainstream schools to be inclusive, exclusions should not form part of their behaviour policies -4

**34** Children and young people whose behaviour is consistently poor have special educational needs. -5

**35** To support children's and young people's SEMH needs properly, we must first fully understand what is contributing to these needs and then plan support accordingly. +3

**38** Exclusions are sometimes necessary to safeguard the needs and rights of other children and young people in their teaching groups / the school. +4

**51** Behaviourist approaches to SEMH difficulties are the most effective way of addressing and reducing misbehaviour in mainstream schools. +1

**55** Children and young people continue to misbehave because they experience feelings of rejection and/or have been labelled as "naughty". +3

**Items Ranked lower in Factor 1a Array than in other Factor Arrays**

**4** Inclusion of children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion can be achieved with adequate resources and adaptations i.e., differentiated curriculum. -3

**7** A child's presenting behaviour is a form of communication, which may indicate they have an unmet need. +1

**8** Training and CPD opportunities, particularly relating to trauma, attachment, and nurture, are important in enabling all staff to meet the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties. -3

**16** Positive, consistent relationships between adults and children can prevent children and young people from being permanently excluded. -1

**23** Inclusion and inclusive practice of children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion depends on school staff wellbeing and capacity. -1

**28** Inclusion fails when school staff feel unsupported or are not given adequate support and supervision. -1

**29** There is little school staff can do to support children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion if parents/family are not onboard. -4

**31** The curriculum isn't designed for children and young people who experience severe SEMH difficulties. -5

**41** When a child or young person has been permanently excluded support should focus on reintegration into mainstream schools and preparation for adulthood. -2

**42** When a child or young person has been permanently excluded, they should be able to return to a mainstream school, rather than transferring to a specialist setting. -4

**44** Pupil referral units are set up to support the needs of children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties better than is viable in mainstream secondary schools. -3

**46** Inclusion and inclusive practice for all children, including those experience SEMH difficulties, should be fundamental to pedagogic practice. -1

**49** For inclusion of children and young people with SEMH difficulties to succeed, requires consistent support within Government policy. 0

**52** Behaviourist approaches to SEMH difficulties will remain mostly ineffective without the use of relational approaches which offer nurture, empathy, attentiveness, PACE. -1

**53** Mainstream school staff should always seek the support of external agencies, e.g. educational psychologist, inclusion, for children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion. -2

**56** Children and young people's wishes and perspectives are important and should always be considered. +3

**58** Mainstream schools which have lower exclusion rates tend to serve less diverse, socially and/or economically-deprived or complex communities. -4

**59** Inclusion of children and young people with SEMH difficulties is a valid ideal, but often unrealistic in mainstream schools. -5

**60** There is not enough support, funding, and/or training for mainstream schools to practise inclusion, particularly with children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties. 0

**Items Ranked at -6**

**37** Exclusions are necessary to support the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties.

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| **50** Children and young people are often permanently excluded because school systems are inflexible, with a marked reluctance to adapt to support students' needs. |
| **Additional items considered**<br>**6** The curriculum should have a focus on social and emotional wellbeing as well as academic knowledge and skills. +1<br>**40** Excluding children and young people risks leading them to a life of crime and/or poor outcomes. +2<br>**47** External factors are the most significant in placing children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion, rather than attributes of the children themselves. 0 |

**Appendix V – Breakdown of demographics, pole rankings and post Q-sort information for Q-sorts significantly loading onto mainstream Viewpoint 1b.**

| Participant ID | Demographic data | Statements ranked at -6 and +6 poles | Post Q-sort information |
|---|---|---|---|
| RS001 | Female<br>Age: 25 – 34 years<br>Ethnicity: White British<br>Exp: 6 – 10 years<br>Role: Teacher | ***Ranked at +6:***<br>**40** – Excluding children and young people risks leading them to a life of crime and/or poor outcomes<br>**42** – When a child or young person has been permanently excluded, they should be able to return to a mainstream school, rather than transferring to a specialist setting<br>**Ranked at -6:**<br>**33** – In order for mainstream schools to be inclusive, exclusions should not form part of their behaviour policies | *"As it is factual that children who are excluded are more likely to commit crime and end up in prison children are always entitled to a new start following an exclusion and should not be permanently sanctioned"*<br>*"Exclusions can play a part in an effective behaviour policy"* |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | **29** – There is little school staff can do to support children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion if parents/family are not onboard | |
| RS004 | Female<br>Age: 35 – 50 years<br>Ethnicity: White British<br>Exp: 11 – 15 years<br>Role: Teacher | ***Ranked at +6:***<br>**32** – A zero-tolerance approach to poor behaviour does not support inclusive practice in mainstream schools<br>**43** – Where inclusion is successful, all children and young people feel that they belong within their school<br>***Ranked at -6:***<br>**34** – Children and young people whose behaviour is consistently poor have special educational needs<br>**44** – Pupil referral units are set up to support the needs of children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties better than is viable in mainstream secondary schools | *"Every child needs an individual approach and need to belong – relationships are important to help a happy person"*<br>*"Not everything is to do with learning need by nature and nurture"* |

## Appendix W – Mainstream Factor 1b: Crib Sheet

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| Items Ranked at +6<br>43 Where inclusion is successful, all children and young people feel that they belong within their school.<br>54 Following a permanent exclusion, children and young people should always be offered a fresh start in their new school setting. |
| Items Ranked higher in Factor 1b Array than in other Factor Arrays<br>4 Inclusion of children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion can be achieved with adequate resources and adaptations i.e., differentiated curriculum. -1<br>18 Children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion often (disproportionately, compared with other students), live in poverty. +1<br>23 Inclusion and inclusive practice of children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion depends on school staff wellbeing and capacity. 0<br>29 There is little school staff can do to support children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion if parents/family are not onboard. -3<br>30 A person-centred approach is the best way to support children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties. +3<br>32 A zero-tolerance approach to poor behaviour does not support inclusive practice in mainstream schools. +4<br>34 Children and young people whose behaviour is consistently poor have special educational needs. -5<br>35 To support children's and young people's SEMH needs properly, we must first fully understand what is contributing to these needs and then plan support accordingly. +3<br>37 Exclusions are necessary to support the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties. +1<br>39 Exclusions occur because children and young people misbehave, are unmotivated and disaffected from their learning. 0<br>40 Excluding children and young people risks leading them to a life of crime and/or poor outcomes. +5<br>42 When a child or young person has been permanently excluded, they should be able to return to a mainstream school, rather than transferring to a specialist setting. +2<br>44 Pupil referral units are set up to support the needs of children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties better than is viable in mainstream secondary schools. +1<br>47 External factors are the most significant in placing children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion, rather than attributes of the children themselves. +3<br>49 For inclusion of children and young people with SEMH difficulties to succeed, requires consistent support within Government policy. +5<br>50 Children and young people are often permanently excluded because school systems are inflexible, with a marked reluctance to adapt to support students' needs. +1<br>53 Mainstream school staff should always seek the support of external agencies, e.g. educational psychologist, inclusion, for children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion. +3<br>57 Mainstream schools which have lower exclusion rates tend to be more inclusive. +2<br>58 Mainstream schools which have lower exclusion rates tend to serve less diverse, socially and/or economically-deprived or complex communities. +2<br>59 Inclusion of children and young people with SEMH difficulties is a valid ideal, but often unrealistic in mainstream schools. +2 |

60 There is not enough support, funding, and/or training for mainstream schools to practise inclusion, particularly with children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties. +2

Items Ranked lower in Factor 1b Array than in other Factor Arrays

1 Children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties in mainstream classes disrupt the education of other children. -5

3 Inclusion of children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion is hindered by funding and budgetary constraints. -3

5 The curriculum should be adapted and motivating for children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties. -2

7 A child's presenting behaviour is a form of communication, which may indicate they have an unmet need. +1

11 Influences outside school - such as peers, crime and gangs in the community can jeopardise the inclusion of children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties. -2

12 Parental engagement and support are crucial for the inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties, particularly those at risk of permanent exclusion. -3

13 There cannot be a "one size fits all" approach to inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties and are at risk of exclusion: individual cases and contexts need to be considered. -4

14 It is important that the child and young person, who are at risk of permanent exclusion, participates in decision-making processes, particularly processes relating to identifying the support they need. -2

15 The biggest barriers to the inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties relate to 'within-child' factors such as motivation and disaffection. -4

16 Positive, consistent relationships between adults and children can prevent children and young people from being permanently excluded. 0

19 Clear open communication between all stakeholders, i.e., child, parent, school staff, external professionals, etc., supports inclusion and inclusive practice for children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties. 0

20 In order to support the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties, teaching staff must have a good understanding of what the child may be experiencing. -1

21 For inclusion to work it must be a whole school approach, where everyone within the school community, including SLT, subscribes to the inclusive ethos. -1

22 The support from external and specialist services, such as educational psychologists, inclusion team, social workers, etc., is important to support inclusion within mainstream settings. -4

24 School staff need specialist training, knowledge, and skills to meet the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties. 0

25 School policies, particularly behaviour policies, should be inclusive and reflect the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties. 0

26 Collaborative working across all stakeholders, i.e., child, parent, school staff, external professionals, is the key to inclusion working in mainstream schools. -2

27 Positive peer relationships within school can support the inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties. -3

28 Inclusion fails when school staff feel unsupported or are not given adequate support and supervision. -1

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| 36 Exclusions do not serve a constructive purpose in enhancing the wellbeing of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties. -4<br>45 Mainstream schools can provide opportunities for small group working and personalised curricula to support children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties. -5<br>48 Supporting the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties places immense strain and pressure on teaching staff. -3 |
| Items Ranked at -6<br>2 Inclusion and inclusive practice in schools, particularly for children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion, is heavily dependent on senior leadership.<br>33 In order for mainstream schools to be inclusive, exclusions should not form part of their behaviour policies. |
| Additional items considered<br>6 The curriculum should have a focus on social and emotional wellbeing as well as academic knowledge and skills. +1<br>51 Behaviourist approaches to SEMH difficulties are the most effective way of addressing and reducing misbehaviour in mainstream schools |

**Appendix X – Consensus statements and their corresponding Z-scores and factor arrays for each viewpoint in the mainstream dataset**

| Statements | Viewpoint 1 | | Viewpoint 1a | | Viewpoint 1b | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Z-Scores | Ranking | Z-Scores | Ranking | Z-Scores | Ranking |
| *4. Inclusion of children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion can be achieved with adequate resources and adaptations i.e., differentiated curriculum | -0.26 | -1 | -0.94 | -3 | -0.36 | -1 |
| *7. A child's presenting behaviour is a form of communication, which may indicate they have an unmet need | 0.68 | +3 | 0.32 | +1 | 0..02 | +1 |
| *15 The biggest barriers to the inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties relate to 'within-child' factors such as motivation and disaffection | -1.18 | -4 | -0.52 | -2 | -1.28 | -4 |
| *23 Inclusion and inclusive practice of children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion depends on school staff wellbeing and capacity | -0.20 | -1 | -0.26 | -1 | -0.16 | 0 |
| 28 Inclusion fails when school staff feel unsupported or are not given adequate support and supervision | 0.64 | +2 | -0.16 | -1 | -0.30 | -1 |
| *29 There is little school staff can do to support children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion if parents/family are not onboard | -1.02 | -3 | -1.35 | -4 | -0.95 | -3 |
| *30 A person-centred approach is the best way to support children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties | 0.36 | 1 | 0.24 | 0 | 1.05 | 3 |
| *33 In order for mainstream schools to be inclusive, exclusions should not form part of their behaviour policies | -1.53 | -5 | -1.63 | -4 | -2.05 | -6 |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 36 Exclusions do not serve a constructive purpose in enhancing the wellbeing of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties | -0.16 | 0 | -0.38 | -2 | -1.00 | -4 |
| *38 Exclusions are sometimes necessary to safeguard the needs and rights of other children and young people in their teaching groups / the school | 0.53 | +2 | 1.21 | +4 | 1.05 | +3 |
| *44 Pupil referral units are set up to support the needs of children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties better than is viable in mainstream secondary schools | -0.47 | -2 | -0.86 | -3 | -0.07 | +1 |
| *45 Mainstream schools can provide opportunities for small group working and personalised curricula to support children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties | -1.11 | -4 | -1.19 | -3 | -1.39 | -5 |
| *48 Supporting the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties places immense strain and pressure on teaching staff | -0.34 | -1 | -0.51 | -2 | -0.84 | -3 |
| 52 Behaviourist approaches to SEMH difficulties will remain mostly ineffective without the use of relational approaches which offer nurture, empathy, attentiveness, PACE | 0.64 | +3 | -0.20 | -1 | 0,.28 | +2 |
| 60 There is not enough support, funding, and/or training for mainstream schools to practise inclusion, particularly with children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties | 0.15 | 0 | -0.16 | 0 | 0.89 | +2 |

**Appendix Y – Breakdown of demographics, pole rankings and post Q-sort information for Q-sorts significantly loading onto PRU Viewpoint 1.**

| Participant ID | Demographic data | Statements ranked at -6 and +6 poles | Post Q-sort information |
|---|---|---|---|
| NB001 | Male<br>Age: 35 – 50 years<br>Ethnicity: White British<br>Exp: 21+ years<br>Role: Teacher | ***Ranked at +6:***<br>**2** – Inclusion and inclusive practice in schools, particularly for children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion, is heavily dependent on senior leadership.<br>**43** – Where inclusion is successful, all children and young people feel that they belong within their school<br>**Ranked at -6:** | *"Senior leadership should ensure all policies and procedures support inclusion. This should be role modelled and embed into the ethos of the school"*<br>*"Exclusions, when used correctly, can form part of an effective behaviour policy. For some young people, it can be an effective measure to deter repeat behaviours"*<br>*"Although mentioned in some of the statements the use of outside agencies and collaborative working is crucial"* |

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|---|---|---|---|
| | | **40** – Excluding children and young people risks leading them to a life of crime and/or poor outcomes<br>**34** – Children and young people whose behaviour is consistently poor have special educational needs | *"Substance abuse?"* – in reference to areas not covered in the statements |
| NB006 | Female<br>Age: 35 – 50 years<br>Ethnicity: White British<br>Exp: 6 – 10 years<br>Role: Teaching assistant | ***Ranked at +6:***<br>**35** – To support children's and young people's SEMH needs properly, we must first fully understand what is contributing to these needs and then plan support accordingly<br>**13** – There cannot be a "one size fits all" approach to inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties and are at risk of exclusion: individual cases and contexts need to be considered | *"We can't begin to support children and young people's SEMH needs properly until we actually know why they have needs, where they come from and why"*<br>*"Differentiation is key. Every young person is different and so are their needs. E.g., A young person who witnesses DV may be triggered differently to a child who has not. We have to adapt our strategies to meet individual needs. Then tackle the rest"*<br>*"Not all young people who experience SEMH disrupt. There are many ways we see SEMH, quiet and* |

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|---|---|---|---|
| | | ***Ranked at -6:***<br>**1** – Children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties in mainstream classes disrupt the education of other children.<br>**40** – Excluding children and young people risks leading them to a life of crime and/or poor outcomes | *withdrawn, loneliness and shyness. I do not agree with this statement"*<br>*"Staff who are not able or willing to understand SEMH and different or challenging behaviour. Angry or judgemental staff who lack sympathy, empathy or general understanding and the willing to listen to a child or young persons voice or views makes it difficult for a child to build possible bonds and trusting relationship"* – in reference to missing topic areas. |
| NB009 | Male<br>Age: 35 – 50 years<br>Ethnicity: White British<br>Exp: 11 – 20 years<br>Role: Teaching assistant | ***Ranked at +6:***<br>**17** – Children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties need more targeted support for their emotional expression and regulation, and social interaction. | *"Young people with SEMH <u>need</u> more targeted support"*<br>*"Exclusions do play a part in self regulation and behaviour consequences. However, I do understand that exclusion can lead to criminal/behavioural issues etc."* |

**6** – The curriculum should have a focus on social and emotional wellbeing as well as academic knowledge and skills

***Ranked at -6:***

**36** – Exclusions do not serve a constructive purpose in enhancing the wellbeing of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties

**40** – Excluding children and young people risks leading them to a life of crime and/or poor outcomes

*"Family (parenting sessions) – to improve family cohesion/ bond/ relationships"* – in reference to missing topic areas.

## Appendix Z – PRU Factor 1: Crib Sheet

**Items Ranked at +6**

**35** To support children's and young people's SEMH needs properly, we must first fully understand what is contributing to these needs and then plan support accordingly

**21** For inclusion to work it must be a whole school approach, where everyone within the school community, including SLT, subscribes to the inclusive ethos

**Items Ranked higher in Factor 1 Array than in other Factor Arrays**

**2** Inclusion and inclusive practice in schools, particularly for children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion, is heavily dependent on senior leadership. +1

**5** The curriculum should be adapted and motivating for children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties. +3

**6** The curriculum should have a focus on social and emotional wellbeing as well as academic knowledge and skills +4

**9** Children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties – and particularly those at risk of permanent exclusion or who have already been permanently excluded - need access to a nurturing key adult. +3

**12** Parental engagement and support are crucial for the inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties, particularly those at risk of permanent exclusion. +2

**17** Children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties need more targeted support for their emotional expression and regulation, and social interaction. +5

**19** Clear open communication between all stakeholders, i.e., child, parent, school staff, external professionals, etc., supports inclusion and inclusive practice for children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties. +3

**20** In order to support the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties, teaching staff must have a good understanding of what the child may be experiencing. +4

**24** School staff need specialist training, knowledge, and skills to meet the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties. +4

**25** School policies, particularly behaviour policies, should be inclusive and reflect the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties +3

**26** Collaborative working across all stakeholders, i.e., child, parent, school staff, external professionals, is the key to inclusion working in mainstream schools +4

**29** There is little school staff can do to support children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion if parents/family are not onboard **-4**

**33** In order for mainstream schools to be inclusive, exclusions should not form part of their behaviour policies -5

**38** Exclusions are sometimes necessary to safeguard the needs and rights of other children and young people in their teaching groups / the school. +2

**43** Where inclusion is successful, all children and young people feel that they belong within their school +5

**44** Pupil referral units are set up to support the needs of children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties better than is viable in mainstream secondary schools 0

**49** For inclusion of children and young people with SEMH difficulties to succeed, requires consistent support within Government policy -3

**51** Behaviourist approaches to SEMH difficulties are the most effective way of addressing and reducing misbehaviour in mainstream schools. 0

**54** Following a permanent exclusion, children and young people should always be offered a fresh start in their new school setting 0
**57** Mainstream schools which have lower exclusion rates tend to be more inclusive -4
**59** Inclusion of children and young people with SEMH difficulties is a valid ideal, but often unrealistic in mainstream schools -3

**Items Ranked lower in Factor 1 Array than in other Factor Arrays**

**3** Inclusion of children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion is hindered by funding and budgetary constraints. -1
**4** Inclusion of children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion can be achieved with adequate resources and adaptations i.e., differentiated curriculum. 0
**14** It is important that the child and young person, who are at risk of permanent exclusion, participates in decision-making processes, particularly processes relating to identifying the support they need. 0
**16** Positive, consistent relationships between adults and children can prevent children and young people from being permanently excluded. +1
**18** Children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion often (disproportionately, compared with other students), live in poverty. 0
**23** Inclusion and inclusive practice of children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion depends on school staff wellbeing and capacity. -2
**27** Positive peer relationships within school can support the inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties. +1
**28** Inclusion fails when school staff feel unsupported or are not given adequate support and supervision. -3
**31** The curriculum isn't designed for children and young people who experience severe SEMH difficulties 0
**36** Exclusions do not serve a constructive purpose in enhancing the wellbeing of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties. -5
**39** Exclusions occur because children and young people misbehave, are unmotivated and disaffected from their learning. -3
**45** Mainstream schools can provide opportunities for small group working and personalised curricula to support children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties. -3
**47** External factors are the most significant in placing children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion, rather than attributes of the children themselves. -2
**48** Supporting the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties places immense strain and pressure on teaching staff. -5
**55** Children and young people continue to misbehave because they experience feelings of rejection and/or have been labelled as "naughty". -2
**58** Mainstream schools which have lower exclusion rates tend to serve less diverse, socially and/or economically-deprived or complex communities. -4
**60** There is not enough support, funding, and/or training for mainstream schools to practise inclusion, particularly with children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties. -4

**Items Ranked at -6**

**34** Children and young people whose behaviour is consistently poor have special educational needs
**40** Excluding children and young people risks leading them to a life of crime and/or poor outcomes

**Additional items considered**
**13** There cannot be a “one size fits all” approach to inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties and are at risk of exclusion: individual cases and contexts need to be considered +5
**1** Children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties in mainstream classes disrupt the education of other children. -1

**Appendix Aa – Breakdown of demographics, pole rankings and post Q-sort information for Q-sorts significantly loading onto PRU Viewpoint 1a.**

| Participant ID | Demographic data | Statements ranked at -6 and +6 poles | Post Q-sort information |
|---|---|---|---|
| NB002 | Female<br>Age: 51 – 60 years<br>Ethnicity: White British<br>Exp: 21+ years<br>Role: Teaching assistant | ***Ranked at +6:***<br>**7** – A child's presenting behaviour is a form of communication, which may indicate they have an unmet need<br>**16** – Positive, consistent relationships between adults and children can prevent children and young people from being permanently excluded<br>**Ranked at -6:**<br>**34** – Children and young people whose behaviour is consistently poor have special educational needs | *"Because of space restrictions. Cards 'had to be' placed (ordered) somewhere. Many cards would have been moved around after looking at the whole picture"*<br>*"Could have moved around many cards on the board after looking at the 'whole picture'"*<br>*"Need more psychological methods/theories"* – in reference to missing areas |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | **2** – Inclusion and inclusive practice in schools, particularly for children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion, is heavily dependent on senior leadership | *"Looking at the 'whole picture' is what we should do when working with individuals"* |
| NB007 | Female<br>Age: 60+ years<br>Ethnicity: Black Caribbean<br>Exp: 21+ years<br>Role: Teaching assistant | ***Ranked at +6:***<br>**13** – There cannot be a "one size fits all" approach to inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties and are at risk of exclusion: individual cases and contexts need to be considered<br>**11** – Influences outside school - such as peers, crime and gangs in the community can jeopardise the inclusion of children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties<br>***Ranked at -6:***<br>**57** – Children and young people whose behaviour is consistently poor have special educational needs | *"As it states 'one size' does not fit all. Pupils should be assessed on their individual needs"*<br>*"True e.g., "Girls High" less exclusion due to more inclusive needs"*<br>*"Empathy in mainstream schools"*<br>*"To realise that pupils are going through difficult times"* |

**49** – Pupil referral units are set up to support the needs of children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties better than is viable in mainstream secondary schools

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## Appendix Ab – PRU Factor 1a: Crib Sheet

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| **Items Ranked at +6**<br>**11** Influences outside school - such as peers, crime and gangs in the community can jeopardise the inclusion of children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties<br>**13** There cannot be a "one size fits all" approach to inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties and are at risk of exclusion: individual cases and contexts need to be considered |
| **Items Ranked higher in Factor 1a Array than in other Factor Arrays**<br>**1** Children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties in mainstream classes disrupt the education of other children +4<br>**4** Inclusion of children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion can be achieved with adequate resources and adaptations i.e., differentiated curriculum +5<br>**7** A child's presenting behaviour is a form of communication, which may indicate they have an unmet need +5<br>**8** Training and CPD opportunities, particularly relating to trauma, attachment, and nurture, are important in enabling all staff to meet the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties +4<br>**9** Children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties – and particularly those at risk of permanent exclusion or who have already been permanently excluded - need access to a nurturing key adult. +3<br>**10** Government targets and pressure make inclusion of children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties difficult +1<br>**14** It is important that the child and young person, who are at risk of permanent exclusion, participates in decision-making processes, particularly processes relating to identifying the support they need +3<br>**15** The biggest barriers to the inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties relate to 'within-child' factors such as motivation and disaffection +4<br>**16** Positive, consistent relationships between adults and children can prevent children and young people from being permanently excluded +5<br>**19** Clear open communication between all stakeholders, i.e., child, parent, school staff, external professionals, etc., supports inclusion and inclusive practice for children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties. +3<br>**27** Positive peer relationships within school can support the inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties +2<br>**29** There is little school staff can do to support children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion if parents/family are not onboard **-4**<br>**33** In order for mainstream schools to be inclusive, exclusions should not form part of their behaviour policies -5<br>**39** Exclusions occur because children and young people misbehave, are unmotivated and disaffected from their learning +1<br>**41** When a child or young person has been permanently excluded support should focus on reintegration into mainstream schools and preparation for adulthood +2<br>**42** When a child or young person has been permanently excluded, they should be able to return to a mainstream school, rather than transferring to a specialist setting +4<br>**44** Pupil referral units are set up to support the needs of children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties better than is viable in mainstream secondary schools 0 |

**45** Mainstream schools can provide opportunities for small group working and personalised curricula to support children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties +1
**48** Supporting the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties places immense strain and pressure on teaching staff 0
**52** Behaviourist approaches to SEMH difficulties will remain mostly ineffective without the use of relational approaches which offer nurture, empathy, attentiveness, PACE 0
**54** Following a permanent exclusion, children and young people should always be offered a fresh start in their new school setting 0
**55** Children and young people continue to misbehave because they experience feelings of rejection and/or have been labelled as "naughty" 0
**57** Mainstream schools which have lower exclusion rates tend to be more inclusive -4
**59** Inclusion of children and young people with SEMH difficulties is a valid ideal, but often unrealistic in mainstream schools +3

**Items Ranked lower in Factor 1a Array than in other Factor Arrays**
**2** Inclusion and inclusive practice in schools, particularly for children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion, is heavily dependent on senior leadership -2
**21** For inclusion to work it must be a whole school approach, where everyone within the school community, including SLT, subscribes to the inclusive ethos +1
**22** The support from external and specialist services, such as educational psychologists, inclusion team, social workers, etc., is important to support inclusion within mainstream settings -3
**23** Inclusion and inclusive practice of children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion depends on school staff wellbeing and capacity. -2
**24** School staff need specialist training, knowledge, and skills to meet the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties -1
**25** School policies, particularly behaviour policies, should be inclusive and reflect the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties -2
**26** Collaborative working across all stakeholders, i.e., child, parent, school staff, external professionals, is the key to inclusion working in mainstream schools -1
**30** A person-centred approach is the best way to support children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties -3
**31** The curriculum isn't designed for children and young people who experience severe SEMH difficulties 0
**37** Exclusions are necessary to support the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties -4
**38** Exclusions are sometimes necessary to safeguard the needs and rights of other children and young people in their teaching groups / the school -3
**46** Inclusion and inclusive practice for all children, including those experience SEMH difficulties, should be fundamental to pedagogic practice -1
**49** For inclusion of children and young people with SEMH difficulties to succeed, requires consistent support within Government policy -5
**50** Children and young people are often permanently excluded because school systems are inflexible, with a marked reluctance to adapt to support students' needs -3
**53** Mainstream school staff should always seek the support of external agencies, e.g. educational psychologist, inclusion, for children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion -4

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| **56** Children and young people's wishes and perspectives are important and should always be considered -3<br>**60** There is not enough support, funding, and/or training for mainstream schools to practise inclusion, particularly with children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties. -4 |
| **Items Ranked at -6**<br>**34** Children and young people whose behaviour is consistently poor have special educational needs<br>**51** Behaviourist approaches to SEMH difficulties are the most effective way of addressing and reducing misbehaviour in mainstream schools |
| **Additional items considered**<br>**43** Where inclusion is successful, all children and young people feel that they belong within their school +2<br>**35** To support children's and young people's SEMH needs properly, we must first fully understand what is contributing to these needs and then plan support accordingly 0 |

**Appendix Ac – Breakdown of demographics, pole rankings and post Q-sort information for Q-sorts significantly loading onto PRU Viewpoint 1b.**

| Participant ID | Demographic data | Statements ranked at -6 and +6 poles | Post Q-sort information |
|---|---|---|---|
| NB008 | Female<br>Age: 25 – 34 years<br>Ethnicity: White British<br>Participant did not provide information for years' experience or job role | ***Ranked at +6:***<br>**34** – Children and young people whose behaviour is consistently poor have special educational needs<br>**31** – The curriculum isn't designed for children and young people who experience severe SEMH difficulties<br>**Ranked at -6:**<br>**59** – Inclusion of children and young people with SEMH difficulties is a valid ideal, but often unrealistic in mainstream schools<br>**29** – There is little school staff can do to support children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion if parents/family are not onboard | *"I believe that special needs is anyone who struggles with learning in anyway. Spectrum"*<br>*"The curriculum is outdating and the same lessons/learning has been going on for 20+ years. Doesn't reflect modern world of young people"*<br>*"Inclusion can happen in my setting, it's a choice whether it is or not"* |

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| | *"Family is an important element but inclusion and learning can still take place without it. Just needs to be looked at more creatively, some CYPIC succeed"* |

## Appendix Ad – PRU Factor 1b: Crib Sheet

**Items Ranked at +6**

**31** The curriculum isn't designed for children and young people who experience severe SEMH difficulties

**34** Children and young people whose behaviour is consistently poor have special educational needs

**Items Ranked higher in Factor 1b Array than in other Factor Arrays**

**2** Inclusion and inclusive practice in schools, particularly for children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion, is heavily dependent on senior leadership +1

**3** Inclusion of children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion is hindered by funding and budgetary constraints +1

**18** Children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion often (disproportionately, compared with other students), live in poverty +3

**22** The support from external and specialist services, such as educational psychologists, inclusion team, social workers, etc., is important to support inclusion within mainstream settings +3 +

**26** Collaborative working across all stakeholders, i.e., child, parent, school staff, external professionals, is the key to inclusion working in mainstream schools +4

**27** Positive peer relationships within school can support the inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties +2

**28** Inclusion fails when school staff feel unsupported or are not given adequate support and supervision +2

**30** A person-centred approach is the best way to support children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties +4

**33** In order for mainstream schools to be inclusive, exclusions should not form part of their behaviour policies -5

**37** Exclusions are necessary to support the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties +2

**38** Exclusions are sometimes necessary to safeguard the needs and rights of other children and young people in their teaching groups / the school. +2

**46** Inclusion and inclusive practice for all children, including those experience SEMH difficulties, should be fundamental to pedagogic practice +4

**47** External factors are the most significant in placing children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion, rather than attributes of the children themselves +4

**50** Children and young people are often permanently excluded because school systems are inflexible, with a marked reluctance to adapt to support students' needs +5

**53** Mainstream school staff should always seek the support of external agencies, e.g. educational psychologist, inclusion, for children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion +3

**54** Following a permanent exclusion, children and young people should always be offered a fresh start in their new school setting 0

**56** Children and young people's wishes and perspectives are important and should always be considered +5

**57** Mainstream schools which have lower exclusion rates tend to be more inclusive -4

**60** There is not enough support, funding, and/or training for mainstream schools to practise inclusion, particularly with children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties +2

**Items Ranked lower in Factor 1b Array than in other Factor Arrays**

**1** Children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties in mainstream classes disrupt the education of other children. -3

**4** Inclusion of children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion can be achieved with adequate resources and adaptations i.e., differentiated curriculum 0

**5** The curriculum should be adapted and motivating for children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties 0

**6** The curriculum should have a focus on social and emotional wellbeing as well as academic knowledge and skills 0

**7** A child's presenting behaviour is a form of communication, which may indicate they have an unmet need 0

**8** Training and CPD opportunities, particularly relating to trauma, attachment, and nurture, are important in enabling all staff to meet the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties -2

**9** Children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties – and particularly those at risk of permanent exclusion or who have already been permanently excluded - need access to a nurturing key adult -1

**10** Government targets and pressure make inclusion of children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties difficult -5

**11** Influences outside school - such as peers, crime and gangs in the community can jeopardise the inclusion of children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties 0

**12** Parental engagement and support are crucial for the inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties, particularly those at risk of permanent exclusion -1

**13** There cannot be a "one size fits all" approach to inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties and are at risk of exclusion: individual cases and contexts need to be considered 0

**15** The biggest barriers to the inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties relate to 'within-child' factors such as motivation and disaffection -3

**16** Positive, consistent relationships between adults and children can prevent children and young people from being permanently excluded +1

**17** Children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties need more targeted support for their emotional expression and regulation, and social interaction +1

**19** Clear open communication between all stakeholders, i.e., child, parent, school staff, external professionals, etc., supports inclusion and inclusive practice for children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties -1

**20** In order to support the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties, teaching staff must have a good understanding of what the child may be experiencing +1

**36** Exclusions do not serve a constructive purpose in enhancing the wellbeing of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties -5

**41** When a child or young person has been permanently excluded support should focus on reintegration into mainstream schools and preparation for adulthood -4

**42** When a child or young person has been permanently excluded, they should be able to return to a mainstream school, rather than transferring to a specialist setting -4

**43** Where inclusion is successful, all children and young people feel that they belong within their school -3

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| **44** Pupil referral units are set up to support the needs of children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties better than is viable in mainstream secondary schools -2<br>**52** Behaviourist approaches to SEMH difficulties will remain mostly ineffective without the use of relational approaches which offer nurture, empathy, attentiveness, PACE -3<br>**55** Children and young people continue to misbehave because they experience feelings of rejection and/or have been labelled as "naughty" -2 |
| **Items Ranked at -6**<br>**29** There is little school staff can do to support children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion if parents/family are not onboard<br>**59** Inclusion of children and young people with SEMH difficulties is a valid ideal, but often unrealistic in mainstream schools |

**Appendix Ae – Consensus statements and their corresponding Z-scores and factor arrays for each viewpoint in the PRU dataset**

| Statements | Viewpoint 1 | | Viewpoint 1a | | Viewpoint 1b | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Z-scores | Ranking | Z-scores | Ranking | Z-scores | Ranking |
| 2 Inclusion and inclusive practice in schools, particularly for children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion, is heavily dependent on senior leadership | 0.51 | +1 | -0.52 | -2 | 0.32 | +1 |
| *3 Inclusion of children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion is hindered by funding and budgetary constraints | 0.31 | -1 | 0.03 | 0 | 0.32 | +1 |
| *5 The curriculum should be adapted and motivating for children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties | 1.03 | +3 | 0.44 | +2 | 0.00 | 0 |
| 6 The curriculum should have a focus on social and emotional wellbeing as well as academic knowledge and skills | 1.14 | +4 | 0.62 | +2 | 0.00 | 0 |
| 9 Children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties – and particularly those at risk of permanent exclusion or who have already been permanently excluded - need access to a nurturing key adult | 0.91 | +3 | 0.96 | +3 | -0.32 | -1 |
| 12 Parental engagement and support are crucial for the inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties, particularly those at risk of permanent exclusion | 0.75 | +2 | 0.24 | +1 | -0.32 | -1 |
| *14 It is important that the child and young person, who are at risk of permanent exclusion, participates in decision-making processes, particularly processes relating to identifying the support they need | 0.15 | 0 | 0.95 | +3 | 0.64 | +2 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 17 Children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties need more targeted support for their emotional expression and regulation, and social interaction | 1.50 | +5 | 0.95 | +3 | 0.32 | +1 |
| 18 Children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion often (disproportionately, compared with other students), live in poverty | -0.17 | 0 | 0.79 | +2 | 0.96 | +3 |
| 19 Clear open communication between all stakeholders, i.e., child, parent, school staff, external professionals, etc., supports inclusion and inclusive practice for children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties | 0.95 | +3 | 0.96 | +3 | -0.32 | -1 |
| *20 In order to support the needs of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties, teaching staff must have a good understanding of what the child may be experiencing | 1.26 | +4 | 0.95 | +3 | 0.32 | +1 |
| *23 Inclusion and inclusive practice of children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion depends on school staff wellbeing and capacity | -0.70 | -2 | -0.60 | -2 | -0.32 | -1 |
| *27 Positive peer relationships within school can support the inclusion of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties | 0.67 | +1 | 0.37 | +2 | 0.64 | +2 |
| *29 There is little school staff can do to support children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion if parents/family are not onboard | -1.30 | -4 | -1.35 | -5 | -1.93 | -6 |
| *32 A zero-tolerance approach to poor behaviour does not support inclusive practice in mainstream schools | -0.75 | -2 | -0.34 | -1 | -0.32 | -1 |
| *33 In order for mainstream schools to be inclusive, exclusions should not form part of their behaviour policies | -1.81 | -5 | -1.35 | -5 | -1.61 | -5 |
| 36 Exclusions do not serve a constructive purpose in enhancing the wellbeing of children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties | -1.42 | -5 | -0.56 | -2 | -1.61 | -5 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *44 Pupil referral units are set up to support the needs of children and young people experiencing SEMH difficulties better than is viable in mainstream secondary schools | -0.20 | 0 | -0.01 | 0 | -0.64 | -2 |
| 45 Mainstream schools can provide opportunities for small group working and personalised curricula to support children and young people who experience SEMH difficulties | -0.79 | -3 | 0.17 | +1 | -0.64 | -2 |
| *49 For inclusion of children and young people with SEMH difficulties to succeed, requires consistent support within Government policy | -0.90 | -3 | -1.58 | -5 | -1.28 | -4 |
| *52 Behaviourist approaches to SEMH difficulties will remain mostly ineffective without the use of relational approaches which offer nurture, empathy, attentiveness, PACE | -0.39 | -1 | -0.06 | 0 | -0.96 | -3 |
| *54 Following a permanent exclusion, children and young people should always be offered a fresh start in their new school setting | 0.42 | 0 | -0.01 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 |
| *55 Children and young people continue to misbehave because they experience feelings of rejection and/or have been labelled as “naughty” | -0.68 | -2 | 0.00 | 0 | -0.64 | -2 |
| *57 Mainstream schools which have lower exclusion rates tend to be more inclusive | -1.06 | -4 | -1.20 | -4 | -1.28 | -4 |
| 59 Inclusion of children and young people with SEMH difficulties is a valid ideal, but often unrealistic in mainstream schools | -0.90 | -3 | -0.80 | -3 | -1.93 | -6 |