

**SAFETY/BULLYING IN THE COMMUNITY: AN
EXPLORATION OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF
STUDENTS WITH LEARNING AND/OR
COMMUNICATION DIFFICULTIES, OF THEIR
PARENTS/CARERS AND OF THEIR TEACHERS**

By

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to explore the extent to which young people with learning/communication difficulties see themselves affected by feeling unsafe/bullying in the community.

This research also investigated the views of parents of young people with learning/communication difficulties. The researcher wished to explore the extent to which parents endeavour to support their vulnerable offspring by curtailing their exposure to potential risks, as against helping them develop coping strategies to enable them to stay safe in community settings and be competent to avoid and address potential or actual risks.

Finally, the study aimed to explore the perceptions of teachers who work with young people with learning/communication difficulties, of how much the young people are at risk of being bullied in the community, and how the school curriculum seeks to minimise/prepare young people to address any such risks.

Through a multiple case study design, the perceptions of six young people with learning/communication difficulties were explored, as were the perceptions of one of the parents of each of the young people. Three schools were involved: one mainstream and two special schools. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the young people, with their parents and with one member of staff from each school. In addition, rating scales and photographs were used with the young people. The research was collaborative in that the young people were involved in identifying which places in the community to take photographs of, and took some of the photographs themselves with the help of school staff.

The qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis (Thomas, 2009). Findings point to the importance of taking an eco-systemic approach to the issue of how safe young people with learning/communication difficulties feel in the community, and to the issue of bullying.

To Dave, Josh and Sam

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ARC	Additional Resources Centre
ASDAN CoPE	Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network Certificate of Personal Effectiveness
CS	Case Study
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
INSET	In-Service Training
LA	Local Authority
MLD	Moderate Learning Difficulties
MS	Member of staff
P	Parent
S	School
SATS	Standard Assessment Tests
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SLD	Severe Learning Difficulties
YP	Young Person

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context for the study

At the time of my joining Shelton (pseudonym) EPS as a Trainee Educational Psychologist, one of the service's priorities was anti-bullying work. Shelton EPS is based in a small, urban Local Authority (LA) in the West Midlands. Following on from Shelton's involvement in the Anti-Bullying Alliance's (ABA) final report (2011) on practice in ten Local Authorities with regard to tackling bullying in the community, Shelton was particularly concerned with bullying that goes on beyond the school gates (Education and Inspections Act, 2006, Section 89 (5)). Community is defined by the ABA as 'any place outside of the school or home environment, which is frequented by children, with or without the presence of onlooking adults' (NCB, 2007a, p.1). The approach within Shelton EPS toward anti-bullying work is an eco-systemic approach, i.e. it is not possible to deal with one element of anti-bullying work (e.g. in school) in isolation from community work. This is underpinned by a community psychology approach to build sustainable communities and an understanding that the well-being of one person is affected by the well-being of those around her/him.

Much research has been carried out on bullying within schools, for example:

- 'The Use and Effectiveness of Anti-Bullying Strategies in Schools' (Thompson and Smith, 2011);
- 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for School Leaders, staff and Governing Bodies' (DfE, 2011a);

- ‘Sticks and stones may break my bones, but being left on my own is worse: An analysis of reported bullying at school within NFER attitude survey’ (Benton, 2011); and
- The National Children’s Bureau ‘Highlight’ report on bullying (NCB, 2010).

However, less research has been carried out on bullying outside of school, as highlighted by the ABA (NCB, 2007a); but is nevertheless a significant concern, as highlighted by National Indicator (NI) 69 (HM Government, 2009). NI 69 considers the number of children who have experienced bullying, both ‘at school’ and ‘somewhere else (including on your journey to or from school)’ (p.50).

In addition, research from the DfE (2011b) suggests that children with special educational needs (SEN) are amongst the worst affected by bullying. A longitudinal study of young people in England (DCSF, 2010) is cited by the DfE (2011b) as demonstrating that bullying prevalence and concern decreases with age, except in the case of SEN pupils. Other studies which highlight a connection between bullying and disability include:

- ‘The protection of children online: a brief scoping review to identify vulnerable groups’ (Munro, 2011);
- ‘Tellus National Indicators: How do the views of pupils with a learning difficulty differ from all pupils?’ (HM Government, 2008); and
- ‘Spotlight briefing: Bullying and disability’ (NCB, 2007b).

Munro (2011) calls for more in-depth qualitative research to be undertaken, which enables ‘a more nuanced understanding’ (p.15) of how young people’s life

experiences within the wider family and environmental context, shape their behaviour and their coping strategies. Other studies recognise, similarly, that small-scale, in-depth studies are essential if practitioners are to be equipped to deal with bullying (Bourke and Burgman, 2010; Sawyer et al., 2011; Torrance, 2000).

Prior work within the Borough suggested that, despite the DfE (2011b) research claim that young people with special educational needs are amongst the worst affected by bullying, the young people themselves were under-represented and their views had not been sought to any great extent. In line with the LA's eco-systemic approach to tackling bullying in the community, it was decided to conduct a small-scale piece of research, using a multiple case study design (Thomas, 2011), exploring the views of young people with learning/communication difficulties with regard to their perceptions/experiences of feeling safe in the community and of bullying. In addition, for the purpose of triangulation, the research gathers the views of the young people's parents/carers and of their teachers.

1.2 Advance organiser to the main body of the paper

The literature review considers the definition and the prevalence of bullying, as well as perceptions of prevalence of, and interventions for, bullying. It considers risk and protective factors for bullying, one of which may be having, or not having, a disability (DfEE, 2001; Salmon and West, 2000). It considers also contexts for research into bullying: school, home and community, in line with the eco-systemic approach. Both special schools and mainstream schools are considered, and whether one context renders young people with disabilities more vulnerable to being bullied than the other. The home context is considered in terms of how well families manage to adapt to having a child with a learning disability, as well as the levels of cohesion within the

family. Other variables considered are socioeconomic status, level of parent education, and, in line with the principles of positive psychology (Dykens, 2005; Prout, 2009), the extent to which parents are able to recognise strengths in the young people, and equip them with strategies to cope with any potential bullying. Finally, the literature review considers the community context, and the role that the wider community plays in tackling bullying, in line with a community psychology approach (Nelson and Prilleltensky, 2010).

The methodology employed was one of collaborative research arising from a relativist epistemology (Cohen et al., 2011). A multiple case study (Thomas, 2011) was used to explore the perceptions of six young people and of their parents (six young person/parent dyads), from three different schools within one metropolitan borough: one mainstream and two special schools. The methods employed were semi-structured interviews and rating scales. One member of staff from each school was also interviewed. The qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis (Thomas, 2009) and the results/discussion section considers the themes which emerged, as well as how the themes relate to the supporting literature. Finally the concluding section considers implications for professional practice and future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Aims and objectives of the literature review

The purpose of the literature review is critically to review existing research on bullying in the community, with particular regard to the perceptions of young people with learning and/or communication difficulties. Additionally, there has been limited research into parents' perspectives on bullying. This literature review also addresses the risk and protective factors associated with bullying, including coping strategies employed by parents and young people. This literature review will address the broad issues presented in Box 1.

1. Definitions of bullying
2. Prevalence of bullying
3. Perceptions of prevalence of bullying
4. Contexts for research into bullying
5. Risk factors for bullying
6. Resilience factors for bullying

Box 1. Issues addressed in the current literature review

2.2 Literature search method

Sources were identified from a range of academic databases using the University of Birmingham electronic library service. The databases included *ASSIA*, *Education* (SAGE), *ERIC* and *Psychology* (SAGE), *Swetwise*, and *PsycOVID*. 'Bullying in the community' and 'disability' were initially entered as keywords. Using Boolean logic, these search terms were subsequently combined with a range of other keywords, namely, 'perceptions of parents', 'perceptions of teachers', and 'coping strategies'. The abstracts and references of resulting articles were explored for their pertinence

to the review. As the focus of the literature review became more refined, a snowball technique was used to identify further relevant articles. This involved following up references from the articles found through initial database searches. These references were obtained and further relevant references were identified from the text. Government legislation and guidance were searched for using the Department for Education website.

2.3 Definitions of bullying

Smith (2004) contends that bullying is now 'widely defined as a systematic abuse of power' (p.98). Horner (2011) considers that 'bullying involves repeated acts of aggression, intimidation, or coercion against a victim who is weaker than the perpetrator in terms of physical size or social power' (p.384). Mishna (2003) defines bullying as 'a form of aggression in which there is an imbalance of power between the bully and the victim...that occurs largely in the context of the peer group' (p.338). National Indicator 69 (HM Government, 2009) considers that 'bullying is repeated behaviour which makes other people feel uncomfortable or threatened whether this is intended or not' (p.50), however the script noted in NI 69 used with the young people surveyed, was that 'bullying is when people hurt or pick on you on purpose (for example by teasing or hurting you, including by mobile phone or on the internet, by taking or breaking your things, or by leaving you out)' (p.50). This script appears to omit the repetitive element often contained in bullying definitions, as does the Mishna (2003) definition. The DfE (2011b), on the other hand, notes that 'bullying involves repeated acts of aggression' and that 'an isolated aggressive act, like a fight, is not bullying' (p.6).

Cyberbullying has also come to the fore in recent years, and is defined by Tokunaga (2010) as 'any behaviour performed through electronic or digital media by individuals or groups that repeatedly communicates hostile or aggressive messages intended to inflict harm or discomfort to others' (p.278).

In the current research, after discussion with the teachers in the three schools, it was considered that the young people (aged 15-18) had had sufficient teaching on bullying to understand the different types of bullying, and that bullying is behaviour intended to cause hurt that happens several times on purpose. The young people were also asked to consider how 'safe' (NCB, 2007a) they felt in the context of having concerns about being bullied. Much of the literature reviewed (e.g. Christensen et al., 2012) links bullying and victimization. Victimization suggests a lack of resilience (Benard, 1991) and an increased susceptibility to being adversely affected by bullying (Mishna, 2003). In the current study, it is recognised that there may be some overlap between bullying, victimisation and feeling unsafe, and that this may be a limitation.

2.4 Prevalence and perceptions of bullying

Bullying is recognised as a social phenomenon (Sharp, 1996), in that it requires more than one person to be involved. Within schools, the social dynamics amongst student peers can mean that the prevalence of bullying is fairly high (Sharp, 1996; Cassidy, 2009). The role of peers in either sustaining or tackling bullying in schools is an important one. Sharp (1996), and more recently Rigby (2005) and Savage (2005), has suggested that interventions which are likely to be most effective are those based on peer influence.

The National Children's Bureau (NCB, 2007b) maintain that 'disablist bullying has received limited attention at a national and local level', and that 'anti-bullying strategies do not often have a well-developed disability focus' (p.3). Christensen et al. (2012) suggest that young people with learning difficulties are significantly more likely to report being bullied than their typically developing peers, but that the victimization of young people with learning difficulties is not worse than that of typically developing young people.

Perkins et al. (2011) found that mainstream students 'substantially misperceived peer norms regarding bullying perpetration', in that they 'thought bullying perpetration, victimization, and pro-bullying attitudes were far more frequent than was the case' (p.703). Using print media posters as the primary communication strategy, they conducted an intervention displaying accurate norms from survey results of the students in the schools. They found that a pre-/post-intervention comparison of results revealed not only 'significant reductions overall in perceptions of peer bullying and pro-bullying attitudes' (p.703), but also reductions in levels of actual bullying and victimization.

Nabuzoka (2003) investigated differences between teacher ratings and peer nominations of bullying behaviour of children with and without learning difficulties. Whereas peers associated being a victim of bullying with being shy and displaying help-seeking behaviours, teachers tended to associate victims with 'fighting, being disruptive and being less cooperative' (p.307). Nabuzoka (2003) found that these differences were related to the children's learning difficulties status. Correlations between teacher ratings and peer nominations were significant for typically developing children but not for children with learning difficulties. The findings of this

study suggest the heterogeneity of children with learning difficulties, compared to their typically developing peers. The assessment of young people with learning difficulties, in terms of their potential risk for adjustment problems, may need to be approached differently by teachers.

Rose et al. (2009) concluded that students with disabilities, particularly those in special school settings, reported higher rates of victimization than their typically developing peers. However, young people with disabilities can misinterpret non-bullying situations as bullying, and can perceive victimisation by peers where none is intended, out of a heightened sense of anxiety (van Roekel et al., 2010; Savage, 2005; Saylor and Leach, 2009). Some of the statements used in the survey method used by Rose et al. (2009) - 'other students called me names'; 'other students made fun of me'; 'other students picked on me'; and 'I got hit and pushed by other students' – may have been interpreted differently by the students with disabilities. Savage (2005) suggests that 'a more ecological focus on social acceptance and friendship skills' (p.34) might be a more effective way to address these young people's perceptions of being more likely to be bullied than their mainstream peers.

2.5 Risk factors for bullying

Leff (1999) identified that bullied children are picked on for their vulnerability, but that learning difficulties are only one of the categories that make children vulnerable. Fifteen per cent of the children in this study had learning difficulties; thirty per cent had a physical disability; but the largest percentage of children aged 8-14 were experiencing a family crisis or family distress, or were neglected. Leff (1999) points out that 'it is a sad comment on group behaviours that it is anxious, depressed pupils

with poor self-esteem, who already have much to cope with in terms of physical, personal, or social disadvantage, who become the victims of bullies' (p.1076).

Similarly, Salmon and West (2000) consider the physical and mental health issues related to bullying. They list a number of risk factors which contribute to children being more vulnerable to bullying, of which having special educational needs is only one. Other risk factors include coming from an overprotective family, or a family in crisis. Fox and Boulton (2005) investigated the social skills problems of victims of bullying amongst typically developing children, and found that the perceptions of the victims themselves, as well as of their peers and their teachers, were that they had poor social skills, and that this made them more susceptible to bullying.

Eliot and Cornell (2009) investigated a theory for understanding peer bullying as the result of aggressive attitudes and insecure attachment. They found that 'aggressive attitudes mediated a relationship between insecure attachment and bullying behaviour' (p.201). Cassidy (2009) explored the relationship between social identity, family and school context, problem-solving style, self-esteem, health behaviour, psychological distress, and victimisation in the context of bullying and victimisation in school children. He found that the 'best predictors of victimisation' were gender, family situation, social identity and problem-solving style (p.63). As in the Bourke and Burgman (2010) study, less support from parents featured as signifying increased vulnerability to being bullied.

Vernberg and Biggs (2010) identified that children with health problems such as learning disabilities, may be more likely to be targets for bullying-victimization problems. Similarly, Sweeting and West (2001) suggested that children who had a

disability such as a sight, hearing or speech problem were more likely to be bullied.

Baumeister et al. (2008) found that children with learning disabilities who had 'comorbid psychiatric diagnoses reported a significantly higher amount of peer victimization than children without a comorbid psychiatric condition' (p.11).

Studies such as Fekkes et al. (2006) and Baumeister et al. (2008) suggest a link between victimization and anxiety. Fekkes et al. (2006) pose the question of whether bullied children get ill, or ill children get bullied. For children with learning and/or communication difficulties, their awareness that they are different from their typically developing peers can give rise to anxiety, which in turn can make them more susceptible to bullying. If they are then the victims of bullying behaviour, this can exacerbate their anxiety further. Young people with learning and/or communication difficulties therefore need to be taught to recognise and manage their anxiety.

Studies such as those by Elam and Sigelman (1983) and Bromfield et al. (1986) have suggested that typically developing children and adults can have low expectations of children with disabilities, and may mistakenly cite lack of ability as a reason for a child with a disability struggling in school. Taylor et al. (1987) suggested that more attention needed to be given to the social adaptation of children with disabilities in schools. Similarly, Nabuzoka and Smith (1993) found that the role of social cognitive deficits in the peer relationships of children with learning disabilities warranted further study. Carter and Spencer (2006) suggested that students with disabilities, both visible and non-visible, experienced bullying more than their non-disabled peers.

Botting and Conti-Ramsden (2000) suggest that children with complex language impairments are more likely to score over the clinical threshold for behavioural

difficulties, and that, in addition, these children are rated as having more marked social difficulties with peers. Knox and Conti-Ramsden (2003) found that 36% of participants with specific language impairments viewed themselves in danger of being bullied in school compared with only 12% of the typically developing students. Dockrell and Lindsay (2010) argue that, for children with specific speech and language difficulties, a multi-professional approach is needed, that takes into account the children's social and behavioural needs, as well as the impact of speech and language problems on the children's access to the curriculum.

Kuhne and Wiener (2000) found that students with learning disabilities had 'lower social preference scores' and were 'more likely to be socially rejected' (p.64). Benton (2011) considers that tackling social rejection can be more difficult than dealing with explicit bullying. Bauminger et al. (2005) pointed out that children with learning disabilities had 'major' and 'consistent' difficulties in social information processing and in the understanding of 'complex emotions and in higher emotional understanding capabilities' (p.45). This might be reframed in terms of Huebner et al.'s (2002) findings that children with learning disabilities simply process such social information differently, and that the social information processes of children or adolescents with and without disabilities should not be compared. Warne (2003) reported an evaluation of a peer mediation scheme in a special school for students with moderate learning difficulties. She concluded that pupils with moderate learning difficulties do have the ability to arbitrate successfully; that the process can help to develop their social skills and emotional literacy; and can play an important part in increasing cooperation between pupils within the school community.

Kaukiainen et al. (2002) found that victimisation was not related to having learning difficulties. Christensen et al. (2012) found that adolescents with learning difficulties were significantly more likely to report being bullied than their typically developing peers, but not that the victimization of adolescents with learning difficulties was more 'chronic' or 'severe' than that of their typically developing peers (p.49). They found that 'trajectories of victimization did not differ based on disability status', and that what did emerge as the 'primary predictor of victimization' was lower social skills (p.49). Johnson et al. (2002), like Fox and Boulton (2005), in a study of typically developing young people, found that the children at greatest risk of being bullied were boys with poor pro-social skills and emotional problems, as well as general difficulties with social interaction, expression of emotion and hyperactivity.

The studies in this section suggest that poor social skills can make a young person more susceptible to being bullied, whether or not they have learning difficulties. For young people with learning difficulties however, the importance of improving their social skills may be even more important in that the two factors in combination - learning difficulties and poor social skills – may put them at additional risk.

The majority of studies considered so far in the literature review have used quantitative methods of data collection such as surveys and questionnaires. Flutter (2006) considers that qualitative research can further enhance an understanding of the factors involved, in this case the risk factors for bullying. She advocates also for the importance of listening to the student voice (Benard and Slade, 2009; Bourke and Burgman, 2010), in order to strive towards Munro's (2011) goal of a more elaborate understanding of the factors involved.

2.6 Contexts for research into bullying

Turner et al. (2011) found that 'although victimization at school is substantial, a considerable proportion of peer victimizations occur away from school contexts' (p.1052). Their findings highlight that, rather than focusing only on traditional measures of bullying in schools, there is also a need for comprehensive measurement of various forms of peer victimization that occur both at school and in the wider community. Norwich and Kelly (2004) found that pupils with moderate learning difficulties in special schools experienced more bullying by pupils 'from other mainstream schools, and from peers and outsiders in their neighbourhood' (p.43).

Many studies advocate that any response to bullying prevention needs to include support for families. Vernberg and Biggs (2010) evoke Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological-contextual theory (see Figure 1) as a model for understanding the contribution that families can make to a bullying culture. Vernberg and Biggs (2010) emphasise both how family dynamics can place children at risk of bullying and/or victimization; and how health problems can pose further bullying-related challenges. Olweus (1997) emphasised that of paramount importance, in a programme implemented in 42 schools, was the fact that the behaviours and attitudes characterized were a combination of positive involvement from both teachers and parents. Munro (2011) calls for in-depth qualitative research which facilitates 'a more nuanced understanding of how children and young people's life experiences (within the wider family and environmental context)', (p.15-16), render some young people more vulnerable than others.

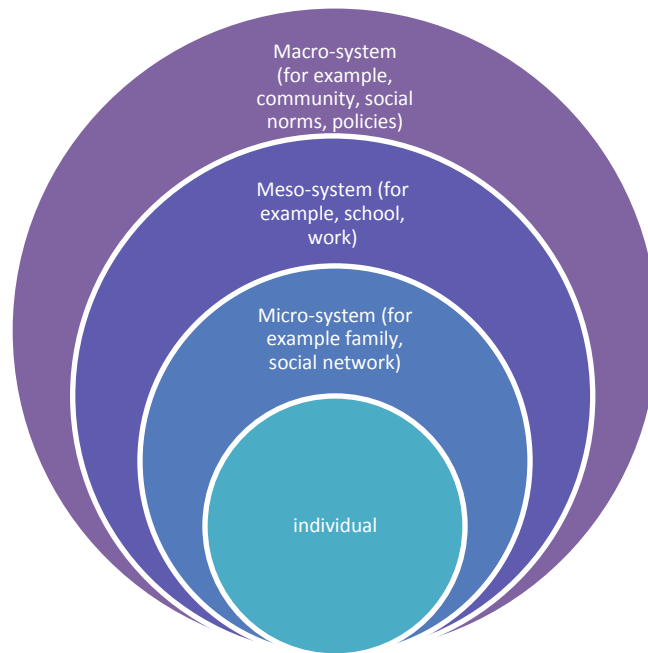


Figure 1: Nested ecological levels of analysis (adapted from Nelson and Prilleltensky, 2010, p.78)

Mishna (2003) considers that ‘a systemic-ecological framework is essential in order to understand and address bullying’ (p.340). In addition to discussing the importance of social skills training for young people with learning difficulties, she considers the importance of family intervention, and of increasing awareness and changing attitudes within the community. Savage (2005) advocates that ‘inclusion-oriented ecological interventions are more likely to encourage friendships and social acceptance among the wider peer group and thus may be the most effective interventions to prevent bullying’ (p.23).

2.6.1 School

Beckett (2009) considers the role of education in encouraging typically developing children and young people to develop positive attitudes towards people with disabilities. She suggests that education could play a ‘truly proactive role in challenging any disablist attitudes’, potential or actual, that are held by typically

developing children and young people (p.317). She considers also that this can lead to building an inclusive society. Prilleltensky (2009) espouses a similar social model of disability: 'a person-environment approach which considers the complex interplay of individual differences and social environments' (p.265). According to this model, many barriers encountered by people with disabilities result from environments that fail to accommodate them, and are therefore socially created. Dykens (2005) considers that there is a need to 'broaden the scope of traditional family research to include a host of positive outcomes for families and siblings' of people with intellectual disabilities (p.360). Prout (2009) considers that, until recently, the history of the provision and care of children and adolescents with intellectual disabilities in the schools has been the antithesis of the principles of positive psychology, in that it has considered only the difficulties faced by young people with learning difficulties, rather than considering also their strengths.

2.6.1.1 Bullying of young people with learning difficulties in mainstream schools

Frederickson et al. (2007) consider that the concerns expressed by The Warnock Report (Warnock, 2005) about pupils' experience of inclusion, highlighted social and affective outcomes in particular. 'Pupils who have special needs are considered at risk of being "bullied and teased, or at best simply neglected" in mainstream schools, particularly as they get older' (Frederickson et al., 2007: 105). On the other hand, Alderson and Goodey (1999) suggest that comparative evidence of inclusive and special schooling for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) 'seriously challenges assumptions about the advantages of special schooling' (p.260). Nakken and Pijl (2002) studied the effects of integration on the development of social

relationships in mainstream schools between peers with and without disabilities. Their results were inconclusive. Knox and Conti-Ramsden (2003) found no statistically significant difference between the risk of being bullied experienced by pupils with a specific language impairment attending mainstream and that by pupils attending special schools. Luciano and Savage (2007) suggest that pupils with learning difficulties in mainstream settings that avoid pull-out programs may still experience significant bullying.

Singer (2005) explored the dynamics between dyslexia, being bullied, self-esteem, and psychosocial problems. She found that a lot of children with dyslexia protected themselves against teasing and feeling valueless by hiding both their academic failures and their emotions. She found however that others coped by concentrating on their academic progress, and that their self-esteem appeared strengthened by fighting against dyslexia. Singer (2005) draws three insights from her study, which are relevant to schools, but also to the wider influences surrounding children and young people, such as family and the wider community. They may be relevant not only to young people with dyslexia, but also to those with other disabling conditions. The first is that parents can be an important resource to young people and that, in order to help a young person, teachers and parents must cooperate where possible. The second is that teachers and parents need to acknowledge the young person's particular issues, from the young person's perspective, and need to help him or her to look for constructive solutions. The third, and in some ways arguably the most important, is that Singer (2005) makes the point that knowledge of 'general dynamics' and of general risk and protective factors is 'insufficient for understanding the dynamics in the relationships of a specific child with his or her environment' (p.422).

‘Every rule’, says Singer (2005), ‘has an exception, and every child is unique’ (p.422).

In the majority of cases, young people and children are able to explain how they live with disabling conditions, and to discuss what their typically developing peers, teachers and parents could do to help with their difficulties. Often young people with learning difficulties just need the opportunity to voice their opinions.

Frederickson (2010) and Campbell (2007) make the point that, when explanatory information is given to typically developing peers in a mainstream setting about a young person with special needs and their disabling condition, then peer acceptance and supportive relationships are more likely to be established. Frederickson et al. (2007) emphasise the importance of peer preparation, in their report on an evaluation of the social and affective outcomes of a special-mainstream school inclusion initiative. ‘Peer preparation’ suggests that it should not be presumed that children understand the right way to behave in any circumstance (Byrne, 1997): in this case, how to respond to children from special schools. Instead they have to be taught and supported to understand how to behave: in this case, in order that the children from the special school might feel included. Campbell (2006) considers changing children’s attitudes towards autism as a ‘process of persuasive communication’ (p.251). This preparation, or persuasive communication, is of benefit to the typically developing children, as much as it is of benefit to the children with disabilities: the typically developing children can benefit from being helped to empathise with the children with disabilities, and with how they might be feeling; as well as from gaining some understanding of the nature of the children’s disabilities, and the impact of these disabilities on the children. Thus the ‘benefits’ of inclusion can be a two-way process.

2.6.1.2 Bullying in special schools

Kaukiainen et al. (2002) and Mishna (2003) found connections between bully-victim problems and self-concept amongst children with learning difficulties. Kelly and Norwich (2004) found that pupils with moderate learning difficulties in special schools had more positive self-perceptions of educational abilities than those in mainstream schools. This may be because there is less comparison with typically developing peers, and therefore the pupils may feel less marginalised.

Nordmann (2001) found that the marginalisation of students with learning disabilities can occur in both schools that do, and schools that do not, acknowledge learning disabilities. Of the two secondary school pupils who were the focus of this study, one attended a school described by the author as 'orientated toward the identification of special education students and the provision of services to them'; the other a 'setting in which learning differences were neither acknowledged nor addressed' (p.276).

Nordmann (2001) maintains that, although the two schools reflected 'different philosophies and practices regarding learning disability', both were flawed in that they reflected 'cultures centred on institutional dogma', and 'driven by economic and political considerations' (p.285). She asserts that schools that respond adequately to students with learning difficulties need to evidence this responsiveness on four levels: acknowledgement, identification, observation, and accommodation. By so doing, schools can demonstrate cultures deemed by Nordmann (2001) to be 'moral' and to the benefit of students with learning difficulties; 'cultures of dialogue and discourse centred on students and their voices' (p.285).

Maybe this, then, is the nature of true inclusion. If so, then it applies to all children who are marginalised on any grounds (Salmon and West, 2000; Sweeting and West,

2001), and not just those with disabilities. Nordmann (2001) refers also to 'the fit' (p.276) between an individual child and a school, and highlights again the point made by Mishna (2003) and Singer (2005) that every child is unique; and the necessity of the specificity of accommodating a child's particular needs (Hodson et al., 2005). A child who feels listened to, and has a positive self-concept may be less vulnerable to being bullied (Kaukiainen et al., 2002; Mishna, 2003). This may apply especially to children with a disability, on account of the heterogeneity of children with learning difficulties, compared to their typically developing peers (Frederickson and Furnham, 2004; Gresham and MacMillan, 1997; Huebner et al., 2002; Mishna, 2003; Nabuzoka, 2003).

Norwich (2008) considers that the 'dilemma of difference' concerning inclusive education is, on the one hand, providing a sense of belonging and participation, and on the other, meeting children's individual needs (p.136). He advocates that, 'rather than insisting on locating "mainstream" and "special" at opposite ends of a one-dimensional placement continuum', what is needed is a 'multidimensional model' (p.136). The 'flexible interacting continua' (p.136) provided by such a model focus, not just on placement, but also on identification, participation, curriculum and teaching and governance. The study was carried out in three countries: England, USA and the Netherlands. Many of the professionals involved across the three countries recognised a 'reduced but nonetheless persisting role for special schools that are inter-connected with ordinary schools' (p.141). He considers that creating educational provision for all children, including those with disabilities, 'involves balancing common and different aspects' (p.141), and that a continuum of provision on multiple levels, might render the choices that parents have to make less difficult.

The continuum of participation, for example, takes into account social and cultural aspects. These may include such factors as socioeconomic status and parental attitudes towards integration both in the school community and in the wider community.

Torrance (2000) advocates for more qualitative research in considering the social context within which bullying occurs, as well as the nature of schools and the interactions of staff, pupils and parents. Lindsay (2007) considers that of prime importance is to investigate more substantially the 'mediators and moderators' (p.2) that enable children with special needs and disabilities to maximise their educational potential. One of these mediators may be parents, and the role they play in supporting their children, regardless of school placement.

2.6.2 Home as a context for research into bullying

Thompson and Smith (2011) consider that a whole-school approach to tackling and preventing bullying in schools includes working with parents, and they emphasise the importance of support for parents of at-risk children. They found that the strategy of involving parents 'was rated as having a positive effect on reducing bullying' (p.20). Similarly, the NCB (2007b) considers that a whole-school approach, including parents, is the 'most effective way to prevent bullying and address the behaviour of bullies' (p.3).

Chang-Hun (2010) maintains that parents have little influence on their children's bullying practices in mainstream schools, and advocates that further study on how parents could get involved with school activity and policy, and on how the parental influence could be delivered to schools, would greatly benefit the study of bullying. A

study by Brighi et al. (2012) explored how the relational context between school, peers and family, as perceived by adolescents, has the potential to influence the probability of becoming a victim of bullying. They found that lower self-esteem in family relationships, and parent loneliness were predictors of victimization, particularly cybervictimization.

Kelly and Norwich (2004) suggest that the formation of self-perceptions is complex and multi-dimensional. It may be that it is the home context that makes the greatest difference to how a young person with learning difficulties views him/herself, and not their school placement. Singer (2005) considers the 'distinction that children make or do not make between their global self and their academic self', and that parents, as well as teachers, could 'support children's use of this distinction to bolster their global self-esteem' (p.422).

De Boer et al. (2010) studied the effect of parental attitudes on the social participation of children with disabilities in mainstream schools. De Boer et al. (2010) highlight the importance of positive parental attitudes on the social participation of children with disabilities. One of the variables found to relate to the attitudes of parents was socioeconomic status. Humphrey et al. (2012) found that students with disabilities are at a 'greatly increased risk of poor academic outcomes' (p.1), and that two of the factors influencing their attainment were socioeconomic status and lack of positive relationships. Similarly, Mishna (2003) found that factors that protect the psychosocial adjustment of young people with learning disabilities include 'appropriate academic support, attachment with teachers and good peer relationships' (p.338), as well as positive relationships with parents.

2.6.2.1 The role of parents in relation to bullying

School-parent interactions can be an intimidating experience for parents of children with disabilities. Duncan (2003) found that parents viewed their negotiation of the special educational needs system as 'exceptionally difficult and stressful' (p.341). Barlow and Humphrey (2012) studied the engagement and confidence of parents of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). They found that statistically significant predictors of variations in parental response were pupils' ethnic origin, socio-economic status, SEND provision and primary need, their wider participation in school and bullying. Bourke and Burgman (2010) explored how children with disabilities experience support from friends, parents and teachers in the context of coping with bullying. Bourke and Burgman (2010) consider that 'professionals need to consider the gaps in current support that require further development, such as emotional support from parents' (p.369).

Sawyer et al. (2011) hold the view that very little research has been devoted to studying the perspectives of the parents of children who are bullied. This study considers that an ecological framework is essential to address the complexities involved in bullying, and that such a framework should include peers, teachers, the school, community, and parents. Sawyer et al. (2011) maintain that 'understanding parents' perceptions and conceptualizations is crucial to bullying research and intervention efforts' (p.1795), in that parents' perspectives undoubtedly influence young people's reactions to bullying, for example with regard to the strategies that parents may or may not suggest in response to bullying. This may be affected by parents' coping styles.

Both the Bourke and Burgman (2010) and the Sawyer et al. (2011) study involved qualitative in-depth interviews, allowing for a more 'nuanced' (Munro, 2011) understanding of the factors involved in addressing the complexities of bullying. Furthermore, Sawyer et al. (2011) consider the importance of an ecological framework, whereby bullying dynamics are seen to extend beyond the children who are bullied, and include peers, teachers, the school, community, and parents.

2.6.2.2 The role of parents in relation to coping styles

Wolfradt et al. (2003) found that 'perceived parental psychological pressure correlated positively with depersonalisation and trait anxiety among the adolescents', and that 'perceived parental warmth was positively associated with active coping and negatively correlated with trait anxiety in the adolescents' (p.521). By contrast, Meesters and Muris (2004) found no significant relationships between parental emotional warmth and coping styles. They did find, however, that 'perceived rejection by both father and mother was significantly associated with the use of passive coping strategies'; and that 'perceived control by both parents was linked to higher scores of active coping' (p.513). These studies suggest a link between parenting styles and coping behaviour in young people. As identified by Sawyer et al. (2011), parents' perspectives of and attitudes towards bullying, and the support they may or may not offer to their children, undoubtedly influence young people's reactions to bullying and their ability to cope with it.

In the case of young people with learning and/or communication difficulties, the role of parenting style may be even more important, in that many young people with disabilities already have a heightened sense of anxiety (Baumeister et al., 2008; Fekkes et al., 2006; Saylor and Leach, 2009). Families typically establish functional

styles early, however it is likely that there may be significant changes upon discovery that their child has some form of disability. A child's development no doubt affects the functioning of a family, but equally so, the functioning of a family can affect the child.

Altieri and von Kluge (2009) studied family functioning and coping behaviours in parents of children with autism. They considered family functioning in terms of the variables of cohesion and adaptability. A well-functioning family is defined as having a 'good balance of cohesion and adaptability' (p.84). Cohesion is defined as 'the emotional bonding that family members have toward one another' (p.84). The levels on the continuum of cohesion (Figure 2) range from disengaged to enmeshed. Highly enmeshed families are defined as 'overly involved with and protective of their children's lives'; whereas disengaged families are defined as having 'rigid boundaries' around family roles and being 'under-involved' in their children's lives (p.84).

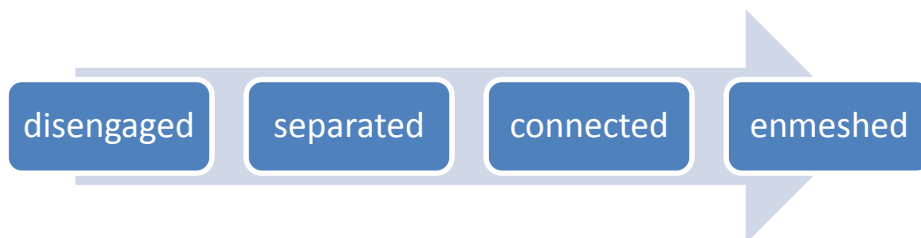


Figure 2: The levels on the continuum of cohesion (from Altieri and von Kluge, 2009)

Adaptability is defined as the measurement of a 'family's ability to change in response to a stressful situation' (p.84). The levels on the continuum of adaptability (Figure 3) range from rigid to chaotic. Rigid families are defined as 'resistant to change even in response to large stressors'; whereas chaotic families are defined as 'characterized by unstable and unpredictable change' (p.84). Previous research had

suggested that families with a child with a disability that operate at optimal levels fall between enmeshment and disengagement on the cohesion continuum, and between rigidity and chaos on the adaptability continuum. However, what Altieri and von Kluge (2009) found was that the parents in their study who rated their family as enmeshed evidenced more positive coping strategies than those from other cohesion styles. Altieri and von Kluge (2009) suggest therefore that ‘the enmeshed style may be more adaptive for a family that encounters extreme challenges’ (p.83).

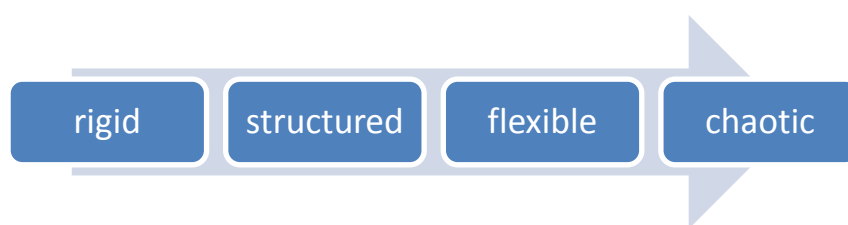


Figure 3: The levels on the continuum of adaptability (from Altieri and von Kluge, 2009)

Similarly, Luong et al. (2009) studied ‘the effect of autism on the family, coping styles, and support systems’ (p.222). Results suggested coping styles including denial/passive coping, empowerment, rearranging life and relationships, changed expectations, social withdrawal and acceptance. These coping styles resonate with Altieri and von Kluge’s (2009) continuum of adaptability, in that they reflect a family’s ability to change in response to a stressful situation. A family may go through each of Luong et al.’s (2009) coping styles, in order to achieve an optimal response to change necessitated by having a child with autism or some other form of learning difficulty; or they may become ‘stuck’, for example retaining a passive coping style, and may require support in order to progress to a more healthy level of adaptability. Luong et al. (2009) consider how having a child with a health problem can affect family functioning and coping. They suggest that a ‘family-centred practice approach’

should be considered the 'standard practice' in school settings when working with families of students with disabilities (p.229). They consider the role of school nurses in helping families receive the information they need to make the best decisions for their children; and in identifying specific needs, and addressing those needs by providing appropriate supportive programs.

Furthermore, the results of a study by Dabrowska and Pisula (2010) shed light on the 'relationship between coping styles and parental stress' (p.266) in families of children with autism. It was found that parents of children with autism were less likely to use 'social diversion coping' than parents of typically developing children. Social diversion coping is defined by Dabrowska and Pisula (2010) as a tendency to avoid a stressful situation by, for example, visiting or phoning a friend. One reason for this result could be that the burden of raising a child with autism can, for some families, significantly limit parents' social activities (p.276). Dabrowska and Pisula (2010) maintain that parental stress 'may inhibit the positive effects of supporting a child's development' (p.277), and that it is therefore important to consider what can be done to alleviate the stress of parents with children with disabilities. Similarly, Lyons et al. (2010) consider that increasing our knowledge of the coping strategies of parents of children with developmental disabilities such as autism could have direct implications for intervention and parent education efforts.

2.6.3 Community

The DfE (2011) recognises that 'successful schools also work with other agencies and the wider community to tackle bullying that is happening outside school' (p.6). The Education and Inspections Act (2006) makes reference to the contribution that schools can make to community cohesion. Schools provide opportunities for young

people to explore 'issues of equality, valuing diversity and disability, generally, and specifically in relation to bullying' (NCB, 2007b, p.3). The NCB (2007a) acknowledges the scarcity of literature addressing bullying in the community, and that 'preventing bullying in the community is a harder problem to address' (p.5).

Individuals affect and are affected by the systems around them (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1986). It might be argued that if the systems are marginalising, individuals are more likely to engage in bullying and anti-social behaviours. Those who feel oppressed are more likely to oppress others. Society has a responsibility to protect its most vulnerable children and young people, be they victims or bullies, be they learning impaired or not, by fostering resilience in them (Benard, 1991). Resilient individuals lead to a resilient society but, equally, a resilient society is made up of resilient individuals. Community psychology purports that 'wellbeing comes about in the combination of personal, relational and collective values' (Nelson and Prilleltensky, 2010, p.64), as illustrated in Figure 4. The seven values identified by Prilleltensky and Nelson (2002) for personal, relational and collective wellbeing are self-determination; caring and compassion; health; respect for diversity; participation and collaboration; support for community structures; and social justice and accountability. These values emphasise the importance of paying attention to community, as well as to personal, values.

To return to Bronfenbrenner's (1977) model, community psychology suggests that change needs to start at a macro-level in order to effect change at other levels.

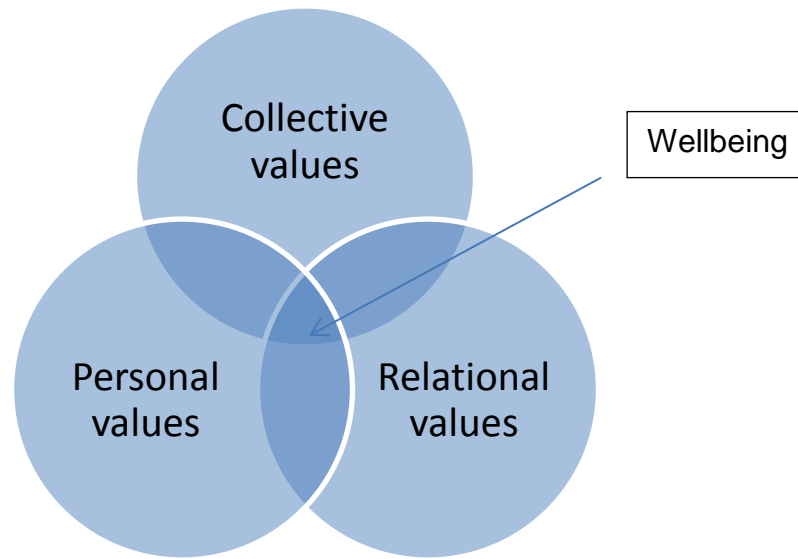


Figure 4: Values for holistic wellbeing (adapted from Nelson and Prilleltensky, 2010, p.64)

Fekkes et al. (2006) studied the relationship between bullying and health-related symptoms. They consider that ‘many psychosomatic and psychosocial health problems follow an episode of bullying victimization’, and that it is important for ‘doctors and health practitioners to establish whether bullying plays a contributing role in the etiology of such symptoms’ (p.1568-1569). They suggest that children with symptoms of depression and anxiety are at increased risk of victimization. They consider that these young people need to be taught skills that could make them less vulnerable to bullying behaviour. Carr-Gregg and Manocha (2011) consider that effective management of bullying is a ‘multidisciplinary effort, involving parents, teachers and school officials, the GP, and mental health professionals’, and that ‘assessment should be incorporated into a standard psychosocial screening routine in the general practitioner’s clinic’ (p.98). Like Vernberg and Biggs (2010), Carr-Gregg and Manocha (2011) maintain that health professionals such as paediatricians and GPs play an important role in bullying prevention by, for example, ‘identifying at risk patients, screening for psychiatric comorbidities, counselling families about the

problem, and advocating for bullying prevention in their communities' (p.98). This is in line with an eco-systemic approach to bullying prevention.

Byrne (1997) and Randall (1996) agree that a community approach to bullying is necessary for maximum effect. Byrne (1997) further categorises a community approach to bullying as operating on three levels: the school community, the wider community or neighbourhood, and thirdly, individual sports and youth clubs within the wider community. He contends that awareness is key, and that parents, and other adults 'should not presume that children know how to behave' (p.259). He argues that bullying 'needs to be placed in a wider community context' and that, in addition to the school, 'the role of parents, non-teaching staff, school bus drivers, shopkeepers, doctors and the police' needs to be considered (p.258). Thompson and Smith (2011), similarly, consider the effectiveness of involving outside agencies, such as community police officers, educational social workers, and the local authority youth offending service or behaviour support team.

Stoddard et al. (2011) found that 'youth living in impoverished urban neighbourhoods are at risk for becoming hopeless about their future and engaging in violent behaviours' (p.278). Rose (2000) refers to a 'politics of conduct that seeks to reconstruct citizens as moral subjects of responsible communities' (p.1395). This places the onus of responsibility on every member of a community and, in the context of bullied children being picked on for their vulnerability, asserts that 'we all need to take responsibility and protect where we can' (Leff, 1999, p.1076). Andershed et al. (2001) ask whether the same people are involved in bullying in school and violence on the streets. They conclude that bullying in school may be indicative of a more general, societal, violent and offensive behaviour pattern, which needs to be

addressed. Similarly, Mishna (2003) recognises that environmental risk and protective factors need to be included in the systematic identification of the variables that distinguish young people with learning difficulties who are victimized from those who are not; and Munro (2011) recognises the 'complex interplay of factors' (p.15) that make some young people more vulnerable than others. Increasing awareness and changing attitudes within the community is of paramount importance in any anti-bullying intervention.

Watts and Erevell (2004) argue that a lot of aggression amongst students is as a result of them feeling disempowered. Aggression can include bullying behaviour. Young people need to be given the opportunity to voice their frustrations, and to know that their views will be heard and can make a difference (Benard and Slade, 2009; Nordmann, 2001). Macfarlane (2009), in a similar vein, conceptualises parental engagement in schooling as a game of social and systemic practice. She explores the rhetoric of policy directives, and how the call to parents to engage can be 'framed and thus often misrecognised, resulting in unintended conflictual relationships between parents and governing authorities' (p.563). Thus parents too can feel disempowered by systems within our society. It is important that schools, as well as the structures that form part of the wider community, and of society, ensure that the values they are teaching children and young children (for example, the values espoused by Prilleltensky and Nelson, 2002) are values that contribute to community as well as to personal wellbeing. Citizens, whether they be citizens of schools or of the wider community, who feel disempowered and the pawns of games involving rhetoric and disingenuous invitations to participate and engage, are unlikely to become 'moral subjects of responsible communities' (Rose, 2000: 1395).

Negative attitudes towards others can be on account of many factors, including socioeconomic status, gender or ethnic origin, as in the Watts and Erevelles (2004) study. Or it can be on account of disability. Beckett (2009) focuses on both tackling negative attitudes, and developing positive attitudes, towards disabled people. Communities need to be welcoming, and enabling or empowering, of any child or young person who is part of those communities. Beckett (2009) makes the point that challenging disabling attitudes is 'also about shaping the attitudes of non-disabled children as "citizens of the future", and is thus an important part of building inclusive communities and an inclusive society *beyond the school gates*' (p.318).

Advocating for bullying prevention in our communities; counselling families about the problem of bullying and the children and young people who may be more vulnerable to it (Carr-Gregg and Manocha, 2011; Salmon and West, 2000); and family-oriented strategies of crime prevention (Bender and Lösel, 2011) all need to form part of a community approach to bullying.

2.7 Protective factors for bullying

Skar's (2003) study is an example of one that does employ the principles of positive psychology. She studied how adolescents with disabilities perceive social roles and relationships to peers and adults. She found that the young people considered themselves regular members of their adolescent peer group, but that they recognised, and to some extent accepted, that the members of their adolescent group saw them as being different. She found that the young people's relationships to adults were 'often characterized as ambivalent or asymmetric', in that they were 'simultaneously helpful and supportive while over protective and dominant' (p.635). She found that despite the adolescents' many difficulties, compounded by these

relationships, the young people remained relatively positive, and had a positive view of future relationships. It might be argued that a positive attitude in itself is a resilience factor which makes young people with learning difficulties less susceptible to bullying. This positive attitude can be capitalised on by adults listening to the young people (Singer, 2005); supporting them emotionally (Bourke and Burgman (2010); and teaching them strategies that foster resilience (Benard, 1991).

Benard (1991) recognises that fostering resilience in children and young people involves the implementation of prevention strategies that strengthen protective factors at the level of school, family and in the community. She identifies the resilient child as one who is socially competent, has good problem-solving skills, is autonomous and has a sense of purpose and future. The protective factors identified by Benard (1991) at all levels are caring and support, high expectations and encouraging children and young people's participation and involvement.

Frederickson and Furnham (2004) question the appropriateness of generic social skills training programmes for promoting the social inclusion of children who have moderate learning difficulties. These programmes, they argue, are focused on skills associated with peer acceptance in mainstream samples, and may therefore need to be tailored more specifically for children with moderate learning difficulties.

Rigby (2000) suggests that the mental health of schoolchildren can be undermined by repeated bullying at school, but that it can be made worse still by the children having inadequate social support. This suggests that social support, whether in the form of support from teachers, parents, peers or the wider community, can make the difference between a bullied young person coping and maintaining good mental

health, or not. Studies such as Vernberg and Biggs (2010) and Carr-Gregg and Manocha (2011) emphasise the importance of family and community involvement in, and responsibility for, the prevention of bullying, and the healthy psychological adjustment amongst young people with learning and/or communication difficulties.

Mishna (2003) and the NCB (2007b) maintain that there is reason to believe that young people with learning difficulties are at increased risk of victimization, but that there is little research on the relationship between learning difficulties and bullying. Risk and protective factors, as well as the variables that differentiate young people with learning difficulties who are victimized from those who are not, must be identified in a systematic way (Mishna, 2003; Munro, 2011). Mishna (2003), like Singer (2005) also addresses the importance of changes in the therapeutic process which may be necessary to take into account and serve the specific characteristics of a young person's learning difficulties; as well as the need for interventions to specifically apply to the particular circumstances of young people with learning difficulties.

2.8 Concluding synthesis

To conclude, there seems to be a growing emphasis in government policy that schools should be concerned about bullying that goes on beyond the school gates (Education and Inspections Act 89, 2006 (5)). The DfE (2011) suggests that young people with SEN are amongst the worst affected by bullying, and that bullying prevalence and concern decreases with age, except in the case of SEN pupils. The Tellus National Indicators (2008) suggest that young people with a learning difficulty are more likely to be bullied, and that they found it harder to have good relationships with friends and family.

The literature reviewed suggests that there has been more research in recent years on the relationship between learning disabilities and bullying. Although it may be the case that young people with disabilities are at increased risk of being bullied (Mishna, 2003), and although they may be more likely to report being bullied, it may not be the case necessarily, that the victimisation of young people with learning difficulties is worse than that of typically developing young people (Christensen et al., 2012). It should not be assumed that a young person is more susceptible to being bullied solely on account of their learning difficulties, or conversely that a typically developing young person is less susceptible to being bullied. Other factors such as family background, coping styles of parents or self-perception are equally important, and any research into what may make young people vulnerable to being bullied needs to be multi-disciplinary in its approach (Munro, 2011).

Attention has been given to the difference that school placement may or may not make to the likelihood that a young person with SEN will be bullied. In more recent years, research has considered the importance of the home context as to the likelihood that a young person with SEN will be bullied (Bourke and Burgman, 2010; Brighi et al., 2012). Sawyer et al. (2011) nevertheless consider that 'although there is a considerable body of research on bullying, very little has been devoted to studying the perspectives of the parents of children involved' (p.24). They advocate that an ecological framework is essential to address the complexities involved in bullying.

The majority of studies in the literature review involve the collection of quantitative data using surveys and questionnaires. The current study responds to Munro's (2011) call for more in-depth qualitative research to be undertaken, which enables 'a more nuanced understanding' (p.15) of young people and of how their life

experiences within the wider family and environmental context, shape their behaviour and their coping strategies.

The current study concerns the perceptions of young people with learning and/or communication difficulties, of their parents and of their teachers, with regard to feeling safe, and to bullying, in the community. It therefore takes into account the perspectives of parents, and considers both the home and the school (mainstream and special school) contexts. It considers risk and protective factors, in the context of learning difficulties and bullying, as well as some of the factors that may make some young people with learning difficulties more vulnerable to bullying than others.

2.9 The current study

The overarching aim of the research is to explore whether feeling unsafe/being bullied is related to having learning difficulties; and if not, what are the variables that differentiate young people with learning difficulties who feel unsafe/are bullied from those who are not? This overarching aim was explored through the questions, photographs and rating scales used in the interviews. The research aims are:

1. To explore what young people with learning and/or communication difficulties report in relation to feeling a lack of safety and to experiences of bullying in the community
2. To explore what level of independence young people with learning and/or communication difficulties experience out of school in the community
3. To explore what teachers and parents of young people with learning and/or communication difficulties report in relation to young people's experiences of feeling a lack of safety and of bullying in the community

4. To explore the coping strategies of young people with learning and/or communication difficulties in relation to feeling unsafe or feeling bullied in the community.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

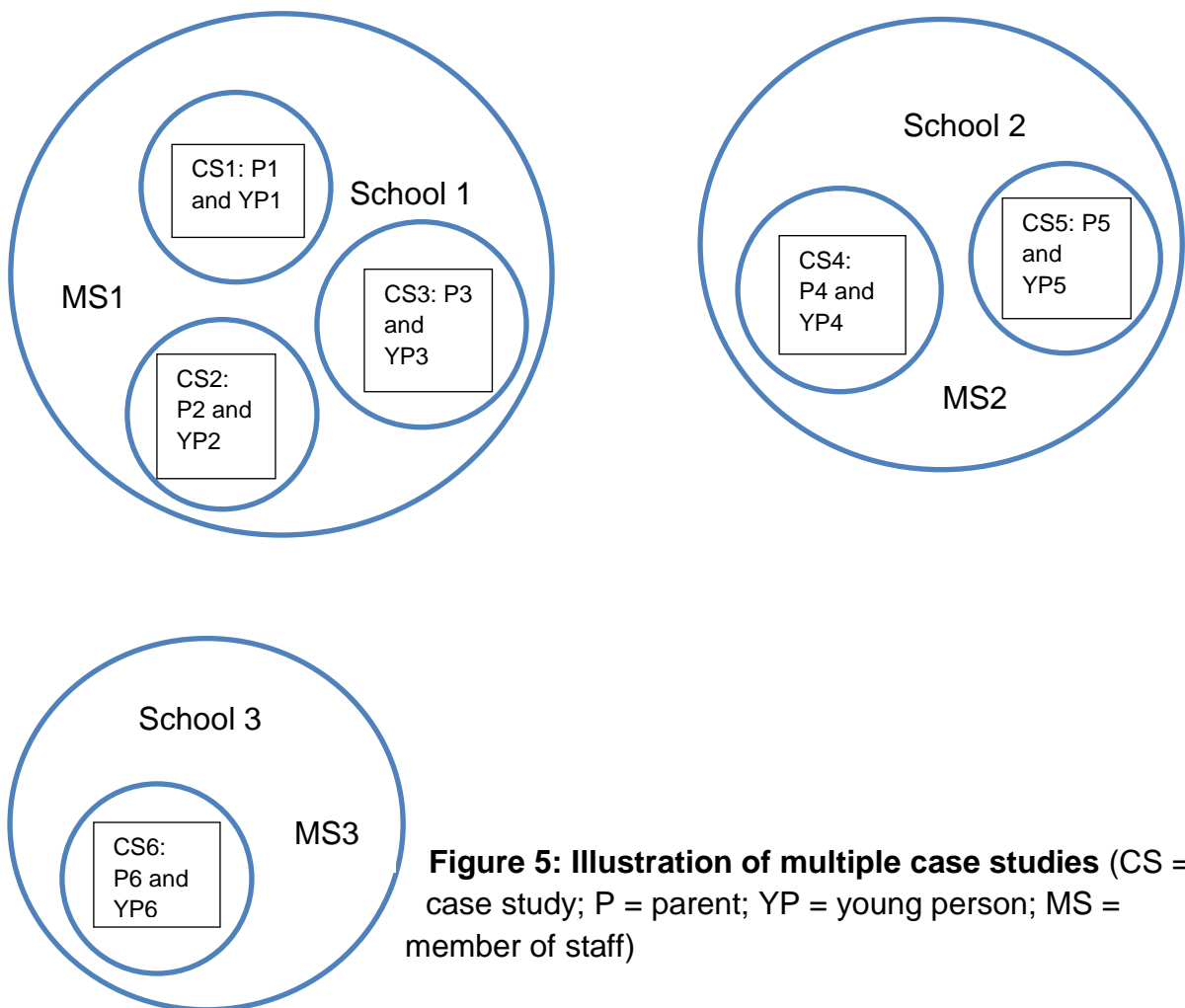
3.1. Epistemology

The epistemology of this study is one of relativism. It is argued that the extreme of objectivism is not conducive to the study of human beings or of society, in that it denies their complexity as living, changing organisms. On the other hand, the position of extreme subjectivism denies any reality at all. Post-positivism argues for 'multiple views of reality', and recognises the centrality of subjective and multiple interpretations (Cohen et al., 2011, p.30). The research is exploratory in nature. It involves multiple settings. The methodology is that of participative research. Each of the schools invited to take part were open to the perceptions of the students, staff and parents with regard to safety/bullying in the community being explored. The hope would be that the results of these explorations might be reflected upon, with a view to planning and implementing any changes that might be deemed appropriate. The current study was collaborative in that the views of the young people were sought at the start of the process with regard to areas in the community where they go, and where they might or might not encounter bullying. The young people were also involved in taking the photographs subsequently used in the research.

3.2 Research design

The research design in the current study is that of a multiple case study (Thomas, 2011, p.141), as illustrated in Figure 5. Thomas (2009) suggests that 'a case study involves in-depth research into one case or a small set of cases' and that 'the aim is to gain a rich, detailed understanding of the case by examining aspects of it in detail' (p.115). Thomas (2011) maintains that comparisons are at the heart of multiple case studies. The current study is that of safety/bullying in the community. The cases

being compared are the six student-parent dyads. Early exploratory work had suggested that it might be useful to collect data within student-parent dyads, in order to explore to what extent the views of students and their parents matched. The setting for the cases is the three schools within a Borough in a suburban area of a city in the West Midlands. The Borough has quite a distinct divide in terms of socioeconomic status, in that the north is an area of disadvantage compared to the south which is an area of affluence. Fifteen of the Borough's areas of deprivation are in the bottom 10% nationally and there are two areas in the bottom 5%. All of the areas in the bottom 10% are in the north of the Borough (Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2010).



School 1 is a special school in the south of the borough for students with moderate learning difficulties (MLD). School 2 is a mainstream secondary also in the south of the borough. This school houses an Additionally Resourced Centre (ARC) for students with moderate learning and speech and language difficulties. School 3 is a special school in the north of the borough for students with MLD. School 3 shares a campus with a mainstream secondary and a school for children and young people with severe learning difficulties (SLD).

3.3 Methods

The methods employed in the current study were semi-structured interviews. In the case of the young people, the interviews involved rating and scaling questions. After early exploratory work carried out in two of the schools, it was felt that it would be useful to have photos of the local area for the young people to look at, in order for them to consider which areas they felt most safe in, with least fear of being bullied, and which areas they felt least safe in, with most fear of being bullied. Flexibility in how questions are framed has been shown to be particularly important in research with young people with learning difficulties (Costley, 2000; Lewis, 2002). The photos were preceded by questions rating the young people's perceptions of how much bullying outside of school affects them; how well they think they manage it; how much help they think they need; as well as a question rating their general happiness levels.

Appendix 1 shows the script/information sheet used with the young people, inviting them to become involved in the research. Appendix 2 shows the letter sent to parents, inviting them to take part, and to give permission for their children to take part. Appendices 3 and 4 show the consent forms for parents and for students.

Appendix 5 shows the letter inviting staff members to take part; and Appendix 6 the consent form for staff.

3.3.1 Semi-structured interviews

Appendices 7, 8 and 9 show the interview schedule used with students, parents and staff respectively. Appendix 10 shows a help sheet which was given to all participants, with information about where to seek further information and advice. Participants were also given information on a local anti-bullying group (this is not included in the appendices). Appendix 11 shows a timeline of how the research developed. Answers to the semi-structured interview questions for parents and staff were interpreted thematically, using a constant comparative method of analysis (Thomas, 2009, p.198. See Appendix 14 for details).

The interview questions in this project involved both 'how' and 'what' questions. Yin (2009) states that 'how' questions deal with causal links and are explanatory as opposed to exploratory. The 'how' and the 'what' questions in the parent and staff interview schedules were designed to explore what parents and teachers of young people with learning and/or communication difficulties report in relation to young people's experiences of bullying and feeling of lack of safety in the community; and to examine their perceptions of what helps the young people to cope.

A semi-structured interview format was chosen as I wanted to provide some structure (particularly for the young people due to their difficulties), while at the same time allowing scope for discussion (particularly for the more articulate amongst the young people). Thomas (2009) points out that the semi-structured interview provides the 'best of both worlds as far as interviewing is concerned, combining the structure of a

list of issues to be covered together with the freedom to follow up points as necessary' (p.164). Oppenheim (1992) suggests that exploratory interviews are designed to be essentially heuristic, and seek to develop hypotheses rather than to collect facts and numbers. He notes that these frequently cover emotionally loaded topics and, if handled well by the interviewer, can enable respondents to talk with candour, richness, depth, authenticity and honesty about their views. Robson (2011) makes the point that interviewers should listen more than they speak in order to encourage interviewees to talk freely and openly.

3.3.2 Rating scales

The questions asked of the young people were about explaining how much bullying outside of school affects them; how well they think they manage it; how much help they think they need; as well as how happy they are with themselves as a person. This last question was designed to consider a possible link between self-esteem and vulnerability to being bullied.

The first four questions asked the young people to rate themselves on a scale of 1 to 10. Cohen et al. (2000) say that rating scales are widely used in research because they combine the opportunity for a flexible response with the ability to determine frequencies, correlations and other forms of quantitative analysis. "They afford the researcher the freedom to fuse measurement with opinion, quantity and quality" (p.253). The questions combined an open and a closed format in that the prompts gave respondents the opportunity to expand on their rating scale response. Cohen et al. (2000) make the point that closed questions are quick to complete and straightforward to code, and do not discriminate unduly on the basis of how articulate the respondents are. This may be particularly pertinent when working with students

with learning and/or communication difficulties. On the other hand, closed questions do not enable respondents to add any remarks, qualifications and explanations to the categories, and there is a risk that the categories might not be exhaustive and that there might be bias in them.

Cohen et al. (2000) maintain that most people would not wish to be called extremists; they often prefer to appear like one another in many respects. For rating scales, this means that the respondents might wish to avoid the two extreme poles at each end of the continuum of the rating scales, reducing the number of positions in the scales to a choice of three, in a five-point scale, or to eight in a ten-point scale. This means that in fact there could be very little choice for the respondents.

Cohen et al. (2000) argue that choosing an even-numbered scale, for example a six-point scale, might reduce the problem of using a scale with a mid-point, for which respondents may have a tendency to choose the mid-point. A six-point scale was used with the photos because the early exploratory work suggested that a range of 1 to 6 was the optimum range that the young people were comfortable using to put photos in order of places where they felt most/least safe.

3.3.3 Photographs

After consultation with the sixth form students and staff of the special schools, it was agreed which areas/places in the surrounding community would be appropriate to take pictures of. The students took photos with the help of the staff members. Any remaining photos were taken by me. This collaborative method also ensured that the students were already familiar with me when the interviews were conducted, and had a good understanding of what the research was about.

3.3.4 Interviewing the young people

Cohen et al. (2011) maintain that one way of controlling for trustworthiness in interpretive studies is to have a highly structured interview, with the same format and sequence of words and questions for each respondent. On the other hand, they do point out that this might suggest a misreading of the infinite complexity and open-endedness of social interaction. The semi-structured format used in the current study goes some way toward countering this latter concern, while bringing some consistency of content and structure to the interviews.

Cohen et al. (2000) make the point that rating scales, though powerful and useful in research, do have limitations in terms of validity and reliability. For example, they say, the researcher may not be able to infer a degree of sensitivity and subtlety from the data that they cannot bear. Cohen et al. (2000) highlight other cautionary factors about rating scales. One of these is that there is no assumption of equal intervals between the categories, hence a rating of 4 indicates neither that it is twice as powerful as 2 nor that it is twice as strongly felt. It might be argued therefore, that rating scales are limited in their usefulness to researchers by their fixity of response caused by the need to select from a given choice. This problem was overcome to some extent in the current research in that the interview questions combined an open and a closed format, and that the prompts gave respondents the opportunity to expand on their rating scale response. Section 4.1.3 in Chapter 4 looks at the experience of interviewing the young people.

3.4 Participants

I negotiated with the two special schools to work with the students in their sixth form. I decided to work with older students as, after discussion with the schools, it was felt

that older students might have had more of a degree of independence outside of school, and therefore might have more scope for talking about their experiences in the community, as opposed to younger students who often had very little independence. The mainstream secondary students leave after Year 11 so I negotiated with School 2 to work with the year 11s. Thirty-five letters were sent out to parents of the students in these forms (see Appendix 2), asking for the parents' consent for the students to take part, and requesting also that the parents take part in the research (BPS, 2009). The aim was to explore parents' perceptions of whether their children felt safe/were bullied, as well as exploring the perceptions of students and staff.

The responses were such that three student-parent dyads emerged from School 1, two from School 2, and one from School 3. These six student-parent dyads form the six case studies as depicted in Figure 5. One member of staff from each school also took part in the research: a teacher from Schools 2 and 3, and at School 1, a Learning Support Assistant with 15 years' experience at the school. Although only one of the students attended school in the north of the Borough, three of the students lived in the north of the Borough, two having to travel to schools in the south on a daily basis from Monday to Friday. Tables 1 and 2 show a breakdown of the participants.

Young Person	Gender	Age	Learning Difference/Disability/Medical condition	Parent interviewed	Area of residence	School (S) attended
YP1	M	17	Asperger's Syndrome (AS), Dyslexia	P1 (mother)	south	S1 (south)
YP2	F	18	Tuberous Sclerosis (TS), Epilepsy, MLD	P2 (father)	south	S1 (south)
YP3	F	17	MLD, social communication difficulties, speech and language difficulties, emotional difficulties	P3 (mother)	north	S1 (south)
YP4	M	15	Speech, Language and Communication Needs	P4 (mother)	south	S2 (south)
YP5	M	16	Speech, Language and Communication Needs, Literacy and Numeracy Difficulties	P5 (mother)	north	S2 (south)
YP6	F	18	MLD	P6 (mother)	north	S3 (north)

Table 1: Breakdown of student participant details

Member of Staff	Gender	Age	Involvement
MS1	M	65	Learning Support Assistant (in 6 th Form) at School 1 for 15 years
MS2	F	53	Teacher/Assistant SENCo at School 2 for 6 years
MS3	M	46	Teacher/Head of 6 th Form at School 3 for 3 years

Table 2: Breakdown of staff participant details

3.5 Ethical considerations

According to the British Psychological Society (BPS, 2009), research should adhere to the four ethical principles of respect, competence, responsibility and integrity.

Appendix 12 sets out how these principles have been applied in the current study.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results and discussion are presented together for coherence and to avoid repetition. It is to be noted that although the original focus of this study was on bullying, the actual findings reflect a much wider set of safety issues that were concerning the young people, their parents and their teachers. Figure 6 (p.55) shows the 6 overarching themes and 17 subthemes that emerged from the data, and that have been used to explore the hypothesis that feeling unsafe/being bullied is related to having learning and/or communication difficulties.

4.1 Research aim 1: To explore what young people with learning and/or communication difficulties report in relation to experiences of feeling a lack of safety and of bullying and in the community

This subsection considers the findings in relation to research aim 1.

4.1.1 Scaling questions

Table 3 below shows how the six young people scored themselves on the 4 scaling questions. Appendix 13 provides a synopsis of each of the case studies involving the six young people and six parents. It provides more detail about the responses of the young people, of their parents, and about how the responses of each student-parent dyad concur.

Table 3 also shows the mean scores for each of the scaling questions. Important points to note were:

- It might be argued that the young people appeared to have a tendency to think in extremes: with the exception of Question 4, answers contained ratings of '1' and '10'. The young people were given an example of scaling (see Appendix 7) to ensure they understood the concept.

- Question 1: some of the young people struggled to differentiate between community and school: YP6 said that she had experienced a lot of bullying but then clarified that this had been at school, in the playground.
- Question 2: some of the young people at special school said that bullying had been more of an issue at mainstream primary:

I actually got an awful lot of experience (of bullying) when I was very young...at primary school) (YP1)

I've never been bullied, only at my old (primary) school (YP2)

- Question 3: some of the young people said they felt they needed less help now that they were older:

I can now (manage the bullying myself)... when I was younger...I really didn't actually know how to deal with it (YP1)

I am feeling pretty confident, because I've had a pretty like distressing life, but I've pretty much raised myself from the ground to being a proper adult 'cause I've turned 18 (YP2)

- Question 4: the majority of the young people appeared content with who they were, with scores ranging from 5 to 10.

Scaling question	Score for YP1	Score for YP2	Score for YP3	Score for YP4	Score for YP5	Score for YP6	Mean score
1. On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is 'not at all', and 10 is 'very badly', how much do you think bullying outside of school affects your life?	7	5	9	1	1	10	5.5
2. On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is 'not at all', and 10 is 'very well', how well do you think you manage bullying outside of school?	5	10	1	10	10	10	7.7
3. On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is 'none', and 10 is 'a lot', how much help do you think you need to manage bullying outside of school?	3	4	10	1	1	1	3.3
4. On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is 'not at all', and 10 is 'very much', how happy are you with who you are as a person?	6	6	5	10	10	10	7.8

Table 3: Scores for the scaling questions

4.1.2 Photographs

Table 4 shows the ratings given by the young people to 17 of the 20 photographs used. Ratings of 'n/a' were given to places where the young people said they had not been. For the purposes of working out averages, these ratings were given zero value. The results do not include photos for which 3 or more of the young people said they did not go there (cash point, ice rink, youth centre).

PLACES (rated 1-6)	YP1	YP2	YP3	YP4	YP5	YP6	average
leisure centre	4	1	1	n/a	4	n/a	2.5
restaurant/cafe	1	1	1	1	1	n/a	1
bus	4	1	1	n/a	4	1	2.1
taxi	1	1	1	n/a	5	1	1.8
market	1	6	1	n/a	1	1	2
bowling	3	1	1	1	1	n/a	1.4
cinema	1	1	1	1	6	1	1.8
theatre/concert hall	1	1	1	1	6	n/a	2
carnival/fair/theme park	4	1	6	5/6	6	n/a	4.6
museum	2	1	1	1	1	1	1.2
local shopping centre	1	1	6	5	1	1	2.5
city shopping centre	3	1	1	n/a	6	1	2.4
town centre	5	1	1	3	1	1	2
local park/skate park	6	1	1	3	6	n/a	3.4
sports stadium	n/a	1	n/a	2	4	1	2
library	2	1	1	3	n/a	1	1.6
shops e.g. supermarkets	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Totals (out of a possible 120)	40	22	26	27.5	54	11	35.3

Table 4: Ratings given by the young people to 17 of the 20 photographs

Important points to note were:

- Local parks and theme parks scored highest in terms of being places where the young people felt they were least safe from bullying
- Restaurants/cafes and supermarkets scored lowest in terms of being places where the young people felt they were most safe from bullying
- No clear pattern emerged. Answers appeared to be determined by personal experience: for example, YP5's brother (who had been a victim of bullying,

according to his mother) had been attacked under a by-pass resulting in YP5 being of the opinion that bullying happens in dark places where people can hide, such as woods, tunnels and cinemas

- The girls tended to use extreme scores (1 or 6) whereas the boys differentiated more
- Other ideas emerging from the young people about where bullying happens:
 - Where 'random' people hang around with no clear purpose, for example on the streets:

I don't really like being stuck in a place where there is a lot of random people and there's a lot of space (YP1)

- Where there is alcohol:

that's where teenagers seem to hang around, and they tend to be drinking... they've got like alcoholic things and it can get a bit rough (YP2)

- Where there are queues, for example at bus stops and theme parks:

*if you are standing in a line for the queue, maybe (YP2)
it's just something about going past a big queue of people (YP4)*

- Where there are 'gangs' of youths, for example in shopping centres:

there might be gangs, you never know, 'cause gangs like pick on people, don't they? (YP3)

- At night/in the evening:

*it happens at night time (YP2)
especially at night (YP4)
it's bad at night times 'cause that's when all them gangs come out (YP5)*

- Ideas for tackling bullying:

- Having more police personnel on the streets:

I don't think there are as many police on the streets as there used to be (YP2)

a police box or policemen walking around (would make me feel safer)...then I would go...but how do you know it's gonna be safe there? (YP3)

- Being taught how to deal with bullying from a younger age:

maybe if people are taught how to deal with bullying from quite an early age. I know they've started doing that now, but when I was at that school they weren't teaching us at all...I was even asked to do some bullying myself (YP1)

- The theme of escape featured with two of the young people in the context of being resourceful:

- YP1 talked about knowing where the exits are in shopping centres in case he needed to 'escape'; and the fact that in the park, his 'escape' can sometimes be 'compromised' by younger kids getting in the way.
- YP4 was a keen cyclist, and preferred to cycle to school rather than walk, so that he had the speed to get away from anyone who might bother him.

4.1.3 The experience of interviewing the young people

Early exploratory work had suggested that the young people might benefit from the use of rating scales to help them stay focused. Open-ended questioning had tended to mean that the young people veered off from the topic. Open-ended questions about their own experiences of bullying outside of school had tended either to meet with the response that they had not experienced any, or to focus on bullying in school.

The use of rating scales also enabled the less articulate young people to participate and to potentially feel less uncomfortable if they felt they had no direct experiences to share, or that they did not want to share them. I found that the combination of an open and a closed format for the young people's interviews worked well, in that the

prompts gave those young people who wanted to expand on their rating scale responses the opportunity to do so, without putting pressure on those who did not. Appendix 16 provides an example of a transcript of an interview with one of the young people.

4.2 Semi-structured interviews relating to research aims 2, 3 and 4

The following subsections consider the findings in relation to research aims 2, 3 and 4. Answers to the semi-structured interview questions for parents and staff were interpreted thematically, using a constant comparative method (Thomas, 2009, p.198. See Appendix 14 for details). Numerous readings of the raw data led to 6 overarching themes and 17 subthemes. Figure 6 shows the overall conceptual map.

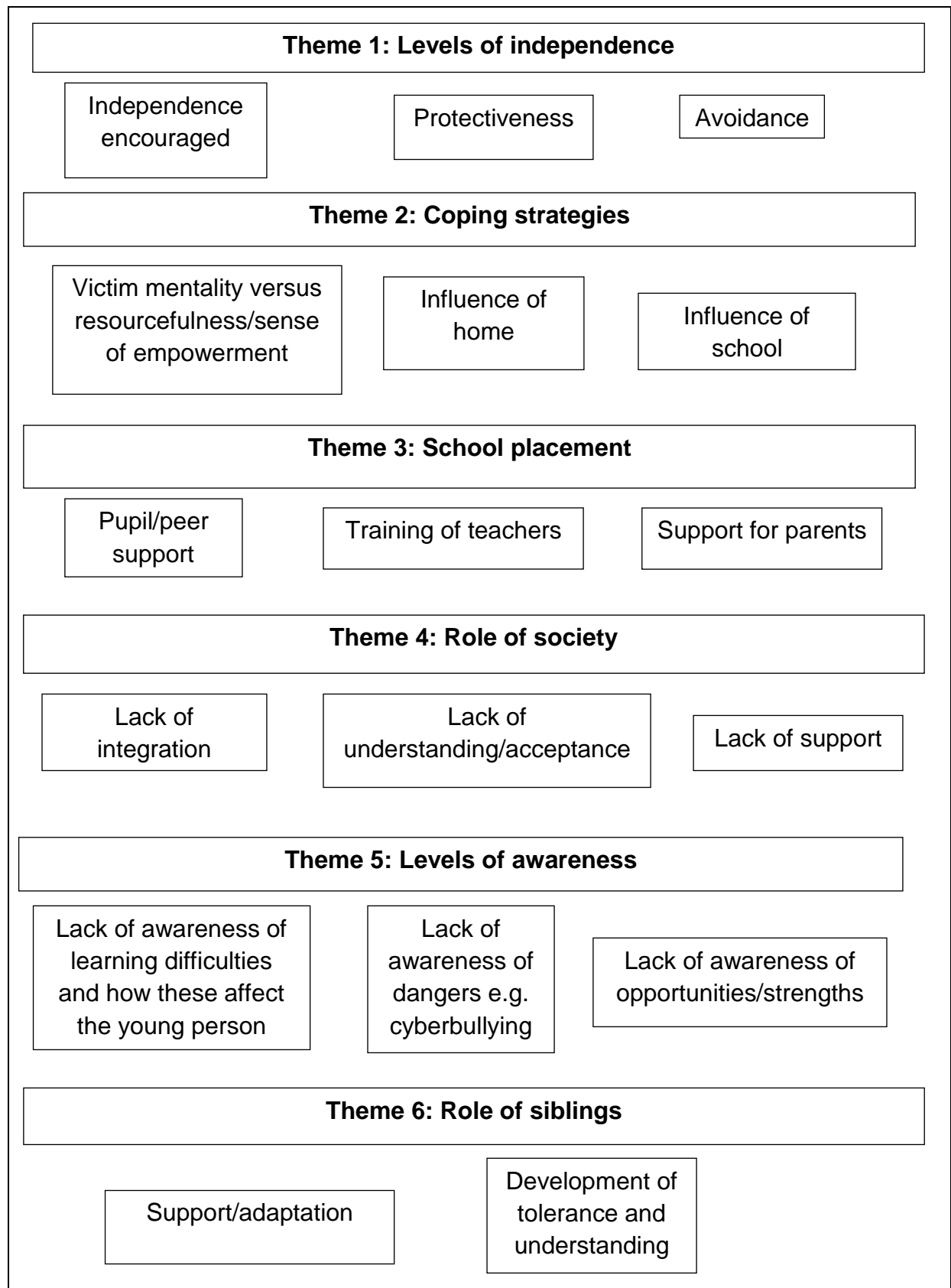


Figure 6: Overall conceptual map showing the 6 overarching themes and 17 subthemes

Appendices 17 and 18 show a summary of the answers to the parent and the staff questions, with themes highlighted. The results will be discussed here with subtitles linking to the subthemes. This approach has been taken to avoid repetition. Each subsection starts with supporting quotations taken from Appendix 19. Each theme is then related to the supporting literature.

4.3 Research aim 2: To explore what level of independence young people with learning and/or communication difficulties experience out of school in the community

This subsection considers the findings in relation to research aim 2. The overarching theme considered here is 'levels of independence'.

4.3.1 Theme 1: Levels of independence

4.3.1.1 Subtheme 1: Independence encouraged

The majority of parents spoke of allowing the young people to go out independently to an extent:

*I'm quite happy to take him and drop him off... (P1)
they'll (X and friend) go to the cinema by themselves... (P4)
he gets the bus to school (P5).*

P3 and P6 spoke of their daughters having been away on school trips:

*last year was the first time she'd ever been on her own (without parents)...she loved it (P3)
she's been to London...she goes on most of the trips here (at school) (P6).*

P2 spoke of his belief that a certain level of independence was beneficial to his daughter:

I'm desperate to get her in a residential college next year...for the 2 or 3 weeks after she has been away she is so much more grown up (P2),

and that this would have ramifications for her later in life:

I want X to have as normal as possible a life...I think living in sheltered accommodation with other people her own age...it's really important...socially (P2).

P4 echoed this view:

I do see him living independently...I think he'd be perfectly able to (P4),

and P1 added her view that she believed her son would be able to find a job:

...I think he probably could hold down a job (P1).

MS3 shared his view that it is often to the young people's advantage when they are encouraged by their families to be independent:

some of them have got full lives, they leave here and they've got activities in clubs and things like that...it depends on the family (MS3),

and that the young people appreciate being given responsibility:

they really quite like that responsibility, looking out for him, and they make sure he's safe... some of the parents would not believe it (MS3).

MS3 also commented that the level of independence encouraged by families is not necessarily determined by the level of disability:

someone like X is a lot more severe in her learning difficulties, but her parents...allow her out and to go to the shops independently, so she's more streetwise and would handle things better...whereas somebody like X was quite an independent person, but she'd never go out on her own because her parents worried that much (MS3).

Cassidy (2009) and Altieri and von Kluge (2009) consider young people's independence in the context of personal growth. Altieri and von Kluge (2009) suggest that highly enmeshed families (such as in case studies (CS) 3 and 6) are overly involved with and protective of their children's lives, which can have detrimental effects on the young person because there may not be a promotion of growth and independence. They acknowledge also, however, that given the importance of social support in the families of young people with learning difficulties, this can often be a difficult balance to strike.

4.3.1.2 Subtheme 2: Protectiveness

P1 and P2 showed an awareness that YP1 and YP2 had led quite protected lives:

... he does have quite a protected life (P1)
I have been very protective of her, possibly over-protective (P2),

but were nevertheless trying to encourage independence, as covered in the previous subsection. P3 and P6 arguably showed less of an awareness of this

overprotectiveness:

she's not allowed to go out on her own (P3)
She's not very independent because she's normally with me (P6).

P5 spoke in terms of YP5's lack of independence in the home:

when the kid's poorly he'll go to the bathroom and he'll leave the water running...I wouldn't even dare let him use the cooker...'cause I just think he forgets an awful lot (P5).

MS2 commented that the young people with learning/communication difficulties were:

so looked after by their families, and they're with their families a lot of the time...a lot of our really special needs children are taxied...or parents pick them up...we've only got a small number that actually go home on their own (MS2).

MS1 commented on the other hand that the majority of the sixth form students:

pursue perfectly normal social integration outside of school hours... there are only perhaps a few of the slightly more tender ones that are still under the parental wing (MS1).

MS3 commented further on parental influence:

their parents do stop them from doing a lot out of school...someone like X, for example, who's perfectly capable of walking to school but her mother...doesn't feel she's safe (MS3),

and on the link between vulnerability, learning difficulties and independence:

whether that's (i.e. his vulnerability) a product of him having a learning difficulty or not having that independence over the past 18 years...In that respect it'd be the same for any teenager...I mean any 16 year old who'd never been allowed out before, would probably be more vulnerable than someone who's...been quite semi-independent from the age of 8...going to school (MS3).

Skär (2003), in a study of adolescents with disabilities, and of how they perceive social roles and relationships, found that the young people's relationships to adults were 'often characterized as ambivalent or asymmetric', in that they were 'simultaneously helpful and supportive while over protective and dominant' (p.635). This further emphasises the need for adults to find the right balance between being protective and encouraging independence; and to teach the young people strategies that foster resilience: being socially competent, having good problem-solving skills, being autonomous and having a sense of purpose and future (Benard, 1991), rather than just not letting them out on their own (CS3 and 6).

4.3.1.3 Subtheme 3: Avoidance

P6 commented that she gives little thought to how things will be in the future for her daughter, and that she prefers to take each day as it comes:

I think she'll still live with me...I ain't thinking about that (the future) just yet...I don't talk about that...I just wait 'til it comes...day to day, that's what I do... (P6),

whereas P1 showed more of an awareness of the future:

you worry about the future and you worry about when you're not there to kind of mastermind it (P1).

MS1 commented that parents' avoidance of thinking about the future can be a problem:

parents are sometimes a major obstacle because we do still have a big problem with parents...who seem to think...that life is going to be magically OK for them... (MS1).

P3 commented that she struggled to monitor her daughter's level of independence on social networking sites:

not that she's allowed to do (go on Facebook)...but they've got the means, her phone does it, her iPod does it (P3),

whereas P4, by contrast, appeared to have a more open relationship with her son:

...I don't go on Facebook myself but I look at it through X's account, so I'll just go on and have a look occasionally. And he's very open about it...he sits here with it on his lap, and he'll say, 'oh mum, come and look at this photo...' (P4).

MS3 commented on parents' avoidance of dealing with the issue of internet access/safety:

the parents know about it, but you can only do so much, 'cause it all happens at home...any sensible person would be just, 'right, no more computer, no more phone, no more anything because you're putting yourself in danger'...but the answer is like, 'what can I do, it's her phone?' (MS3).

Brighi et al. (2012) comment on the importance of helping parents not only to 'increase their active control of what their children are doing online, but also to enhance their parenting skills in engaging their children in caring and affective relations' (p.385), such as in CS4. They emphasise that open and caring parent-child relationships are associated with better protected and well-adjusted children and adolescents, and that intervention strategies for cyberbullying should tackle the family context. Brighi et al.'s (2012) study was not aimed specifically at young people with learning difficulties; however it might be argued that their findings are even more important in the context of these young people, in that their learning difficulties present an additional risk factor (CS3). Bourke and Burgman (2010) found that young people with disabilities lacked emotional support from their parents. Part of this support may involve helping the young people to consider their futures (Benard, 1991), and how the parents can offer help and guidance (CS1, 2 and 4), while at the same time encouraging independence (Skär, 2003).

4.4 Research aim 3: To explore what teachers and parents of young people with learning and/or communication difficulties report in relation to young people's experiences of feeling a lack of safety and of bullying in the community

This subsection considers the findings in relation to research aim 3. The first overarching theme considered here is 'coping strategies'. The second is 'school placement', and the third is the 'role of society'.

4.4.1 Theme 2: Coping strategies

Two of the 'coping strategies' subthemes will be considered in this subsection – the influence of home, and the influence of school. The third 'coping strategies' subtheme – victim mentality versus resourcefulness/sense of empowerment – will be considered in subsection 4.5.1

4.4.1.1 Subtheme 4: Influence of home

P1, P2 and P4 spoke in terms of having to change how they thought as a result of having a child with learning/communication difficulties:

you have to learn to accept...that...not everything is possible and...you have to learn to compromise... (P1)
you have to think outside the box (P2)
I've always had to think differently...it was always having to think out of the box (P4)

P1 and P4 spoke in terms of helping their sons to manage their difficulties:

for a child with Asperger's, he's pretty good on emotions and he's quite good at reading other people...we quite often talk about those sorts of things (P1)
he feels safer on his bike...my husband said...'you're gonna have to walk', and he doesn't like it...and it would be very easy for me to say, 'ok, I'll quickly take you', but I don't (P4).

P3, P4 and P6 spoke about having benefitted from the support of wider family:

family helped...(P4)
...strong network of family (P3)
...from a very close family...have had support from my sister and my mum...they've all been supportive (P6).

P5, by contrast, felt she lacked the support of family:

I don't have the support network I need...it has taken a toll (P5),

and appeared to be finding it much more difficult to cope:

I'm tired of...making excuses...having to explain all the time, why the children...act or do the things they do...I just find some people very rude... (P5).

P1, P2 and P4 spoke in terms of helping the young people plan for their future:

he's now working at a bakery...I'm hoping the baker might take him on, this is part of my grand plan (P1)

I've worked with charities and such like to find a role for her (P2)

There's a retail course that we've been looking at...I've crossed those off my list (the courses X didn't like)...hopefully something within the retail sector (P4)

whereas P3, P5 and P6 seemed more uncertain and less optimistic:

she doesn't know what she wants to do (P3)

if he hasn't been helped in the right areas, he's gonna fail...(P5)

she keeps changing her mind (P6).

All of the staff members interviewed commented on how the family environment

affects the young people in terms of their coping strategies:

*It's if they're confident and they've got self-esteem...I mean we can only support that and improve it, but it really does stem from family (MS2)
...it depends on the family...I think that will come down to parenting...and finances as well...is it the learning difficulties (that hold the young people back) or is it the environment?... if mum is with her all the time, she's not exposed to the possibility of somebody saying something to her, or coping in a situation where somebody's nasty to her, and her coping mechanism is to burst into tears (MS3)*

we do still have a big problem with parents who are in denial (MS1)

M2 added that parents can also increase the young people's vulnerability in terms of unrealistic expectations, or of not providing adequate opportunities for them:

some of the parents have unrealistic expectations of the children, and that puts an awful lot of pressure on them, when they can't achieve what the parents want them to achieve (MS2)

some of them are quite immature for their age, in that they're...not really involved in similar activities out of school that maybe some of their peers are involved in (MS2)

Dabrowska and Pisula (2010) and Altieri and von Kluge (2009) highlight the importance of social support for parents of children with disabilities, but how levels of social support can deteriorate due to stress in the family, such as in CS5. Parents with a support network of wider family and friends (CS3, 4 and 6) may find it easier to adapt to having a child with a learning disability. Research considers that other factors which may impact on a family's ability to adapt and cope are level of parent education (de Boer et al., 2010; Sawyer et al., 2011), and socioeconomic status (Barlow and Humphrey, 2012). These factors can, in turn, impact on parents' ability to support their children with bullying issues (Bourke and Burgman, 2010; Sawyer et al., 2011). Where a family with a young person with a disability encounters multiple additional risk factors such as lack of support, low socioeconomic status and poor job prospects, such as in CS5, the young person may be in particular need of intervention for risk of being vulnerable and of being bullied.

4.4.1.2 Subtheme 5: Influence of school

All of the members of staff spoke in terms of the young people learning about independent living:

we go travel training... we had been learning about travelling independently and learning really how to survive (MS3)
they are able to do lessons which involve going out and about...learning how to cross roads...how to use buses, trains, etc, and that is a huge part of the curriculum (MS1)
we do an independent living topic (MS2).

In addition, MS3 spoke about a new initiative at School 3:

They all...use the local shops at dinner time...they're all allowed with parental permission to leave the school...part of going to the shops is they are doing it independently (MS3).

Staff also spoke in terms of giving the young people strategies to cope with bullying:

we do have a number of things every year which covers bullying awareness... and all the strategies that are available to them in the case of bullying are there for them (MS1)

We gave her strategies to try and help her...we explain that it could happen that someone could call you a name every day at the bus stop on your way to work, and you can't not go to work and not have a job...you've just gotta think 'deal with it', and you can't run off every time someone calls you a name...you gotta have ways to know how to deal with it (MS3)

I do that in ASDAN...about the reasons why (people bully)... (MS2).

MS3 also spoke in terms of teaching the young people how to deal with social situations, such as peer pressure, recognising that a young person's reaction in a social situation could make them more susceptible to bullying:

we've done things...like peer pressure... 'cause they might be that age...if someone offers you drugs or alcohol or cigarettes...you've just gotta give them the facts... (MS3).

MS2 spoke of the importance of having high expectations of the young people:

I push them to get the best qualifications they can...they've achieved amazing qualifications, and I think they will do what's expected of them, so if you don't expect much of them, then you won't get much from them (MS2),

and MS1 commented on the importance of gearing the curriculum towards giving the young people practical skills:

...our school curriculum now is based far more on employability than it is on obtaining certificates...they do hairdressing, land studies, animal studies, mechanics, painting and decorating, that's all the sort of stuff that we're doing now purely to try and get them a foothold on the ladder when they leave school...otherwise they're really going to suffer like people who are already out there who can't get a job (MS1).

Norwich (2008) argues for the importance of the curriculum that is provided for young people with learning difficulties, whether in mainstream or special schools. Mishna (2003) argues for curriculum activities that 'foster social cognition, such as perspective-taking, problem-solving and conflict resolution' (p.340-341). Studies such as Baumringer et al. (2005) and Christensen et al. (2012) advocate that young people with learning difficulties need to be taught social skills. Social skills training

programmes may need, however, to be tailored specifically to children with learning difficulties (Frederickson and Furnham, 2004), and to take into account a child's particular needs (Hodson et al., 2005; Singer, 2005). MS3 talked about helping young people with autism, for example, to understand that people may use the word 'mate' even though they do not know the young person. Young people need also to be taught life skills and employment skills in order to promote their personal growth (Altieri and von Kluge, 2009; Cassidy, 2009). MS1 makes the point that their curriculum now has a more practical focus on employability rather than on obtaining qualifications. All of the schools emphasised life and independent living skills, including bullying awareness. MS3 also emphasised the importance of teaching the young people about peer pressure. Such skills can enable young people to be less vulnerable to being bullied. Teachers need also to have the right level of expectations for the young people (Bromfield et al., 1986; Elam and Sigelman, 1983), as highlighted by MS2, so they can learn and develop to the best of their ability.

4.4.2 Theme 3: School placement

4.4.2.1 Subtheme 6: Pupil/peer support

MS1 voiced his belief that a lot more bullying goes on in mainstream schools:

I cannot understand the mentality of anybody who says that our students can be coped with in units in a mainstream school... (MS1).

MS2, on the other hand, believed that attending a unit in a mainstream school had its advantages:

because we are an ARC school, we have a lot more children with difficulties so...it is more the norm than the exception...they (the young people with learning/communication difficulties) are no more bullied than...the general population in the school (MS2).

School 3 shared a campus with a mainstream secondary and a school for young people with SLD. MS3 spoke of the advantages of this model of integration:

I think...if mainstream students came in...I think they'd really get on and really warm to a lot of the students...XX (mainstream) School have been over and there's been...workshops with the mainstream as well...I think they learn themselves that there's not that much difference...they learn to be more accepting (MS3).

P1 held the view that young people (disabled and non-disabled) have to be supported to integrate:

they have to be taught to integrate...they have to be supported to integrate, they're not going to naturally integrate (P1),

and she made a strong distinction between primary and secondary schools:

I think they (teachers) do in junior school (i.e. train children to be tolerant of others)...but the moment they get to senior school, it's all out the window... (P1).

MS1 and MS3 spoke of young people who had come to the special schools from mainstream where they had been having a difficult time:

*Some of them have come from mainstream backgrounds, and I think after experiencing that, and then coming here, they feel safe here (MS3)
we do tend to find that some students who come to us late in life, around about Year 8 or 9, they've come from mainstream schools because they're having a torrid time (MS1).*

On the other hand, MS2 could see the benefits of attending a mainstream school:

I think they learn from each other (mainstream young people and those with learning difficulties), and I think it's good when they are in groups together because...the more able children will support the less able, but the less able will teach them things...about...ways of doing things that they hadn't even thought of...Some of them come from their primary schools with friends as well...so...they keep those friendships and then maybe make more friendships...there's more integration (MS2).

Staff also recognised, however, that the issue of school placement depends on the individual child:

I think there's a place for all of it (mainstream and special schools), some children thrive really well in mainstream school, but I think these (special)

*schools have a really strong position with these young people...young X...has grown in confidence since she's come to our school... (MS3)
it would depend on the individual because some children would find the size of a (mainstream) school like this...very intimidating, very frightening...I do think that there are some children where special school is more appropriate (MS2).*

Thompson and Smith (2011) highlight the importance of peer mediators in dealing effectively with bullying. Warne (2003) contends that pupils with learning difficulties too 'have the ability to mediate successfully', and that 'the process can develop their social skills and emotional literacy' (p.27). The NCB (2007b) contends that 'raising awareness of disability among other children can help them understand why someone may be different, communicate in different ways or behave differently' (p.3). Thus typically developing children can be helped to empathise with children with disabilities (Campbell, 2006; Frederickson et al., 2007), and the advantages can be bidirectional. The onus is nevertheless on adults to support the integration of children and young people with and without disabilities, regardless of school placement (Norwich, 2008). Parental attitudes towards integration both in the school community and in the wider community can be highly significant (Kelly and Norwich, 2004; Lindsay, 2007). None of the members of staff spoke directly of peer mediation. This may be an area to which the schools may need to give further thought.

4.4.2.2 Subtheme 7: Training of teachers

P1 spoke of her experience of her son's teaching in mainstream primary as opposed to a special (secondary) school:

I think that level of continuity (in a special school) is really valuable...I think they (all mainstream teachers) should (have at least one placement in a special school) because they don't get special school training...that is one of the real problems as a mother of a child who's not neurotypical (in a mainstream school) (P1).

MS2 commented on the amount of pressure she feels Year 6 teachers are under in mainstream primaries:

I think that Year 6 teachers are under such incredible pressure to get SATs results that...children with difficulties...get more marginalised...they're taken out, they tend to work in smaller groups...it's really obvious when they don't get their level 4s (MS2).

She appeared to agree with P1's view that mainstream secondary teachers do not always have a good understanding of the needs of young people with learning/communication difficulties:

some of the teachers have unrealistic expectations of them and set homework that perhaps is too difficult...some teachers have a better understanding of children with difficulties, and have more patience, whereas others find it more difficult to do...some teachers are more subject-based...whereas other teachers are more about the child... (MS2).

She commented also that more training was needed:

There isn't a lot (of training), but we had an INSET day last year...some teachers are expert on some areas...and other teachers have no experience at all...the first time that they're faced with a child with great difficulties, it may be the first time they've had to think about how they teach (MS2).

Marginalisation can lead to increased vulnerability to being bullied (Nordmann, 2001; Salmon and West, 2000; Sweeting and West, 2001). Setting work at the right level for children can impact on their self-esteem, which can impact on their vulnerability to being bullied (Brighi et al., 2012; Cassidy, 2009; Mishna, 2003; Munro, 2011). This seemed to be more of an issue at School 2, being a mainstream school, because the mainstream teachers (those not based in the ARC) may have lacked knowledge and expertise in how to teach children with learning/communication difficulties.

4.4.2.3 Subtheme 8: Support for parents

P4 commented that she had felt a lack of support from her son's mainstream primary school:

early on when he was first at (mainstream) school, it was very hard then because...we didn't really know the full extent of his difficulties...looking back on it now, I didn't feel like I got much support from them... (P4).

P2 had had different experiences with two different mainstream primaries, before sending his daughter to special school. His experience of the first had been negative:

despite all the...emphasis on it being a school for inclusion and everything, as soon as they found she had special needs, they found they hadn't a place for her (P2),

however, thereafter, his experience had been more positive:

school provided the practical advice (P2).

P1 commented that a school nurse from School 1 had started a parent support group and that she had '*found it a lifeline at one stage*'. P4's experience, however, had not been as favourable:

I think had there been something (a support group), I would have done (joined), I think if somebody'd told me about it, I probably would have done...but I didn't know about any of that (P4).

Staff members related different experiences about support groups at their schools:

there are parental support groups in place...we do encourage parents to come in and support in the classes as well, so they've got an insight into the work that we're doing (MS1)
parents do kind of get together...we meet the parents regularly...but we don't run any support groups (MS2)
We have loads of support (for parents)...we've got...family workers... and there's coffee mornings...the parents are invited to come in...If there's help needed at home, then the school will intervene and bring the parents in, and talk to the parents, or advise the parents, or point them towards agencies that can help them... (MS3).

Thompson and Smith (2011) emphasise the importance of support for parents, including parent organisations and involving parents in making an anti-bullying policy. Nordmann (2001) and Macfarlane (2009) consider the importance of parental engagement in school, as well as the importance of parents, and young people, feeling empowered. Feelings of disempowerment can lead to parents having a

negative attitude towards school, which can affect the social participation of children with special needs in schools (de Boer et al., 2010). Parents of children with special educational needs and disabilities find that negotiation of the SEN system is, in itself, stressful (Barlow and Humphrey, 2012; Duncan, 2003). Parents who have additional stresses in their family, such as lack of support or family crises, are even more in need of support (Dabrowska and Pisula, 2010; Luong et al., 2009), particularly in relation to bullying (Carr-Gregg and Manocha, 2011; Vernberg and Biggs, 2010). Schools 1 and 3 appeared to have more in place for the support of parents than School 2. This may be linked to the fact that Schools 1 and 3 were special schools. School 2 may need to give further thought to the support they have in place, particularly for the parents of the young people who attend the ARC.

4.4.3 Theme 4: Role of society

4.4.3.1 Subtheme 9: Lack of integration

Parents reported varying experiences of the young people integrating with the community:

...it's more the absence of things than doing things...being (socially) excluded... (P2)
his access to social networks and friendship groups are limited... quite a lot of the time when he does go out into the community...he's solitary (P1)
doesn't really go out...keeps herself to herself... (P3)
I think he integrates well...school have a group, it's called 'the Wednesday club' and it's for the over 60s in the local area, and through school he's been helping out there... (P4)
not much at all really (P5).

P6 believed that the area in which she lived was a barrier to her daughter being able to integrate more with the community:

Not really (doesn't want her daughter to integrate with the community), not where I live it's different...you get a lot of...joyriders...and some of them do drugs (P6).

P2 and P4 commented on the reciprocal benefits of young people with learning/communication difficulties integrating with the community:

*...I think it's important (integration with the community)...he does enjoy doing it...and he seems to get quite a lot from that (P4)
she likes people...she's very sociable...I think she likes society, she likes being in things...and I think that's good for society (P2).*

P1 commented that the young people might benefit from having access to community activities until they are older:

he goes to a learning difficulties club (at the youth centre)... they're allowed to stay until about... 18,19...and then they have to leave, which is a shame because then, if they're not careful, they lose contact with each other (P1).

MS3 commented that social network sites such as Facebook can mean that the young people have less of a need to go out and integrate in the community:

I think it's more a case of they haven't got a social life really, so that's (Facebook) their social life (MS3).

On the other hand, P2 commented that social networks sites also have their advantages:

it would be a huge problem if she didn't have Facebook, and she wasn't able to talk to her friends from school, you know, after school (P2).

He did say as well, however, that he does monitor what his daughter does on Facebook:

I do have access to X's Facebook, and I do check it reasonably regularly (P2).

MS1 commented that the majority of students integrate well outside of school:

We've got a few students who play football...for...one of the local football teams... I would say that probably 75-80% do pursue perfectly normal social integration outside of school hours, where they'll go round to each other's houses... they'll go to the cinema...one or two of them have actually started going to clubs now...they do go to parties just like anybody else (MS1),

and during school hours:

that is the whole point of going out...it's basically total integration into the community (MS1),

and that this integration continues when they leave school:

The majority of them go on to lead successful lives...I would say that...95% of our students have either been placed in further education or in part-time work...a lot have passed their driving test, they're holding down permanent jobs...quite a few who are now married and have children of their own (MS1).

MS2 seemed more uncertain of the amount of integration outside of school, possibly because School 2 concentrates its efforts on integration in the school community.

She did comment however on activities during school hours that encourage community involvement:

I can tell you about the community of school...they (young people with learning/communication difficulties) are fully integrated...but the community outside, I don't know, I mean some of them belong to clubs and things...we won a community award in the Xxxxxx Mail...for fundraising...my 8 children in year 11 this year have raised £1,400 for Marie Curie cancer care, by designing, making and selling Christmas cards...they've made over £1,400...we went to a lunch...and they got a trophy and certificate and they won some money too for the school (MS2).

Nordmann (2001) and Norwich (2008) emphasise the importance of listening to children with SEN, and of their full participation in all aspects of school life. The NCB (2007b) advocates that, 'often, disabled children and young people can be involved in raising awareness of bullying in local schools' (p.3), and Bourke and Burgman (2010) consider that 'children with disabilities may be valuable contributors to school programmes which teach children to notice bullying, and how to assist children who may be at risk' (p.367) such as children who are being socially excluded (Benton, 2011). Children with disabilities could also be involved in raising awareness of bullying in the community, for example by being involved in a local anti-bullying group, such as the one referred to in section 3.3.1, and about which information was given to all the participants in the current study (see final paragraph of Appendices 7,8 and 9).

The NCB (2007a) recognises that ‘young people living in socially disadvantaged areas [do] not feel safe within their local community’ (p.2). Young people with disabilities may be even more at risk, as in CS6. Mishna (2003) considers that community awareness needs to be increased and attitudes changed; and Beckett (2009) calls for a ‘detailed examination of current teaching practices/school strategies relating to disability awareness’ (p.327), and considers the role of education in challenging disablism and in reducing inequalities in society. As commented on by P2, the benefits of integration of young people with disabilities into society are bidirectional. Society stands to gain much in terms of Prilleltensky and Nelson’s (2002) values, particularly those of respect for diversity and social justice and accountability.

4.4.3.2 Subtheme 10: Lack of understanding/acceptance

P2 and P4 related experiences of experiencing understanding in the community:

she has played rugby...they were very friendly with her...they always brought her on at some point in the game (P2)
Initially when we started, we made the coaches aware of his difficulties...they knew to sort of repeat instructions and...X’s been in the cycling club since he was about 8...he’s very highly regarded there by them (P4).

P2 and P3 commented on the difficulties of having a less visible disability:

because X looks so normal, people expect her to be normal... (P3)
with someone like X, the first reaction is, ‘oh, she’s quite capable, but in fact she has a very complex situation...and people...make an initial reaction...there’s too much immediacy in their response... (P2).

MS1 commented, on the other hand, that having a less visible difficulty can make life easier for the young people:

you don’t tend to get people gawping because, to all intents and purposes, they look like completely normal students (MS1).

He contrasted this with having a more visible disability, and the effect he had witnessed this having on members of society:

you could see the effect where they (members of the public) would just turn round and walk off in the opposite direction... (MS1)

MS3 commented that integration between disabled and non-disabled young people can help break down these barriers:

when you're young, disability can be quite frightening, and when you're a teenager, you handle it in different ways, by...giggling, by being embarrassed, and the only way that's gonna change is through more integration (MS3).

P5 commented on the 'stigma' she felt she had experienced as a result of having children with learning difficulties:

over the years...I've felt...the stigma attached to my own family...I've had less friends come round...through the fact that they don't understand my own children... (P5).

MS1 commented that he felt that there was less stigma attached to having learning difficulties that in previous years, and on his belief that the young people were aware of this:

there is no doubt that some of them are aware of their...shortcomings...when they go out on school trips...possibly in the past, a lot more than now, there was a stigma attached to it (MS1).

Due to the extreme nature of P5's personal circumstances, she appeared to be finding it particularly difficult to cope:

it's a dog-eat-dog world...there's so much spiteful people out there...they've got no compassion...and that's all they can do, is seethe on people who they see as not doing as well as themselves... how many people with children with disabilities are attacked in society?...I feel like I'm like that (P5).

Leff (1999) identified that bullied children may be picked on for their vulnerability.

Children's vulnerabilities may be visible, or invisible (Newberry and Parish, 1987).

Often, typically developing children, and adults, need to appreciate that disabilities that are less visible can be equally as incapacitating as more visible disabilities, as

commented on by P2 and P3. Byrne (1997) and Mishna (2003) advocate that coordination is needed among school, home, and community, and that adults must intervene on behalf of children and young people with learning disabilities who are bullied. School climate and community attitudes that tolerate bullying and promote negative attitudes towards young people with learning disabilities must change. Mishna (2003) considers also the stigma associated with learning disabilities, as evidenced by P5, and that 'children's attitudes toward peers with disabilities in general are more negative than their attitudes toward children without disabilities' (p.338). Beckett (2009) considers the need for 'a more elaborate understanding' of typically developing children's, and adults, 'attitudes towards disabled people...their knowledge/understanding about *disability* as opposed to *impairment*, and their knowledge about the reality of life for disabled people within a "disabling society"' (p.327). As commented on by MS3 and MS1, lack of understanding can breed fear and ignorance amongst young people and adults. More integration between disabled and non-disabled young people and adults may help to break down the barriers and to enable typically developing people, young and older, to make the distinction between disability and impairment.

4.4.3.3 Subtheme 11: Lack of support

The majority of parents spoke in terms of having to 'fight' the system, as a result of having a child with learning difficulties:

*you have to fight so hard, and you have to do so much long term planning (P1)
I feel society itself does absolutely nothing to help...I am outraged at the fact
that I am going to have to be fighting tooth and nail to get funding for
X...you've got to fight every inch of the way and it's hard enough already...I
hadn't had any contact from the child social services ever...there was no
social care provided (when X was diagnosed)...I think it's outrageous (P2)*

I kept her in mainstream all the way through, even though basically I was fighting the system...because they wanted her to go to special school, and I wanted her to have as normal a time as humanly possible (P3).

P5 commented that she had had to physically fight for her children:

I am a fighter...I have fought for my children, I actually have...had to physically stop my children from being injured (P5).

P2 commented that his experience with adult social care had been more positive than that with child social care:

the approach from adult social care was so...helpful...that will go a long way towards helping me develop the argument for residential college (P2),

and he commented also that work had been supportive:

and work (was a good point of support)...because...they let me balance my hours (P2).

P2 and P5 commented on the difficulties they had experienced/were experiencing in terms of accessing benefits to which they were entitled:

no one told me about disability living allowance...we could have had it for years when X's mother was alive...no one bothers, in fact I think they go out of the way not to, because you cost them money (P2)

I need living disability allowances for my children...the past few weeks all I've done is nursed illnesses and gone to appointments...it sounds like I'm making excuses...when I go to them, it's like, 'oh she's just...one of them people who just wants to take, take, take', and it's not the case...I do voluntary work (P5).

P2 made the point that despite he and his wife being well-educated people (both had law degrees), they had found life with a child with learning difficulties extremely difficult:

we'd come to the conclusion, 'we're white, middle-class, fairly competent people...if we can't cope, who can?'...looking back it seems a rather trite and easy way to think, 'cause it's been bloody hard work... (P2).

MS1 commented on his belief that there is an added problem with the jobs market:

the actual jobs market is so restricted now that anybody with a disability...is gonna find it even more difficult to get a job than before...establishments that have been with us...to support people with disabilities...they're no longer in place, and the government are expecting those people to go out into the normal everyday job market and...be able to cope... (MS1).

MS2 added the fact that the government is removing qualifications which young people with disabilities have previously been able to obtain:

it is changing; they're (the government) taking the qualification (equivalent of GCSE) away from it (ASDAN CoPE)...it won't carry the same qualification...which is...a shame, because it's a great motivator for the children...they need to find some way of giving it similar status without maybe...calling it a GCSE (MS2).

Family circumstances can make young people more susceptible to bullying. Families dealing with low socioeconomic status (de Boer et al., 2010; Garner and Hinton, 2010); poor job prospects (Bender and Lösel, 2011; Stoddard et al., 2011); family crises (Leff, 1999); lack of family cohesion (Altieri and von Kluge, 2009; Eliot and Cornell, 2009) are under enormous stress. Families with children with learning difficulties can be under additional stress and find it difficult to cope (Bourke and Burgman, 2010; Lyons et al., 2010). It is the combination of risk factors that can cause the greatest degree of vulnerability, as in CS5 in the current study.

Studies such as Watts and Erevelles (2004) and Macfarlane (2009) highlight that young people, and adults, can feel oppressed by social, political, economic and institutional structures and rhetoric. Young people need to be helped to find positive, empowering solutions to problems that they face (Singer, 2005), as an alternative to turning to violence and bullying behaviours, or to developing passive, disempowering and destructive coping strategies. This responsibility is shared by every member of a community (Leff, 1999; Prilleltensky and Nelson, 2009). Mishna (2003) makes the point that 'a much higher proportion of young offenders have learning difficulties than the general population' (p.337).

4.5 Research aim 4: To explore the coping strategies of young people with learning and/or communication difficulties in relation to feeling unsafe or feeling bullied in the community

This subsection considers the findings in relation to research aim 4. The first overarching theme considered here is ‘coping strategies’: the third ‘coping strategies’ subtheme will be considered in this subsection – victim mentality versus resourcefulness/sense of empowerment. The second overarching theme is ‘awareness’, and the third is the ‘role of siblings’.

4.5.1 Subtheme 12: Coping strategies: victim mentality versus resourcefulness/sense of empowerment

P1 and P4 commented that their sons had learned to help themselves through an awareness of their difficulties:

he's very clever, or just too anxious...to...put himself out there...or put himself in a situation which he doesn't think he would handle... in many ways, he protects himself (P1)
he'll struggle to remember things...but...he's better with that now, and he makes sure he writes things down...he's sort of learning to manage things in his own way...he tries to do things to help himself (P4).

YP1 identified that he avoided places where he felt he had nothing in common with the other young people there:

Not very much bullying can happen if you are all there for the same reason (YP1),

and that what makes him feel safe is if he knows a place well:

I know my way around that (shopping centre) perfectly, and...if I find trouble, I know where to go where I won't get hemmed in...there are something like 2 exits for every corridor (YP1).

P4 identified that her son felt safer when he cycled to school:

I think he feels safer on his bike...he knows that he's got the speed... (P4).

She acknowledged also the progress her son had made:

initially he didn't cope well with it (the bullying)...he's more assertive now (P4).

P1 commented on the importance of her son creating healthy relationships:

I want him to have a good enough group of friends so that he stays mentally healthy (P1).

P2 said that his daughter had a great deal of self-confidence, which helped her to cope:

...she has quite a lot of self-belief...more self-confidence than her (non-disabled) sister...It's one of the things that I've drilled into them, that they are every bit as good as anybody (P2).

By contrast, the coping strategies of the other three young people appeared less positive:

X self-harms terrible...she's got very low self-esteem...she hasn't coped at all...she's always kept it to herself... (P3)
He cuts off, he just switches off, he'll just go upstairs into his room and play his games or literally live in his phone...he goes into himself as a way of protecting himself...there was a time when X was suggesting, 'I'm gonna kill myself' (P5)
she just walks off, just takes no notice...or she just bursts out (crying) (P6).

P3 and P5, in particular, had arguably adopted more of a victim mentality rather than a proactive approach:

we've lost so much money over the years, paying for trips, especially in senior school...we found out the bully's going, and we've lost money (P3)
he's not been treated very well...called 'blackie' or something...strangled by one of the children...no one informed me...I thought, 'that's ever so strange...because I know that if you'd have done that...I would have been called almost instantly to be told that...your child has...physically harmed another person'...I think as a person...it...puts you in a box...you consistently think about how other people think or you'll wonder whether you're all being judged the same (P5).

P3 commented that she believed her daughter was 'always gonna be a target', and her daughter appeared to have adopted the same mind-set:

I'm the victim (YP3),

and when asked if the bullying made her feel bad, she replied:

It does sometimes, but I've just got to get used to it, don't I, it's life innit? (YP3).

Research suggests that it is important for parents to help young people find appropriate ways to respond to bullying, since problem-solving strategies are associated with fewer numbers of bullying incidents (Cassidy, 2009; Mishna, 2003; Sawyer et al., 2011). Sawyer et al. (2011) found however that some of the strategies offered by parents can be ineffective, or worse, can exacerbate the child's situation. They suggest that young people who respond to being bullied passively (such as YP3 and YP5) can experience prolonged victimization. They suggest also that young people who try to ignore being bullied (such as YP6) are at increased risk of internalising problems. By contrast, Sawyer et al. (2011) found that some parents offered children more proactive strategies such as highlighting the importance of prosocial behaviours (such as YP1), and encouraging young people to become involved in extracurricular activities to improve their self-esteem (such as YP2 and YP4). 'Parents are highly influential in their child's life' (Sawyer et al., 2011, p.1800). If parents adopt coping styles which are passive or aggressive (Luong et al., 2009; Lyons et al., 2010), as opposed to proactive and assertive, their children may learn by example (Meesters and Muris, 2004; Wolfradt et al., 2003).

4.5.2 Theme 5: Levels of awareness

4.5.2.1 Subtheme 13: Lack of awareness of learning difficulties and how these affect the young person

P1 and P4 commented that they had helped their sons to recognise when they were feeling anxious, and that this awareness helped them to understand and manage their difficulties to some extent:

last summer we started looking round colleges, and he then said to me, 'I feel sick every day...I think I might need to go to the doctor', and I...said 'well do you think you are just getting really anxious about this college thing...and it's making you feel really unsafe and unsure?', and he went away and he thought about it, and he came back and he went, 'yes, I think so...probably' (P1)

he used to be sick sometimes on the line...and other parents would look at me and I'd be going, 'you're all right now X, go on!', 'cause I knew it was just a nerve thing, it wasn't that he was ill or anything (P4).

P1, P2 and P4 had endeavoured to help the young people to understand the nature of their difficulties:

...when he got to secondary school and they said, 'now what do you know about your own condition?'...he knew quite a lot...others didn't... I think he's got quite a good understanding of his difficulties...I always talked about it a lot with him being around when he was small (P1)

Yes, she...has quite a good understanding of her difficulties (P2)

It's more anxiety than bullying...as he's got older he's sort of learned where his difficulties lie (P4).

YP3's understanding of her difficulties, by contrast, appeared to be pervasively negative, according to her mother:

(She believes) that she just can't do it (i.e. learn/communicate) (P3),

and complicated by her emotional difficulties and her personal circumstances, but

also, it might be argued, by how much information her mother was choosing to give her about her birth family:

X's mental state is very fragile...we're under the adult psychiatrist...only just this year (she) knows that she's got 6 or 7 brothers and sisters...which has really knocked her...she got a letter off her birth sister...she regressed terrible...one minute she says, 'will you take me down to see them?' and I said, 'when you're a bit more older and you're more unemotional'... (P3).

P3 appeared to recognise, on the one hand, that her daughter had the mental age of a much younger child:

educationally X's probably a 9 or a 10 year old, at a push...you've got one who's 8 (X's cousin), and one nearly 18, and they've got the same sort of interests...wants exactly the same amount of attention as this little one (P3),

but, on the other hand, was condoning the behaviour of a young person with the chronological age of 17, or, arguably, older:

some days she hasn't got no emotion inside at all...yet one day then she can be like a baby...you'd think having a boyfriend would settle (her) down...and now we're talking about the (contraceptive) pill (P3).

Similarly, P5 appeared to have an awareness that her son was struggling with certain aspects of everyday living, but appeared to feel a sense of powerlessness as to how she could help him:

He says he knows he's different: 'I know I'm different, but why? But why am I different? Why can't I get it like everyone else?'...he doesn't quite know how to defend himself...He struggles socially, can't tell the time...he's just not responsible...at all (P5).

She expressed an opinion that her son's introversion and withdrawal was a helpful coping strategy:

Going into himself has helped (P5),

which may be concerning, as research suggests that passive coping strategies can be unhelpful (Sawyer et al., 2011).

MS2 commented that she believed the young people's level of awareness, and understanding, of their difficulties, made a difference to how vulnerable they were:

Some do, some don't (have a fairly good understanding of their difficulties)...some have very unrealistic expectations...some of the young people don't necessarily realise that their communication skills are so bad...they're not aware (MS2),

and that this level of awareness and understanding comes primarily from the parents:

...if parents are aware, then they (the children) are (MS2).

She further clarified her belief that the primary difficulties for the young people can be around social skills:

it's to do with relationships, it's to do with not being able to communicate their feelings about relationships, it's the fact of wanting relationships and not knowing the best way to go about it, especially if they've got speech and language difficulties...being able to sort of maintain friendships (MS2).

Parenting styles have been shown to have an effect on coping behaviour in adolescents ((Meesters and Muris, 2004; Wolfradt et al., 2003). Families with children with learning difficulties have additional stresses on the family, and parents benefit from appropriate support programmes (Luong et al., 2009). Research also shows

that poor social skills are related to problems of victims of bullying, both for disabled (Christensen et al., 2012) and non-disabled young people (Fox and Boulton, 2005; Johnson et al., 2002). Parents need to have an awareness of the difficulties their learning disabled children may face, in order to aid the child's self-awareness, as commented on by MS2. Mishna (2003) identifies self-awareness and an understanding of one's difficulties as protective factors which can support young people with learning difficulties. Parents also need to have an awareness of the increased likelihood of young people with learning difficulties having mental health issues, such as an increased vulnerability to bullying (Baumeister et al., 2008; Fekkes et al., 2006). They need to have this awareness in order to give their children the support that they need, both emotional support (Bourke and Burgman, 2010; Skär, 2003), and practical advice in terms of positive coping strategies (Sawyer et al., 2011). Effective bullying prevention could include support for families (Vernberg and Biggs, 2010) and the involvement of mental health professionals (Carr-Gregg and Manocha, 2011).

In the current study, P1, P2 and P4 seemed to have a better awareness of their children's difficulties, and this was reflected in both their children's understanding of their own difficulties, and in the children's coping strategies. By contrast, P3, P5 and P6 appeared to have less of an awareness of how their children's difficulties were impacting on them, and how they as parents could support their children in a proactive way.

4.5.2.2 Subtheme 14: Lack of awareness of dangers e.g. cyberbullying

MS1 and MS3 commented that cyberbullying had been a major difficulty in recent years:

*a lot of e-bullying going on...For over 2 years there's been issues on Facebook about giving out passwords to strangers, letting anyone on, having chats and arranging to meet people she doesn't know, we've done a lot of work...some of them don't understand...e-safety... (MS3)
the major incidents we had evolved around things like Facebook and tweeting...cyberbullying (MS1).*

MS3 commented that parents either aren't aware:

we've got problems with BBM too...it's a Blackberry chat messaging...you can just chat to people for free...that's why all the kids have Blackberry ...you'll find that quite a lot of parents don't even know (MS3),

or they feel a sense of powerlessness as to what they can do to help:

some of the parents come in and say, 'right, I've banned them at home, but they've got it on their phones, so what can I do?' (MS3),

despite staff offering advice:

You can put parental controls on phones...you can restrict going on websites, going on the internet, you can stop that by just clicking a little button and it stops you going on line (MS3).

MS3 added that the problem can be exacerbated by the young people being at home a lot, as a consequence of parents perhaps feeling that the young people are safer at home:

a lot of them when they get home...don't go out at night...hang around, so it's all done on Facebook and texting really...the parents would rather them be at home on Facebook than going out...that is their social life, when they get home it's Facebook... (MS3),

and by parents adding to the bullying problems:

Parents have been involved as well, they join in (with the bullying) sometimes... (MS3).

The parents interviewed demonstrated varying degrees of awareness:

*I don't look at it every day (his daughter's Facebook account)...I tend to look at it if there's a problem... (P2)
I don't go on Facebook myself, but I look at it through X's account, so I'll just go on and have a look occasionally (P4)
X doesn't go on Facebook (P6)
No, well he does go on (Facebook), but not often...he hasn't actually experienced that (cyberbullying), and I do monitor (P5).*

P3 commented on her decision the previous Christmas to buy her daughter an iPad:

we bought her an iPad...by Boxing Day we took it off her because she was talking to any old xxxxxx... (P3).

This was despite YP3 having had a previous experience of being 'groomed', according to her mother:

when X was being groomed... (P3).

P3 expressed the sense of powerlessness referred to earlier:

...not that she's allowed to do (go on Facebook), but they've got the means, her phone does it, her iPod does it (P3).

Brighi et al. (2012) and Carr-Gregg and Manocha (2011) advocate the importance of parents being aware of the dangers of cyberbullying. Brighi et al. (2012) maintain that 'educators and parents need to be aware of the easy transfer between offline and online attacks that victims may suffer, and consider how the school network may be involved in carrying on cyberviolence against victims' (p.384). This was evidenced in the current study by MS3. Brighi et al.'s (2012) results highlight the crucial role of family involvement in young people's lives, particularly in terms of vulnerability to cyberbullying victimization. Carr-Gregg and Manocha (2011) recommend several websites, for example, Cybersmart, where parents can find resources and advice on using the internet safely. A UK equivalent of this website would be Digizen. Further examples appear on the help sheet (Appendix 10) given to every participant in the current study.

4.5.2.3 Subtheme 15: Lack of awareness of opportunities/strengths

All of the parents appeared to have an awareness of the strengths of the young people:

he's caring, he's fair and I think he's loyal...and he's quite a lot of fun to be around really in his own special way...his potential is still huge...and he's still

doing marvellous wonderful things, and things that I didn't expect him to do, like learn to drive (P1)
she's very keen to vote in elections now...she's not going to be Andrew Marr...but she is interested...what I do want is for her to become an advocate for people with disabilities in the longer term...she can articulate quite well (P2)
she'd never be late...'cause I'd always make sure she got there (P3)
X will...talk to anybody really, and he'll include anybody, he would never exclude anybody from anything (P4)
He's a caring character, he's polite...that's about it really (P5)
She's very friendly, and she talks to people who she knows (P6).

The members of staff appeared very aware of the young people's potential:

we've got a young lady...who...actually appeared at the Albert Hall, and the Royal Palladium...in theatrical productions... (MS1)
...when students are out on visits or they go to work experience...they seem to be grateful that somebody is actually providing them with an experience and they do actually make the most of it, and they come back with really good reports from the provider (MS1)
some of them have got great talents, we've got one boy who's...one of the fittest young men in his year group (MS2)
they do look out for each other...they do it instinctively...I think they are vulnerable, but also more resourceful than other people, because they've had to be (MS3)
(they have) so much potential...motivated, they all wanna get jobs afterwards...they all want to get on in life...they seem to have a different (positive) outlook on life (MS3)
we try to teach them that it's ok to be different...you make the most of what you can do, we always look at what they can achieve rather than what they're not able to do, and I think they can bring that out in society...with other young people... (MS3).

Within a school context, the NCB (2007b) assert that a whole-school approach to bullying is 'based on developing a framework or policy that promotes shared values, beliefs and attitudes that inhibit bullying' (p.3). Community psychology purports that a similar framework is necessary for a community approach to tackling bullying. Young people with learning difficulties need to be recognised for the strengths they bring to any community – a sense of optimism (Huebner et al., 2002; Skär, 2003); the ability to recognise and celebrate diversity (NCB, 2007b); and the ability to look beyond their disability to what they can achieve and contribute to their families and to society

(Dykens, 2005; Prilleltensky, 2009; Prout, 2009). This was particularly evidenced in the current study by P1, P2 and P4, as well as by all the members of staff recognising the young people's achievements and potential.

4.5.3 Theme 6: The role of siblings

4.5.3.1 Subtheme 16: Support/adaptation

P6 commented on her son's awareness of his sister's vulnerability when on the computer:

he says, 'just watch what she goes on, on the computer, 'cause you never know what's on them', but he checks it, and he says, 'that's all right' (P6).

P2 commented on his awareness of the responsibility his older daughter would have to play in her sister's life:

I don't want X's sister valuing her life entirely around looking after X, but she will have a role to play for the rest of her life, and all X's life (P2).

P1 commented on the supportive role that her younger son had had, and was continuing to have, in his brother's life:

his brother had had a few parties here and he's got on really well with quite a lot of his brother's friends...even as a little boy he (X's brother) would choose who would be safe to come to his birthday parties, the ones that wouldn't tease X, the ones that could be relied upon to be kind (P1),

and on the responsibilities siblings often feel towards a brother or sister with learning difficulties:

I think we don't always take account of ...the pressure other siblings feel under when they're in school with a brother or a sister who has difficulties...somehow they always feel responsible for the other one (P1).

Dykens (2005) maintains that a child with a learning difficulty 'calls upon the coping mechanisms of family members, who may manage in ways that are both adaptive and maladaptive' (p.360), and that much of the literature to date has focused on the latter. She acknowledges that 'siblings may feel stressed, resentful, embarrassed,

hurt, jealous, anxious, or burdened because of their brother or sister with disabilities' (p.362), as evidenced by P1 and P2 in the current study; but that, equally, some families 'note positive transformations for themselves and the family, with renewed abilities to adapt to a changing world' (p.361), as evidenced in the final subtheme.

4.5.3.2 Subtheme 17: Development of tolerance and understanding

P1 and P2 commented on what they felt the young people's siblings had gained from having a brother or a sister with learning difficulties:

He's (X's brother) a much more tolerant, caring person...because I think he has much more of an appreciation of different people and their own motivations and difficulties...he's had to take account of somebody else's difficulties...somebody else's just not having the skills and the abilities that we all assume people have got, so I think it's made him a little bit more thinking and caring (P1)

X's sister volunteered to work at a charity...at uni dealing with people at a disadvantage...she has done voluntary work as well...when she comes home at Christmas...I'd never have expected it of her, if I'm being honest (P2).

Dykens (2005) maintains that among siblings, a variety of positive outcomes have been noted: 'one sibling thanked his brother with Down syndrome for "teaching me the most important things in life" (patience and tolerance), whereas others have noted that having a sibling with disabilities leads them to have increased empathy, love, sense of social justice, advocacy for those in need, protection–nurturance, loyalty, implicit understandings and acceptance of difference' (p.361). She calls for more research into the idea that families and siblings develop a host of positive outcomes as a direct consequence of having a family member with a learning difficulty.

CHAPTER 5: GENERAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Research aim 1: To explore what young people with learning and/or communication difficulties report in relation to experiences of feeling a lack of safety and of bullying in the community

With the exception of YP3, the young people did not appear to be of the opinion that bullying in the community was an issue which affected them to a substantial degree. The photo ratings in Table 4 (p.51) show that YP1 and YP5 were aware of places in the community where bullying might be more likely to happen, but had not had direct experience of it. Conversely, for YP3, bullying was perceived as a very real presence in her life, but did not appear to be related to specific places in the community.

Local parks and theme parks scored highest in terms of being places where the young people felt least safe from bullying; restaurants/cafes scored lowest. No clear pattern emerged. Answers appeared to be determined by personal experience.

5.2 Research aim 2: To explore what level of independence young people with learning and/or communication difficulties experience out of school in the community

P1, P2 and P4 (all residing in the south of the Borough) showed an awareness of the importance of encouraging a level of independence **(theme 1)** in the young people. P3 and P6 showed less of an awareness of this, and so may have been inhibiting a sense of personal growth and independence in the young people, which could make them more susceptible to being bullied.

MS2 commented that YP5 demonstrated a lack of awareness as to the nature of his difficulties, and that his mother demonstrated a lack of understanding as to how her son's difficulties impacted on him, and how to help him. MS2 believed that these factors rendered YP5 more vulnerable in general, and possibly more vulnerable to

being bullied. P3, P5 and P6 lived in the north of the Borough, in areas of socioeconomic disadvantage.

5.3 Research aim 3: To explore what teachers and parents of young people with learning and/or communication difficulties report in relation to young people's experiences of feeling a lack of safety and of bullying in the community

5.3.1 Theme 2: Coping strategies (influence of home and school)

Parents living in the south of the Borough appeared to have a higher level of proactivity in terms of helping the young people to understand and manage their difficulties, and to plan for their futures. Parents living in both the north and the south of the Borough spoke of support from wider family being crucial, in terms of supporting them to support their children. P5 seemed the most vulnerable in that she felt she lacked the support of the wider family, and felt attacked by society in general. Her sense of disempowerment and lack of support for herself appeared to make it very difficult for her to find the resources to help her son. This, together with her son's lack of awareness, as described by MS2, potentially made YP5 more vulnerable to being bullied, as had previously happened, and was continuing to happen, to his older brother. P1 made the point that young people with disabilities might benefit from having access to community activities until they are older i.e. post-19.

The member of staff from each school, both mainstream and special, commented on the strategies they have in place to help the young people develop independent living skills, as well as strategies to cope with bullying. MS1 also commented on the importance of employment skills.

5.3.2 Theme 3: School placement

MS2 and MS3 could see the advantages of mainstream/special school placements, but recognised that an appropriate placement for any one child depends on her/his individual needs being considered holistically. All of the staff members considered that, regardless of school placement, the young people's home environment was the most important factor in determining how well the young people manage life outside of school. In the mainstream school, peer support was particularly relevant, as the young people with learning/communication difficulties have more interaction with typically developing young people. More thought may need to be given, both in mainstream and special schools, to the value of peer mediation in dealing effectively with bullying. Young people with and without learning difficulties need to be supported by adults to understand and celebrate their differences. The training of mainstream teachers to support young people with learning/communication difficulties was also highlighted by MS2.

5.3.3 Theme 4: Role of society

Parents and staff considered also the importance of young people's integration with the wider community. Highlighted was the need for young people with disabilities, and those without, to be supported to integrate, and being shown how by adults, rather than expecting such integration to happen naturally. Also highlighted was the extent to which such integration can be to the benefit of young people and adults with disabilities, and of those without, and can lead to a more inclusive society. Young people with disabilities can be involved in raising awareness of bullying in the community. Parents highlighted however that more support is needed at a social,

political and economic level, particularly for families dealing with additional stressors such as low socioeconomic status.

5.4 Research aim 4: To explore the coping strategies of young people with learning and/or communication difficulties in relation to feeling bullied or feeling unsafe in the community

5.4.1 Theme 2: Coping strategies (victim mentality vs resourcefulness/sense of empowerment)

YP1, YP2 and YP4 appeared to have developed fairly positive coping strategies. YP2 seemed to have an innate sense of confidence and self-belief, cultivated by her home environment. YP1 and YP4's coping strategies appeared to have developed as a result of their parents' helping them to understand and manage their difficulties. YP3, YP5 and YP6 appeared to have developed less positive coping strategies: self-harming, withdrawal and crying. Again, a divide between those living in less/more disadvantaged areas of the Borough seems apparent.

5.4.2 Theme 5: Levels of awareness

The young people's coping strategies appeared to have been influenced by the level of awareness shown by their parents, in terms of awareness of the young people's difficulties and how these affect the young people; awareness of dangers such as cyberbullying; and awareness of the strengths of the young people. The young people's coping strategies also appeared to have been influenced by their parents' coping strategies and by how well they were managing to adapt to life with a young person with learning/communication difficulties. The individual circumstances of those young people particularly at risk, such as those whose families are experiencing additional crises, need to be understood and accommodated for.

Cyberbullying was highlighted as an issue, particularly by MS3. He commented that either parents were not aware of the dangers, or that they felt a sense of powerlessness as to what they could do to help. Five of the six parents interviewed spoke of monitoring the young people's use of the internet, with the exception of P3.

5.4.3 Theme 6: Role of siblings

Finally, the role of siblings was considered in terms of the support they give to young people with disabilities. It was found that the support offered to young people with disabilities by their siblings can help the young people to cope, but that the non-disabled siblings can also benefit from the relationship.

5.5 Knowledge added to the area of safety/bullying in the community

The current study addresses, to a limited extent, the scarcity of literature on bullying in the community (NCB, 2007a), particularly with regard to the perceptions of young people with learning and/or communication difficulties. It also addresses the perceptions of their parents and of their teachers, in order to take an eco-systemic approach to exploring why some of the young people may feel less safe/more susceptible to being bullied than others.

It therefore attempts to give a voice to young people with learning and/or communication difficulties and to position them as empowered and as potential active partners in change rather than the passive recipients of other people's perceptions of them as victims. In families and communities where young people with learning and/or communication difficulties feel safe, listened to and understood, their understanding of difference and of why young people feel unsafe/are bullied extends

beyond disability (Martin and Stobbs, 2012). In the current study, P5 comments that her son struggles to understand his differences:

He says he knows he's different: 'I know I'm different, but why? But why am I different? Why can't I get it like everyone else?' (P5)

This young man needs to be helped to understand that the question perhaps ought to be: 'Why can't everyone else get me?' – and that the responsibility lies with society to have a better understanding of disability and difference, just as children who are bullied need to understand that the 'fault' lies not with them, but with the bullies. In turn, however, P5 needs support in order to be more able to support her son. She also needs to live in a community and in a society where she feels safe, listened to and understood; and where she can feel confident in the community's response to issues such as feeling unsafe/being bullied (Peirson, 2010).

5.6 Implications for professional practice

Mackay (2006) promotes the idea of the educational psychologist (EP) as community psychologist; as well as that of holistic child psychology across home, school and community. He argues that community psychology should be at the heart of the work of an EP, and evidence-based practice should be underpinned by values that seek to foster health, caring and compassion, self-determination and participation, human diversity and social justice (Prilleltensky and Nelson, 2000, 2009).

Mishna (2003) considers that school mental health professionals, such as educational psychologists, should be involved in training programmes to improve teachers' responses to the academic and social problems of students, particularly those considered 'at risk' (p.342), for example those from disadvantaged areas. Martin and Stobbs (2012) found that a school's response to bullying affects young

people's feelings of safety but also their current and future identity as disabled people. The same can be said for a community or a societal response to bullying. Pimm identifies (2012) strategies suggested by parents that can mitigate tensions and dilemmas felt by them and their children around issues of safety/bullying in schools, such as educating the wider community to better understand disability and difference. These parents also offer advice to other parents in approaching schools around issues of bullying such as asking schools to take responsibility for the behaviour of pupils beyond the school gates, reviewing the anti-bullying policy regularly, and working on pupils' social skills.

Carr-Gregg and Manocha (2011) consider that the 'effective management of bullying at a community level is a multidisciplinary effort, involving parents, teachers and school officials, the GP, and mental health professionals' (p.98). Byrne (1997) and Thompson and Smith (2011) consider also the role of non-teaching staff, school bus drivers, shopkeepers, the police, educational social workers, and the local authority youth offending service or behaviour support team. People within a community need to work together to develop their understanding of disability and difference, and to give a clear message that disablist bullying is unacceptable and that young people with and without learning and/or communication difficulties have the right to live in a community where they can feel safe.

EP Services can encourage anti-bullying work that promotes multi-agency work with a range of LA services (for example, Children Missing Education, Education Welfare Officers, School Improvement staff) plus youth services and voluntary and community groups. They can also promote links with health providers through the Children and

Adolescent Mental Health partnership with clinical psychologists and paediatric specialists.

Prilleltensky and Nelson (2000) consider that 'social responsibility models lead to social policies that support all families', and that 'we need to reformulate solutions in terms of parental, communal and government responsibility' (p.99). At a LA level, EP Services can promote anti-bullying groups, such as the one at Shelton EPS, which are run by young people and supported by youth and community services. It is essential that young people, both those with and without disabilities, and their parents, are represented in such groups, and are therefore given a voice. This can lead to young people and their parents feeling empowered, and able to contribute to the wellbeing of other young people and adults (Cameron, 2006).

5.7 Limitations

The current study was small-scale and qualitative in nature and therefore cannot be replicated or the findings generalised. The value of the study is in detailing the lived experiences of these young people and their parents.

No definition of bullying was discussed with the young people, therefore it is possible that the young people had different understandings of the term, for example they may not have considered the element of repetition considered in some definitions.

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APPENDIX 1: SCRIPT/INFORMATION SHEET FOR STUDENTS (15-18 YEARS OLD)

(This is planned as an oral briefing for each student group, at which students can ask any questions. The script will be left as a reference sheet thereafter)

My name is Jacquie Lomas. I am a student at the University of Birmingham. I am also a Trainee Educational Psychologist and I work for xxx Council's Educational Psychology Service (EPS). Educational Psychologists work with parents and schools to try to improve situations for young people. One of the issues we focus on is trying to ensure that young people are safe. xxx EPS is currently looking at tackling bullying in the community. The community means when you are out and about in xxx, or anywhere between home and school.

You are going to have the opportunity to take photographs out in the community with the help of some of the adults who work with you in school. This will be part of a 'feeling safe in the community' mini-project. You will be taking photographs of places where you go: shops, parks, local streets, using buses, leisure centres, restaurants/cafes, cinemas, youth clubs, skate parks, and anywhere else you spend time.

I would then like to invite you to take part in an interview with me, to look at which of the places in your pictures you feel most safe with no fear of bullying, and which places you feel less safe and worry that you might be bullied. The interview would take 20-30 minutes.

I will be taping the interviews. After your interview, the tape will be kept safe and the only people who will be allowed to listen to it are me and two other adults from the university. No one else will know whose voice it is, so your views will be confidential. The only time we cannot keep your views confidential is if you say something that suggests you or someone else is in danger.

If you decide you would like to take part in the interviews, but then change your mind before or during the interview, that will be fine. You can decide not to take part, and I will not ask you why. If you change your mind after the interview, then I will delete any recordings and will not use the information you have given me. I can be contacted on this telephone number: xxxx xxx xxxx.

Before you participate in the interviews, I will need a parent or guardian to sign a consent form to say that they too are happy for you to participate.

As part of the research I will also be collecting views from students in your school and other schools.

I will then look at all the information you have given me, alongside information given by other people. I'll report what I find out from this research to other adults in xxx (although no-one will be able to tell who said what, or the name of your school or where it is: I'll simply share some of the main things I've learned from my interviews). I think we will be able to use this information to help make communities in xxx safer for young people.

The research will finish in June 2013, and I would like to come back to your school and invite you to a presentation so I can tell you what I found out about young people's views on bullying in the community.

If you would like to participate in an interview, please give your name to _____ by _____.

Thank you for listening

Jacquie

APPENDIX 2: LETTER/INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARENTS/CARERS

Dear Parents/Carers

My name is Jacquie Lomas. I am a student at the University of Birmingham. I am also a Trainee Educational Psychologist and I work as part of xxx Council's Educational Psychology Service (EPS). Educational Psychologists work with parents and schools to try to improve situations for young people. One of the issues we focus on is trying to ensure that young people are safe. xxx EPS is currently looking at tackling bullying in the community. My research specifically looks at the views of young people with learning and/or communication difficulties, and of their parents/carers with regard to how bullying in the community affects them/their children.

As I expect you know, your child has been involved in a school project, taking photographs out in the community, with support from school staff, as part of a 'feeling safe in the community' mini-project, and has expressed an interest in taking part in an interview, to look at which of these places they feel most safe in with no fear of bullying, and which places they feel less safe in and worry that they might be bullied. The interview would take 20-30 minutes.

I am also interested in your views about bullying in the community, and how this can be tackled. I would like to invite you to take part in an interview, either at school or in your home. This interview would take 45-60 minutes.

When I report student and parent/carer views back to xxx EPS, it will be in very general terms. The names and locations of your school will be kept confidential, and withheld in any outputs of the study. It will not be possible to identify individual students or parents/carers from the data. I will be audio-recording the interviews, after which the audio-recording will be kept in a locked cabinet and the only people who will be allowed to listen to it are Jacquie Lomas and two tutors from the university. We will not be storing your names with the recording, so no one will be able to identify your voice or views, or those of your child. Your views, and those of your child, will be confidential. The only time we cannot keep your views or your child's views confidential would be if you or they say something that suggests you, they or someone else faces risks of harm. If this were the case, we would have to talk to the child protection officer in your child's school and information may have to be shared with other agencies.

This falls in line with xxx's Safeguarding policy, which is routinely followed in all xxx schools, including XXXX. More detailed information is available on the Local Authority website at <http://www.xxx.gov.uk/staysafe/20475.htm>

Your consent is required for your child to participate in an interview. If your child decides they would like to take part in the interviews, but then changes their mind before or during the interview, that will be fine. They can decide not to take part, and I

will not ask why. If they change their mind after the interview, then I will delete any recordings and will not use the information they have given me.

If you are willing for your child to take part in an interview, please tick the appropriate box below.

If you are willing to take part in an interview yourself, please tick the appropriate box below. If you decide you would like to take part in the interviews, but then change your mind before or during the interview, that will be fine. You can decide not to take part, and I will not ask you why. If you change your mind after the interview, then I will delete any recordings and will not use the information you have given me.

As part of the research I will also be collecting views from students and parents/carers in other schools. The research will finish in June 2013, and I would like to come back to your child's school and invite you and your child to a presentation so I can tell you what I found out about the views of young people with moderate learning difficulties, and of their parents/carers, on the subject of bullying in the community.

If you would like any further information on the research, please contact me, Jacquie Lomas, at xxx EPS on xxxx xxx xxxx or Sue Morris my supervisor, at the University of Birmingham on xxxx xxx xxxx.

Please complete and return the consent form to _____ by _____.

Yours sincerely

Jacquie Lomas

APPENDIX 3: CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS/CARERS

Child's Participation

Name of child: _____

☐

I give consent for my child to take part in the 'tackling bullying in the community' research project

☐

I do not give consent for my child to take part in the 'tackling bullying in the community' research project

Please tick one of the above boxes

I can be contacted on the following telephone number or email address:

My own participation

I (name of parent/carer) _____ would / would not like to participate in an interview to discuss my views on bullying in the community, specifically with regard to how this affects and has affected my child and our family. I have read the information sheet and understand that:

	Yes/No
I do not have to take part in an interview. It is something I can choose to do, or not to do.	
Should I so wish, I can leave the interview at any point.	
I can ask for any record of my answers to be deleted after the interview, should I so wish.	
My views will be kept confidential unless I say anything that suggests that my child or another child or young person is at risk from harm, in which case, Local Authority Safeguarding procedures would be followed.	

My views will be recorded, and the recording kept locked in a filing cabinet to which only Jacquie Lomas and her two tutors at the university will have access.	
My views will be used to inform anti-bullying work in xxx, and how we can make the community safer for young people with learning and/or communication difficulties.	

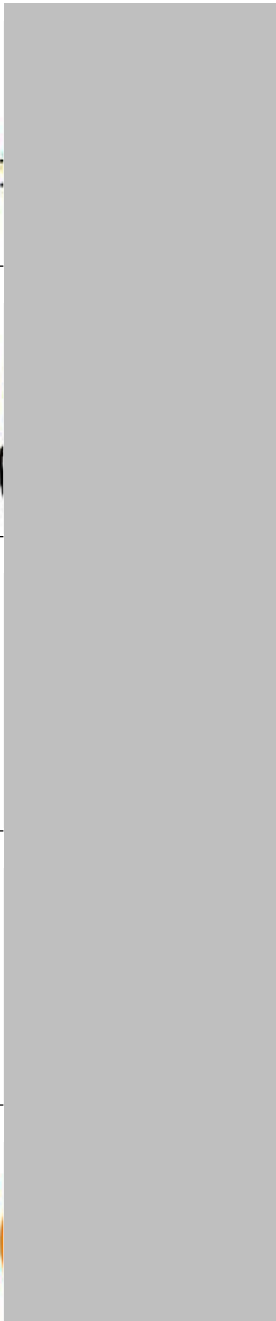
Signed _____

Date _____

APPENDIX 4: CONSENT FORM FOR STUDENTS

My name is _____

I would like to participate in an interview to discuss my views on bullying in the community. I have read the information sheet and understand that:

		Yes/No
	I do not have to take part in an interview. It is something I can choose to do, or not to do.	
	If I decide to, I can leave the interview at any point.	
	My views will be kept confidential unless I say anything that suggests I or anyone else is at risk of being hurt.	
	My views will be recorded and the recording kept safe. Only Jacquie Lomas and the people she works with at the university will have access to it. I can ask for my answers to be removed if I wish.	
	My views will be used to help with future anti-bullying work in xxx, and to help make the community safer for young people.	

Signed _____

Date _____

APPENDIX 5: LETTER/INFORMATION SHEET FOR STAFF

Dear staff member

My name is Jacquie Lomas. I am a student at the University of Birmingham. I am also a Trainee Educational Psychologist and I work as part of xxx Council's Educational Psychology Service (EPS). Educational Psychologists work with parents and schools to try to improve situations for young people. One of the issues we focus on is trying to ensure that young people are safe. xxx EPS is currently looking at tackling bullying in the community. My research specifically looks at the views of young people with learning and/or communication difficulties, and of their parents/carers with regard to how bullying in the community affects them/their children.

As you know, young people at your school have been involved in taking photographs out in the community. They are also taking part in interviews, as are some of their parents/carers.

I am also interested in your views about bullying in the community, and how this can be tackled, specifically with regard to how this affects young people with learning and/or communication difficulties such as those with whom you work. I would like to invite you to take part in an interview in school. The interview would take 45-60 minutes.

When I report staff views back to xxx EPS, it will be in very general terms. The names and locations of your school will be kept confidential, and withheld in any outputs of the study. It will not be possible to identify individual staff from the data. I will be audio-recording the interviews, after which the audio-recording will be kept in a locked cabinet and the only people who will be allowed to listen to it are me and two tutors from the university who are supervising my research. We will not be storing your names with the recording, so no one will be able to identify your voice or views. Your views will be confidential. As you will appreciate, the only time I would not be able to keep information you give during the interview confidential would be if you said something to suggest a young person faces risk of harm. If this were the case, we would have to talk to the child protection officer in your school and information may have to be shared with other agencies, in line with xxx MBC policy (<http://www.xxx.gov.uk/staysafe/20475.htm>).

If you agree to take part in an interview, please fill in the consent form. If you decide you are willing to take part in an interview, but change your mind before or during the interview, that will be fine. You can decide not to take part, and I will not ask you why. If you change your mind after the interview, then I will delete any recordings and will not use the information you have given me.

As part of the research I will also be collecting views from staff in other schools.

The research will finish in June 2013, and I would like to come back to your school and invite you to a presentation so I can tell you what I found out about the views and experiences of young people with learning and/or communication difficulties, of their parents/carers, and of the staff, on the subject of bullying in the community.

If you would like any further information on the research, please contact me, Jacquie Lomas, at xxx EPS on xxxx xxx xxxx or Sue Morris, my supervisor, at the University of Birmingham on xxxx xxx xxxx. Please complete the consent form and email it back to me, or I can collect it on the day of the interview. Thank you.

Yours sincerely

Jacquie Lomas

APPENDIX 6: CONSENT FORM FOR STAFF

I would like to participate in an interview to discuss my views on bullying in the community, specifically with regard to how this affects young people with learning and/or communication difficulties. I have read the information sheet and understand that:

	Yes/No
There is no requirement for me to take part in this research. It is something I can choose to do, or not to do.	
If I so decide, I can leave the interview at any point.	
I can ask for the record of my answers to be deleted after the interview, should I so wish.	
My views and the information I give will be kept confidential unless I say anything that suggests some-one is at risk from harm, in which case school / Local Authority Safeguarding protocols would be followed.	
My views will be tape recorded and the recording kept locked in a filing cabinet to which only Jacquie Lomas and her supervising tutors from the university will have access.	
My views and the information I give will be used to inform anti-bullying work in xxx, and how we can make the community safer for young people with learning and/or communication difficulties.	

Signed _____

Date _____

APPENDIX 7: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR STUDENTS

School:

Date:

I am here to find out about bullying in the community, and about areas of the community where you feel safe from bullying and areas where you may feel less safe. What you say will help me to write a report for the xxx, where I work, and the University of Birmingham, where I am a student, to let them know where young people feel most/least safe. This information will help xxx Council make communities safer for young people like you, so they worry less that they might be bullied. Whatever you say will be confidential – I will not tell anyone else what you have said - unless you say anything that suggests you or anyone else are at risk from harm.

(Refer here to Appendix 10, indicating steps that would be followed if I judged that there were a risk of harm).

You only need to take part if you want to – and you can stop at any time, if you wish. Is that OK?

For the first four questions, we are going to use a scale of 1 to 10. Here is a test question to make sure you understand: On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is 'not at all' and 10 is 'very much', how blue is the sky on a hot, sunny day?

(Researcher to continue once she is sure the young person understands, offering further simple examples as necessary in order to gauge understanding and accurate use of the scale)

OK good, now I will start the interview questions. Remember though, we can stop if you need to; just let me know!:

1. On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is 'not at all', and 10 is 'very badly', how much do you think bullying outside of school affects your life?
 - Are you ever worried about bullying when you go out?
 - Does the worry of being bullied stop you going anywhere?
2. On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is 'not at all', and 10 is 'very well', how well do you think you manage bullying outside of school?
 - Does it upset you/make you feel bad?
 - Do you tell anyone?
3. On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is 'none', and 10 is 'a lot', how much help do you think you need to manage bullying outside of school?
 - What help do you get?

- What sort of help do you think you need?
 - Who do you think is/are the best person/people to help you?
4. On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is 'not at all', and 10 is 'very much', how happy are you with yourself as a person?
- Do you think you are an OK person?
 - Would you want to be anyone else?
 - What do you like most about yourself/other people?
 - Is there anything about yourself you wish was different?
5. Now we are going to look at some photographs that you and/or some other young people have taken of places in your community. I would like you to look at the photographs and think about the places where you'd feel most safe, with no fear of being bullied, and the places where you feel less safe and worry that some bullying may happen. We will try to put these in order (from 1-6) from most safe to least safe. I can help you if you would like me to.
- That's interesting. Can you tell me why you've chosen this one?
 - What is it that makes this a safe place / a place you wouldn't feel very safe or might not want to go to?
 - What makes you feel safe, with no worries about being bullied when you're here?
 - What makes you feel worried or anxious that you might get bullied when you're here?
 - What do you think could happen or be done to make you feel safe here / in places like this?

We are finished now. Thank you for your help.

Highlight some of the strengths that have been highlighted in the course of the interview, and offer authentic feedback on aspects of the young person's presentation during the interview.

Debrief: If you, or anyone you know, needs to talk confidentially to someone for advice and support about any type of bullying, here is a list of contact numbers of organisations that help and support young people (refer again to Appendix 10, the help sheet).

I also have details of a young people's group in xxx called the Xxxx-Xxxxxxxx Xxxxxxxx Xxxxxxxx (XXXX) where you can go to meet with other young people who have been affected by bullying, and who are taking action to stop bullying happening in schools and in the community (give out XXXX leaflet – Appendix 11).

APPENDIX 8: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PARENTS/CARERS

School:

Date:

I am here to find out about your views on tackling bullying in the community, particularly with regard to whether you feel your child is affected by bullying in the community. What you say will help me to write a report for xxx Council to let them know parent/carer views on tackling bullying in the community amongst young people (YP) with learning and/or communication difficulties. Whatever you say will be confidential, unless you say anything that suggests you or anyone else are at risk from harm.

(Refer here to Appendix 10, indicating steps that would be followed if I judged that there were a risk of harm).

You need continue with the interview only if you are happy to do so – and you can stop at any time, if you wish. Is that OK?

1. Tell me a little about your child.
2. I understand your child has some special needs. Can you tell me about these and how they affect/ have affected his/her life?
3. To what extent do you believe your child has experienced bullying outside of school?
 - By other YP from school/from the community?
 - By adults?
 - What kind of bullying was it?
 - Where did it take place?
 - When did it take place? How old was your child?
 - What was the impact?
4. How well do you feel your child has coped with bullying?
 - What has helped/made it more difficult for them to cope?
 - Are there qualities your child possesses which have helped her/him/you to cope?
5. How does your child see him/herself? What is your child's understanding of her/his learning and/or communication difficulties?
 - Do you believe her/his learning and/or communication difficulties detract from their quality of life?
 - Do you believe her/his learning and/or communication difficulties make her/him more susceptible to bullying?
6. What sort of activities/clubs does your child take part in outside of school? Are these mostly mainstream activities/clubs, or activities/clubs for other YP with some form of special educational needs

- To what extent do you think your child integrates with the community?
 - How important is this (integration within the local community), do you think?
7. How independent is your child outside of school compared with other YP of his/her age?
 8. Where do you see your child in the future?
 - Will they be living independently?
 - Which qualities make them an asset to society?
 - Which qualities would make them a good employee?
 9. As typically developing adults ourselves, what do you feel we and typically developing YP can learn from YP with learning and/or communication difficulties?
 10. What do you feel you have gained from having a child with learning and/or communication difficulties?
 - What has helped you to cope?
 - Have you changed as a person?
 - Do you feel you and/or other family members have benefitted from the experience? If so, in what way(s)?

The interview has come to an end. Thank you for your help.

Highlight some of the young person's, parent's and / or family's strengths that have been highlighted in the course of the interview, and offer authentic feedback on aspects of the interview which have been of particular interest or relevance.

Debrief: If a young person you know needs to talk confidentially to someone for advice and support about any type of bullying, here is a list of contact numbers of organisations that help and support young people (Refer again to Appendix 10, the help sheet).

I also have details of a young people's group in xxx called the Xxxx-Xxxxxxxx Xxxxxxxx Xxxxxxxx (XXXX) where your child can go to meet with other young people who have been affected by bullying, and who are taking action to stop bullying happening in schools and in the community, if you or your child may be interested in this (give out XXXX leaflet - Appendix 11).

APPENDIX 9: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR STAFF

School:

Date:

I am here to find out about your views on tackling bullying in the community, specifically with regard to how this affects young people (YP) with learning and/or communication difficulties. What you say will help me to write a report for my research thesis at the University of Birmingham, for the parents of YP with learning and/or communication difficulties and for xxx Council, to let them know staff views on tackling bullying in the community amongst YP with learning and/or communication difficulties. Whatever you say will be confidential, unless you say anything that suggests you or anyone else are at risk from harm.

(Refer here to Appendix 10, offering a brief reminder re: steps that would be followed if I judged that there were a risk of harm, in line with the school's and xxx MBC's Safeguarding policy).

You need continue with the interview only if you are happy to do so – and you can stop at any time, if you wish. Is that OK?

1. To what extent do you feel the YP you work with are subjected to bullying outside school?
 - What kind?
 - Where does it take place?
 - How has this affected them?
2. How well do you feel the YP have coped with this kind of bullying?
 - To what do you attribute this (how well they cope)?
 - What has helped/made it more difficult for them to cope?
 - Are there qualities any of the YP possess which have helped them to cope?
3. How do the YP see themselves? What is their understanding of their learning and/or communication difficulties?
 - How aware do you think they are that they have special educational needs / learning or communication difficulties?
 - Do you believe their learning and/or communication difficulties detract from their quality of life?
4. To what extent do you feel their learning and/or communication difficulties make them more susceptible to bullying?
 - Why?
 - What can be done to alleviate this?

5. To what extent do you see the YP as primarily vulnerable, and susceptible to bullying, or as resourceful YP with a lot to teach their typically developing peers/society in general?
 - What can typically developing adults/YP learn from YP with learning and/or communication difficulties?
 - Which qualities make YP with learning and/or communication difficulties an asset to society?
 - Which qualities would make them a good employee?
 - Where do you see the YP in the future?
6. To what extent do you think the YP integrate within the community?
 - Do you think this is important?
 - What helps? (attributes of the young people; their families; their communities; measures the school takes to support social participation in the community)
7. What do you feel you have gained from working with YP with learning and/or communication difficulties?
 - Have you changed as a person?
 - Do you feel you have benefitted from the experience? If so, in what way(s)?

The interview has come to an end. Thank you for your help.

Highlight some of the respondent's personal/professional strengths that have been highlighted in the course of the interview, and offer authentic feedback on aspects of the interview which have been of particular interest or relevance.

Debrief: If a young person you know, needs to talk confidentially to someone for advice and support about any type of bullying, here is a list of contact numbers of organisations that help and support young people (refer again to the Appendix 10 help sheet).

I also have details of a young people's group in xxx called the Xxxx-Xxxxxxxx Xxxxxxxx Xxxxxxxx (XXXX) where young people can go to meet with other young people who have been affected by bullying, and who are taking action to stop bullying happening in schools and in the community (give out XXXX leaflet - Appendix 11).

APPENDIX 10: HELP SHEET

Please keep this sheet

Bullying

If you or someone you know has a bullying-related problem, please talk to someone (such as a teacher, head teacher, learning mentor) who will be able to help. If you do not feel comfortable talking to someone in your school, you can talk to a parent or guardian, and they can come with you to talk to a teacher.

You can also call Childline FREE on 0800 1111; someone is there all the time and the number will not show up on the telephone bill. If you cannot get through the first time please try again.

If you have access to the internet you can look on the websites below for further information and advice.

Bullying

www.childline.org.uk

www.kidscape.org.uk

www.beatbullying.org

www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

www.mencap.org.uk

Cyberbullying

www.childnet-int.org

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

www.bullyonline.org/schoolbully

It is important to remember that bullying happens to many people, and **you are not alone**. There are people in your school and trained professionals who can listen and offer advice.

Remember keeping quiet about bullying allows it to go on.

Safeguarding Responsibilities

If at any time, anyone is concerned that any child or young person is at risk of harm, the person has an obligation to report the matter so that it can be investigated and, where necessary, help and support can be provided.

This is important: often the early investigation shows that the child is OK, and no further action is needed. Sometimes though, there is a problem, and if no-one reported or investigated, the child could be harmed.

This kind of thing doesn't happen often, but when it does, it is important that every-one does the right thing, to keep children safe.

What happens?

In every school, teachers and other members of staff need to listen to young people and take notice and act if they think any pupil is at risk of harm.

There is one teacher in every school (in this school it is Ms XXXXX) who is responsible for recording cases in which any-one reports that a pupil may be at risk, and for taking action in line with the school's Safeguarding Policy.

If something you said made someone a bit worried that you, or someone else may be at risk, that person would need to report this to this teacher. This teacher, (or perhaps a teacher you know better), would explain what was happening, and would offer support if something you said made them think that you or any other young person was at risk.

The school needs to follow Safeguarding guidance which every school in xxx follows.

These are on the website at <http://www.xxx.gov.uk/staysafe/20475.htm>

Safeguarding Responsibilities and Research into Bullying

In this research study, if you or anyone else says something that suggests that any young person is at risk of harm, I would need to report this, in the same way as any other safeguarding concerns about children and young people.

I would speak to Ms XXXXX, and then Ms XXXXX (or another teacher whom you know better) would explain what was happening, and offer support while Ms XXXXX took whatever actions she thought were necessary.

You would not be in any trouble for having said something suggesting that you or anyone else was at risk of harm: it is a good thing to report these things. The most important thing is to keep you and other young people safe!

APPENDIX 11: TIMELINE

Feb-Mar 2012 Research Proposal Form finalised, including Literature Review

April 2012 Schools approached

May 2012 Early exploratory work completed

June-Aug 2012 Application for Ethical Review (AER) application finalised

October 2012 AER approval received

Nov 2012-Jan 2013 Data collection completed

Dec 2012-Feb 2013 Interviews transcribed

Mar-June 2013 Methodology and Results/Discussion sections completed

APPENDIX 12: ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical Principle	Standards	Application in current study
Respect	General respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - respect the knowledge, insight, experience and expertise of clients - all interview within each group (young people, parents/carers and staff) were asked the same questions to avoid unfair or biased questions
	Privacy and confidentiality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - data gathered were kept confidential and stored in accordance with LA protocol - the schools have not been named, nor the names of the clients - when a student disclosed issues of self-harming, the researcher ensured that the parents and the Head Teacher at the school were aware of the issue (receiving consent from the parents to inform school), and informed the student that the researcher had a responsibility to inform the Head Teacher of the issue
	Informed consent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - informed consent was obtained in writing from clients - written consent was obtained from the students' parents/carers - clients were given the opportunity to understand the nature and purpose of the intervention, particularly the students, owing to their learning/communication difficulties
	Self-determination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - clients were made aware of their right to withdraw at any time, particularly the students, owing to their learning/communication difficulties
Competence	Awareness of professional ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - maintained familiarity with BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct
	Ethical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - recognised that an ethical dilemma might arise.

	decision-making	No such dilemma arose. Clients were asked to speak generally about their experiences, rather than naming names
	Limits of competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - practiced within my competence levels - sought consultation and supervision weekly during Psychology Service supervision
	Recognising impairment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - monitored my own personal and professional lifestyle in order to remain alert to signs of impairment
Responsibility	General responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - potential risks to researcher and participants were considered minimal
	Termination and continuity of care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - conditions under which professional services could be terminated were made clear - the researcher ensured that staff were aware of the self-harming issues talked about by one of the students
	Protection of research participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - potential risks to the psychological well-being, physical health, personal values and dignity of the research participants were considered minimal - due concern was undertaken for the potential effects of disability
	Debriefing of research participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - participants were debriefed at the conclusion of their participation, thanked for taking part, and given the opportunity to ask questions. A help sheet was provided to all participants about where to obtain confidential advice and support about any type of bullying.
Integrity	Honesty and accuracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - endeavours were made to ensure that high standards of honesty and accuracy were maintained throughout, for example the clients were aware that I was a Trainee EP. Also throughout the research, high standards of honesty and accuracy were maintained in conveying professional conclusions, opinions and

		<p>research findings, and in acknowledging limitations</p> <p>- interviews were recorded verbatim in order to strengthen validity</p>
	Avoiding exploitation and conflicts of interest	- parameters of my professional role within the context of the intervention were clarified
	Maintaining personal boundaries	- professional relationships were maintained at all times
	Addressing ethical misconduct	- I aimed to challenge any apparent breach of ethical guidelines

APPENDIX 13: CASE SYNOPSES WITH THEMES HIGHLIGHTED

The purpose of this appendix is to provide a synopsis of each case study. It also provides additional information about the results of the qualitative data gathered from the young people and the parents, and about how the two concur in each case. Themes discussed in the results/discussion section of the paper are highlighted.

Theme 1: levels of independence

Theme 2: coping strategies

Theme 3: school placement

Theme 4: role of society

Theme 5: levels of awareness

Theme 6: role of siblings

Case study 1

Case study 1 involved a 17 year old male (YP1) who lived, and attended a special school, in the south of the borough. He was diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome at the age of 7 or 8. He was also described by his mother as 'quite profoundly dyslexic'. I interviewed YP1's mother (P1). YP1 lived with his mother, father and younger brother. YP1 scored himself as follows on the 4 scaling questions:

Scaling question	Score
6. On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is 'not at all', and 10 is 'very badly', how much do you think bullying outside of school affects your life?	7
7. On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is 'not at all', and 10 is 'very well', how well do you think you manage bullying outside of school?	5
8. On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is 'none', and 10 is 'a lot', how much help do you think you need to manage bullying outside of school?	3
9. On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is 'not at all', and 10 is 'very much', how happy are you with who you are as a person?	6

Table 1: Scores for YP1

YP1 went on to clarify that the bullying he had experienced had been at Primary School, and that he had been helped to cope with this primarily through the support of his family. He said he had learned not to care so much about what other people thought of him. He said he was aware that he did not go out as much as his brother who was a year younger, but that that was his choice. The places where YP1 identified he felt more susceptible to bullying were:

- Parks – 'because there's not very much for me to do in a park...I can't ride a bike or skateboard, so the skateboard park is really not a place where I should be';

- Town centres (in the streets) – *'I don't really hang around in the street very much at all. I don't really like being stuck in a place where there is a lot of random people and there's a lot of space';*
- On a bus – *'more people on that one';* and
- Theme parks/leisure centres – *'places where you usually find the more loud-mouthed teenagers fooling around'.*

YP1 identified that he **avoided places** where he felt he had nothing in common with the other young people there. He said: *'Not very much bullying can happen if you are all there for the same reason'*. He also identified that what makes him feel safe is if he knows a place well. In the context of a shopping centre, he said: *'I know my way around that perfectly, and that usually lets me know, if I find trouble, I know where to go where I won't get hemmed in...If you've been around, there are something like 2 exits for every corridor'*. And in the context of a park: *'...and then there's the younger kids which...it doesn't really have much of a threat in the way of bullying towards me but...it's just that having young kids around at the same time just makes me feel like my escape might be compromised, because young kids sometimes get in the way'*.

YP1's mother confirmed the issue of **not going out as much as his brother**; and she confirmed also YP1's **sense of anxiety but also self-awareness**: *'So...I don't think he's suffering from an awful lot (of bullying) actually outside, although he does have quite a protected life. He wouldn't really choose to go anywhere possibly strange or different or new without me, so he's very clever or just too anxious really to kind of put himself out there really or put himself in a situation which he doesn't think he would handle'*.

His mother also made the point that her son is **becoming more independent** and had already **exceeded her expectations for him**: *'He's not completely mobile by himself but he's now learning to drive, so I feel more confident because you see then he can have a SatNav and then...I'm not saying there won't be disasters, but I feel possibly once he's driving that he will learn much better where things are because he's travelled the road and he's learned those routes, he will have...he'll be better...he's turned out much more able than I had thought he might in my worrying'*.

This mother said also that she had **made every effort to make her son aware of his difficulties, and to help him compensate for those**: *'For a child with Asperger's, he's pretty good on emotions and he's quite good at reading other people...we quite often talk about those sorts of things...and he's quite good at picking up on things, so he's actually quite aware...so yes actually he's, for an autistic person, he's quite touchy feely and good at...but that's partly because I suppose that's my training (works as an art psychotherapist) and I think in those terms all the time, and so I talk to the boys in those terms all the time...about what different characters in a situation might have been thinking and feeling'*.

As a consequence of this, the mother felt her son had a **good understanding of his difficulties**: *'I always talked about it a lot with him being around when he was small...I just talked about it when I knew he was in earshot so that he just got the hang of it without...cos I knew he was listening but, so I sort of...I talked about it and about him having it and about what that meant, to kind of other family members and friends, you know, at coffee after school, when the children were playing and I knew he was in the room, and I knew he was probably listening...and I figured that was the kindest most gentle way of him gradually getting the hang of the idea that actually there was something a bit different about him'.*

She expressed the view that young people with learning differences know that they are different in some way, and that if it is explained to them why they are different, that this in itself can make life easier for them, and that **their increased self-awareness and understanding in itself can make them less susceptible to bullying, and less vulnerable in general**: *'They know that they don't fit, that there's something odd, that other people seem to find this so much easier, they can't work out why they don't keep friends or nobody will play with them or...all that stuff needs an explanation because they can't work out why they struggle so much, and then they think that there must be something fundamentally wrong with them and of course if they just knew it was a slight difference in the way they thought about things, it would make life so much easier'.*

Case study 2

Case study 2 involved an 18 year old female (YP2) who lived, and attended the same special school, in the south of the borough. She was diagnosed with Tuberous Sclerosis at the age of 10 months. She also suffered from epilepsy and had MLD, in particular numeracy difficulties. I interviewed YP2's father (P2). YP2 lived with her father, stepmother, **older sister** and stepbrothers. YP2 scored herself as follows on the 4 scaling questions:

Scaling question	Score
1. On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is 'not at all', and 10 is 'very badly', how much do you think bullying outside of school affects your life?	5
2. On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is 'not at all', and 10 is 'very well', how well do you think you manage bullying outside of school?	10
3. On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is 'none', and 10 is 'a lot', how much help do you think you need to manage bullying outside of school?	4
4. On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is 'not at all', and 10 is 'very much', how happy are you with who you are as a person?	6

Table 2: Scores for YP2

YP2 said that any bullying that did happen to her was usually verbal and that she **dealt with it by not taking any notice, and by reporting it to an adult**: *'If I do get bullied, I don't just...I take it in but I actually don't take notice...I don't particularly listen...I*

just think, 'well they're not being very nice', and it doesn't really affect me that much...I will tell teachers or my father if I am being bullied'.

YP2's mother had died seven years previously when YP2 was 11 years old. It became very clear from the interview with YP2, and from the interview with her father, that father and daughter had a **very strong bond**. YP2 expressed the support she feels from her father and said that she tries to support him also: *'I'd like to put myself as more confident because my dad is getting now a divorce...but...I do feel like I should help him, so I usually do help him through this hard time, by getting him through, and I would like to become more mature and make myself become a more independent person...I am supporting my dad and he is supporting me trying to get me into residential college'*. YP2 expressed the view that life had not been easy for her but that she had come through her difficulties: *'I am feeling pretty confident, because I've had a pretty like distressing life, but I've pretty much raised myself from the ground to being a proper adult 'cause I've turned 18'*. She accredited this largely to the **support from her family**: *'whenever my family say to me "don't let people bring you down", I actually don't let people bring me down, because I don't take any notice of them'*.

YP2's father confirmed that he had **always taught his daughters to have self-belief**: *'I like to think that both of them won't take any nonsense, I mean it's one of the things that I've drilled into them that they are every bit as good as anybody'*. YP2 expressed the view that **having confidence makes people less susceptible to bullying**: *'Yeah, I think it's the confidence, because I think people who actually do struggle...they don't want to tell their parents in case they actually do...actually go and...like I think they struggle more, but...I've always been like the...like...telling person who...I never say who it is unless it's serious, gets really like...out of hand...then I would definitely report'*. She also described **the possible victim mentality of bullying victims**: *'Yeah, (the bullies think) "there's a victim...there's a victim", and...they...want something'*.

The only place YP2 expressed a worry about going because of bullying was market places. She said that it would depend on how busy it was, who was there and whether it was dark. She did explain also however that she is **always accompanied by someone when she is out**. She often used the phrase: *'I stay with my mates'*. Her father confirmed that this was due to her epilepsy, and difficulties with handling money and telling the time: *'she is completely unable to handle numeracy, she can't tell the time, can't handle money...she can't travel independently...she'd get confused because she doesn't do numbers so she can't read the front of the bus fast enough'*.

Case study 3

Case study 3 involved a 17 year old female (YP3) who lived in the north of the borough, but attended the special school in the south of the borough. She had

attended the special school in the north for 4 years, but left because of being bullied. I interviewed YP3's (adoptive) mother (P3), who informed me that YP3 was adopted at the age of 3, with an early history of abuse. She described her daughter as having *'problems with social skills, learning difficulties, a speech problem, temper tantrums'*, and she said *'she's got no empathy with anybody else'*. YP3 lived with her (adoptive) mother and father. YP3 scored herself as follows on the 4 scaling questions:

Scaling question	Score
1. On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is 'not at all', and 10 is 'very badly', how much do you think bullying outside of school affects your life?	9
2. On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is 'not at all', and 10 is 'very well', how well do you think you manage bullying outside of school?	1
3. On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is 'none', and 10 is 'a lot', how much help do you think you need to manage bullying outside of school?	10
4. On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is 'not at all', and 10 is 'very much', how happy are you with who you are as a person?	5

Table 3: Scores for YP3

When I asked YP3 if the bullying made her feel bad, she replied: *'It does sometimes but I've just got to get used to it, don't I, it's life innit?'* When I asked whether she told anyone, she said: *'I usually tell my mum, but sometimes I don't, I just wait for the right time to tell'*. When I asked if her mum helped, she said: *'She does sometimes; she has a go at the teachers'*.

YP3 spoke in the main about bullying in school: *'I used to have a best friend from my old school...she used to spread rumours about me, 'cause I told her one day I was adopted and she started being mean to me'*. She said that the main problem at school now was that she had to do lessons with peers with whom she didn't get on, and who she felt were bullies: *'If they treated us like adults...they should move the bullies away from the victims...instead of making them be friends again even if they don't wanna...or be civil with them, like X she's bullied me a lot...I've been told "be civil with her"...but I don't wanna be civil...at the end of the day I'm the victim...I don't wanna be civil with her because if I'm civil, the teachers think we're friends, but I don't wanna be friends...the teachers are making us but I don't wanna'*.

She spoke also about being excluded, rumours being spread, intimidating behaviour and threats being made via phone calls and text messaging: *'She spread rumours about me and when I came in the next day, people didn't wanna talk to me...her ex-boyfriend was phoning me up threatening me and I got home crying...I had a message on my phone so I had a witness and everything...'cause I've got evidence haven't I, so my boyfriend asked me what's wrong, so I played it to him, and he's after him still, 'cause you gotta protect your loved ones, haven't you?...so he's after him still, and that guy's after me'*. YP3 described herself as having *'mental health issues'* and seeing a *'therapist'*.

The places where YP3 identified she felt more susceptible to bullying were:

- Theme parks/funfairs – *'I stopped going...I do go sometimes when I take my cousins but, 'cause I got bullied before 'cause they had a fairground at xxxx by xxxxx and someone got stabbed there, and there was police there...I was only little...my dad got bullied and called a pervert'; and*
- Shopping centres – *'I might be (worried about bullying there) because there might be gangs, you never know, 'cause gangs like...pick on people, don't they?'*

YP3's mother confirmed that her daughter had had a lot of problems with bullying: *'She's been bullied most of her...well all through school basically...so she's got very low self-esteem...goes over the top...very touchy with other people...sometimes that can leave doors open and you have to worry'*. She said that her daughter had attended a mainstream primary, and that that was where the bullying had started when YP3 told her friends she was adopted: *'She told everybody that she was adopted and that was it...they just picked on her'*. When YP3 transferred to secondary school, she attended the special school in the north of the borough (School 3), because, her mother said: *'It became very apparent....through the bullying that...she wouldn't be able to cope in a place like XX (mainstream secondary), they'd eat her up and spit her out'*. P3 said that at this point, the bullying became physical as well as verbal: *'First week at XX (School 3) she was bit, punched, strangled, spat at, I mean it was just horrendous, and that's how it carried on really, you know, all the way through'*.

P3 said that her daughter had had a problem with one other girl in particular at this school, which she attended for 4 years: *'she had one problem with one girl all the way through'*. This was the case also when YP3 transferred to the special school in the south (School 1): *'and then she went to this school, sixth form and there's one girl in particular'* (a different girl). It might be argued at this point that this data refers to bullying in the school, as opposed to bullying in the community, however what may be relevant is the language, and arguably the mind-set (that of a victim mentality?), behind the language used by both mother and daughter. The language used by the daughter to describe how she felt she was being pressured into being *'civil with'* the *'bully'* was echoed in the language of the mother: *'they tried at every point to get them friends, and she just didn't want to, she'd had enough by this point'*.

P3 expressed how she felt her daughter was vulnerable to cyberbullying; and she expressed *a sense of having no control over this: a sense of powerlessness:* *'Facebook, I mean bane of my life Facebook is, and I think if you speak to most parents it's the bane of their lives, you know these kids have got too much technology...and you've got no control over it...I mean my daughter...we bought her an iPad...by Boxing Day we took it off her because she was talking to any old xxxxxx...not that she's allowed to do (go on Facebook), but they've got the means,*

her phone does it, her iPod does it, you know and as much as I try...I know all her passwords so I do go in and keep an eye on what's being put...you know some of it's very innocent...but yeah the name-calling is disgusting, I mean I know the schools are fed up with them, you know but it's out of school and that's it...they're stuffed whichever way they go'.

P3 appeared to recognise that her daughter had emotional difficulties: *'her mental state is very fragile, you know we're under the adult psychiatrist...I've had a whole lifetime of psychiatrists and psychologists and child therapists';* and that YP3 had the emotional age of a much younger child: *'we went over to see my mum (YP3's grandmother). They'd done some colouring in and little books and everything; well you've got one who's 8 (YP3's niece) and one nearly 18, and they've got the same sort of interests'.*

On the other hand, however, P3 intimated that she had *'fought to get information'* for her daughter pertaining to her biological mother. P3 said her daughter had recently *'got a letter off her birth sister'*, which had caused her daughter to *'regress terrible'*. P3 also said that this year, her daughter had found out she'd *'got 6 or 7 brothers and sisters...which has really knocked her because she was the only one who was adopted'*. P3 said that she had been asked by the social worker to stop some of the information getting through to YP3, arguably because the social worker was of the opinion that the information could be very emotionally disturbing to, and difficult to handle for, any young person, but particularly so for a young person with learning difficulties and severe emotional difficulties.

It may be that P3 was struggling to find strategies to help her daughter deal with her low self-esteem, and with the bullying which in the main appeared to be name-calling, the spreading of rumours, and YP3 being very sensitive to 'looks' from other people. P3 intimated a recognition that she needed to give her daughter these strategies, but perhaps did not know how to, and needed support: *'When she first went to XX (School 3), she didn't used to tell me...and then she'd break down, and same when she went to XX (School 1), it's because I'd had it up to here, d'you know what I mean, and I said to her that she had to start standing on her own two feet and I wasn't going to interfere, but that changed within the first week, because at the end of the day, she's my daughter, and I don't like her being bullied'*. It may be that both mother and daughter need more support with separating from each other. P3 said that her daughter had gone away for the first time earlier that year on a school skiing trip abroad, and that she (P3) *'didn't sleep...it was awful'*. She said also that YP3 was going again the following month, and that she (YP3) *'can't wait...she's hoping she gets the sticks (ski poles) this time'*. Previously, P3 had stopped YP3 going on trips, despite having paid for them, because *'we found out the bully's going'*. Such actions might arguably perpetuate a victim mentality in YP3.

P3 expressed a **sense of powerlessness** around her legal rights as a parent. She appeared worried that if her daughter chose to leave home, there would be nothing she as a mother could do about it: *'You have to be careful as a parent because... she can be very wilful...and if somebody's in her hair, some will, you know at 16 you can leave home, I don't want to...God, and to think she could walk out this door and there's not a legal thing I could do'.*

Case study 4

Case study 4 involved a 15 year old male (YP4) who lived, and attended a mainstream school, in the south of the borough. He was diagnosed with Speech, Language and Communication Needs in Year 2. I interviewed YP4's mother (P4), who said her son had Semantic Pragmatic Language Disorder. YP4 lived with his mother, father and **younger sister**. YP4 scored himself as follows on the 4 scaling questions:

Scaling question	Score
1. On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is 'not at all', and 10 is 'very badly', how much do you think bullying outside of school affects your life?	1
2. On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is 'not at all', and 10 is 'very well', how well do you think you manage bullying outside of school?	10
3. On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is 'none', and 10 is 'a lot', how much help do you think you need to manage bullying outside of school?	1
4. On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is 'not at all', and 10 is 'very much', how happy are you with who you are as a person?	10

Table 4: Scores for YP4

YP4 said that he had had a bullying incident at school when he was younger, but that he had spoken to a teacher and *'it was taken care of'*. He said he had not been bullied out of school.

The places where YP4 identified he felt more susceptible to bullying were:

- Theme parks/funfairs – *'I might be worried about bullying there, especially at night'*; and
- Shopping centres – *'I am a little more wary of going there as I find it very busy'*.

YP4 identified that he felt more anxious in places where there were a lot of people and where there was a lot of noise. In particular, he identified that he disliked walking past bus stops if there were a lot of people waiting to get on a bus.

P4 confirmed that her son had had an experience three years previously in Year 8 when he felt intimidated out in the community by a group of Year 11 boys from his school: *'It was more sort of intimidation rather than bullying, and some children probably wouldn't even have picked up on it, but he did – "oh they're looking at me" -*

...and it would be when he was walking home from school, and he would say...they would be walking behind him, and I don't know why, but he started to turn around and, of course, the more you do that sort of thing, the more the people behind notice, and then of course they start shouting: "What are you looking at?", and whereas some children wouldn't have even bothered, he got himself in a right state about it, and that snowballed into something quite massive, but **the school were very good**.

P4 said that at the time, it had quite a debilitating effect on her son: 'He wouldn't eat, he wouldn't walk to school, I had to drive him to school, I had to pick him up, or my husband had to'. She recognised however, that the 'snowballing' effect was partly as a result of her son's reaction to what was happening: 'It developed because of his reaction to...but his reaction wasn't really to anything they did...like I say, a lot of other children wouldn't even have noticed it'; and: 'It's because his anxiety's at such a level that some things are exaggerated, and he makes them worse than they actually are really'.

P4 said she and her husband **spoke to their GP about their son's anxiety, and YP4 was referred to a psychologist**. The psychologist helped by taking photos, with YP4 and his mother, of the route to school, and getting YP4 to talk about his feelings at the various landmarks on the way to school. This enabled YP4 to have more of an understanding of why he was feeling anxious, and within two to three months, he was able to start walking to school again by himself.

YP4 was a **keen cyclist**, and **raced competitively** for a local club. His mother said he preferred to cycle to school now, one of the reasons being that **'he feels safer on his bike'**, because **he knows he can get away if he needs to**. P4 said that recently there had been snow, and that YP4 had been unable to cycle to school, and had had to walk, albeit reluctantly. **P4 said: "it would be very easy for me to say, "OK, I'll quickly take you", but I don't"**. P4 gave other examples also of having **an awareness of her son's difficulties**, in particular his anxiety: **'He's actually got better...I mean he used to be sick sometimes on the line (in a cycling race) you know, and other parents would look at me and I'd be going, "You're all right now, go on!", 'cause I knew it was just a nerve thing, it wasn't that he was ill or anything'**; and: **'Sometimes I'll say, "Can you walk into Sainsbury's and get me some milk?", and if it's sort of...you know after 4 o'clock and there might be loads of students at the bus stop and things...he's a bit funny sometimes...and you know I say "They're not bothered about you", you know, "they won't be looking at you", they're not, but that's sort of anxiety'**.

P4 also talked about **giving her son strategies to cope with his difficulties**: **'He's certainly a lot better than he used to be, and he'll struggle to remember things sometimes but he's learning, he's better with that now, and he makes sure he writes things down, and so he's sort of learning to manage things in his own way'**. She referred to his **levels of self-awareness**: **'As he's got older he's sort of learned where**

his difficulties lie and I think he knows that...he knows that he needs help at school in certain areas and...he does know that he'll need certain things explaining again to him...he knows that he forgets things...he knows he's not very good at explaining...he's more aware of his difficulties, but he tries to do things to help himself.

As a result of YP4 having an understanding of his difficulties, his mother described him as becoming more resilient and more assertive: 'Yesterday I think it was, he said, "I was in Maths and so-and-so came over and said, "I want your calculator"', and it's somebody who messes about a bit, and my son said this lad just picked it up and walked off with it, and my son said he got up and went over and said, "you're not having my calculator", and he said I took it off him, and Mr Jones the teacher said, "well done, good for you!", and I said, "yeah, see?", you know, "don't just let people walk over and say...", and he was quite proud that he'd done it, whereas a few years ago he wouldn't have done that'.

She described also how YP4 was making good choices: 'He goes on X-Box Live...and he was on it last night or the night before...he was playing against his friend D, but some other lads...they also joined in this game, and my son went in to join it, and apparently he heard one of them say: "oh it's one of D's retard friends", and I said "what did you do?", and my son said, "oh I just came out of it"'. P4 appeared to recognise her son's part in de-escalating the situation: 'Had my son perhaps said something when he'd gone in to join this game on X-Box and they'd made that comment, perhaps of he'd have said something, and then it could have started...it could have escalated and then when they got to school, would it have then started, 'cause I think that's what happens with my son's friend, he doesn't know when to keep his mouth shut and he almost encourages it in some ways'.

P4 said that her son used Facebook, but that she monitored what he did: 'He doesn't have a computer in his room...everything's always down here, so I know exactly what's going on...I don't go on Facebook myself but I look at it through my son's account, so I'll just go on and have a look occasionally. And he's very open about it, you know he sits here with it on his lap, and he'll say, "oh mum, come and look at this photo", or "look what so-and-so's..."

Case study 5

Case study 5 involved a 16 year old male (YP5) who lived in the north, and attended a mainstream school in the south, of the borough. He was diagnosed with Speech, Language and Communication Needs, and Literacy and Numeracy difficulties, in Infant School. I interviewed YP5's mother (P5). YP5 lived with his mother, older half-brother and younger brother. YP5 scored himself as follows on the 4 scaling questions:

Scaling question	Score
1. On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is 'not at all', and 10 is 'very badly', how much do you think bullying outside of school affects your life?	1
2. On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is 'not at all', and 10 is 'very well', how well do you think you manage bullying outside of school?	10
3. On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is 'none', and 10 is 'a lot', how much help do you think you need to manage bullying outside of school?	1
4. On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is 'not at all', and 10 is 'very much', how happy are you with who you are as a person?	10

Table 5: Scores for YP5

YP5 said he had never been bullied. The places where he identified he might be more susceptible to bullying were:

- Large city shopping centres, and parks (both recreational and theme parks) – because there are a lot of people, and especially at night: *'it's bad at night times 'cause that's when all them gangs come out'*; and
- Cinemas, theatres, ice rinks – because these places are dark and people can hide.

When I asked YP5 where he felt bullying was more likely to happen, he said: *'More like places where like...bushes...like in the forest...because any of them could have just jumped into the area and then just gone and beaten someone up, and then just walked out of there and no-one would have known about it'*.

P5 told me that YP5's older half-brother had had several incidents of bullying: *'in XX (mainstream) school, he was attacked by loads of children and they'd sent it away and done a U-tube of R getting his head kicked in in the woods, and he was really badly battered, he did all his ribs in and everything and his head, and you know each one of the children took their time booting him in and stuff like that so'*; and *'he got stabbed in the side of his head when he was at XXX College...he was attacked under that, you know the park, under the bridge, as they got under the bridge, a load of Asian boys rushed him there'*. These may have been the incidents to which YP5 was referring.

P5 suggested she was not happy with YP5's diagnosis of SLCN, and that over the years she had been fighting to get additional support for him. She believed her son had learning difficulties, and that he may have been autistic. There was some evidence to suggest that YP5 looked at things very literally, for example his initial reaction to being asked whether he felt bullying might happen in a theme park was to laugh and say: *'Who's gonna fight in a theme park, it's meant to be for fun!'*; and when asked about the possibility of bullying happening in markets, he said: *'No...for one, it's a place for eating, not fighting'*. P5 said that school described YP5 as *'immature'*.

P5 said that she felt her eldest son (aged 19) also had (undiagnosed) 'mild learning difficulties', and that her youngest son (aged 5) had 'moderate difficulties...I wouldn't say learning difficulties, I think he's got social issues'. She said her eldest son had been diagnosed with dyslexia when he was at college, and she said that she herself was dyslexic. P5 mentioned that YP5 could be very disorganised; there was evidence to suggest that P5 may have lacked organisational skills also, for example she had forgotten I was coming. Alternatively, it may have been the case that P5 was just under pressure and struggling to cope. At times her speech may have been described as erratic and disjointed, which could have been further evidence that P5 had difficulties of some sort, or was under extreme pressure.

P5 said that the family had been through 'a lot of stressful situations', such as being 'homeless...unsettled...no real home base...moving from family member to family member'. It was her view that she and her children had been bullied over the years, even by family members, and that they had suffered from a lack of support: 'I suffered a lot of depression, after having...like...the youngest one, I mean a car was burnt out on the drive while I was pregnant with him; after I had him the house was burnt down; I had an awful lot of problems with XXX Council because they just wouldn't do nothing, they wouldn't move me, wouldn't do nothing; so I'd say six years of my life I feel has been stolen, even though my children have had complex difficulties, I think, because of all the situations and the lack of support, and the lack of people that have been helpful, it's kind of melted them down to where they are now; and it does affect myself as well, so I don't trust an awful lot, I don't trust people'.

P5 appeared to feel the same lack of support at school. She said she had witnessed YP5 being called names by other children at primary school, but that her son 'wasn't aware of it'. She also mentioned a couple of incidents at secondary school (School 2): one when YP5 had been 'called blackie or something'; and another when he 'had been strangled by one of the children by his tie', and she had not been informed: 'nobody informed me (laughs) about this situation, I'd found out about it a little bit after and I thought "that's ever so strange", I said, "because I know that if you'd have done that (to her son), I would have been called almost instantly to be told that, you know, your child has, you know, physically harmed another person'. She felt also that her son had been treated unfairly by teachers at primary school, treated like a 'naughty child with no brain', and like 'a statistic...a troubled, black child'.

There was a sense of a lack of parent and school working together, from P5's perspective. P5 intimated that she felt the education system had let her and her son down, and she was particularly worried about what the next step would be for YP5 when he left his current school in six months' time: 'he...talks in class quite a lot, so he's very chatty, he talks a lot and he needs to learn not to do that while the teacher's talking which is fair enough, but he still needed to have an understanding that he has

to do this work and this is what's gonna happen when you leave school...he hasn't been given that, he hasn't been given it'.

There was also a sense of a **lack of awareness** on the part of P5 as to how YP5's difficulties might impact on him, and how he needed support at home, as well as at school, to understand his difficulties and to cope with them. **P5 expressed frustration that none of her three sons showed a particular willingness to help around the house: 'they get frustrated if they're asked to do things because they don't particularly want to participate'.** She referred to such behaviour as **'complex things I do notice about them'**, whereas it might be argued that this is normal child behaviour and that children need to be taught to help out rather than just being expected to do it.

P5 also talked about YP5's posture when walking: *'he walks around like this (hunched), so if you walk around like that you're gonna kind of...attract attention, but he doesn't actually mean it, so obviously there's something going on where he doesn't quite know how not to, you know, get that kind of attention which is a shame really'*; and his difficulties with telling the time: *'he can't even tell the time actually, you know unless it's on a digital clock, he can't tell the time'*. It was evident that P5 was **trying to give YP5 strategies to help**: *'at the moment I'm sort of...like...telling him to put his shoulders back and his head up and look a little bit more confident, but I think even that's beginning to get on his nerves, it's like "oh mum, just stop it please"'*; but that she was **struggling to cope**: *'I just haven't been helped, to be honest, I've just not been helped...I've asked questions to see whether I can get some extra support, but I just haven't been helped'*. P5 said she felt her son had **'gone into himself'** as a way of coping with his difficulties, and that she felt he was very vulnerable, but there was a **sense of desperation** as to where she could go for help: *'...I mean I said, "could he have a child paediatrician?", down at the doctor's surgery, and they said, "no, no, he can't", you know, "he's too old for a child paediatrician", and I'm thinking, "well, where am I supposed to go, what am I supposed to do?", you know, it's ridiculous'*.

P5 spoke also about the **'stigma'** she felt was attached to her family, and how she had changed as a person, and not for the better: *'I've definitely changed as a person, 'cause I...I mean I'm still outgoing and I'm still very sociable, but I think as a person, I think what it does is it kind of...I think it puts you in a box, to be fair with you, you consistently think how other people think or you'll wonder whether you're all being judged the same and...which you are really because if people stop...I'd say stop being thoughtful, you are put in that box really...and it's a hard one to be in, I mean how many people with children with disabilities are attacked in society and I feel like I'm like that to be fair with you'*.

Case study 6

Case study 6 involved an 18 year old female (YP6) who lived, and attended a special school, in the north of the borough. She was diagnosed with Moderate Learning Difficulties at Primary School. I interviewed YP6's mother (P6). YP6 lived with her mother and older brother. Her parents separated five years previously. YP6 sees her father regularly at weekends. YP6 scored herself as follows on the 4 scaling questions:

Scaling question	Score
1. On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is 'not at all', and 10 is 'very badly', how much do you think bullying outside of school affects your life?	10
2. On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is 'not at all', and 10 is 'very well', how well do you think you manage bullying outside of school?	10
3. On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is 'none', and 10 is 'a lot', how much help do you think you need to manage bullying outside of school?	1
4. On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is 'not at all', and 10 is 'very much', how happy are you with who you are as a person?	10

Table 6: Scores for YP6

Although YP6 gave a rating of '10' for the first question, she clarified that the bullying is *'mostly at school'*. It happens *'at break times and lunchtimes'*, and consists of *'people in other classes calling me nasty names'*. YP6 said she *dealt with this by 'just ignoring them'*. She said she is never bothered by bullies outside of school, but that she does go everywhere with her mother. YP6 did not identify any of the 20 photographs as places where she would be worried about bullying. She also identified that 45% of the photographs were not applicable to her as she did not go to those places, for example restaurants and cafes.

P6 confirmed that she *accompanies her daughter when she goes out*. She walks her to school and picks her up after school. She confirmed also that YP6 had not been bullied out of school: *'she ain't been bullied really outside of school, no, not really, not what you'd call bullying, she just walks off, just takes no notice of the children...if they say anything, I just say, "just walk on", and she does'*.

P6 said that her daughter had a mobile phone, but that she did not bring it in to school: *'she don't bring it to school, I have it in me bag, 'cause she says, "oh I've run out of credit", and I say, "what are you texting about?", you know, "I'll keep your phone 'til you wan' it', 'cause they have to give their phones in anyway'*. P6 said that her daughter was *not on Facebook* and showed no interest in it. P6 said that YP6 used the computer at home, but that *her brother kept an eye on his sister: 'he says, "just watch what she goes on, on the computer, 'cause you never know what's on them", but he checks it and he says, "that's all right"'*.

P6 said that YP6 did **get upset** at times: *'she gets a bit upset if somebody's being funny with her in class'*, and that YP6 did get anxious: *'if she's late, **she panics...she just burst out...it was nerves**...'*. School maintained that YP6 **got upset very easily**. On the other hand, YP6 had been on school trips, and was to attend a residential trip with the school later that year. P6 also intimated that YP6 had an adventurous side: *'she's got a habit of climbing... she's more devil than I would...'*

P6 was unsure what the next step for her daughter would be in terms of education/work: *'I don't know because she changes her mind... I think they're gonna try and get her into college...I think so, that's what...Mr X and X will sort that out, come the time for her to leave, they're gonna sort it for me'*.

P6 appeared to feel that her daughter was more vulnerable in terms of the area where she lived, rather than because of her learning difficulties: *'where I live it's different...how can I put it...you get a lot of...well...not a lot of trouble, but you get a lot of people, you know, joyriders and all these, and some of them do drugs, 'cause there's a pub down the bottom, and they have a lot of trouble there'*.

P6 appeared to believe that her daughter would live with her for the foreseeable future. She preferred to take things on a day-to day basis and not plan too far ahead: *'I ain't thinking about that just yet... I don't talk about that...I just wait 'til it comes'*.

APPENDIX 14: THE CONSTANT COMPARATIVE METHOD OF ANALYSIS (adapted from Thomas, 2009, p.199)

1. I read through the notes from the 15 interviews and made an electronic copy of the raw data (Appendix 15 shows an example).
2. I made a separate copy of the raw data and read through this copy (working data files), underlining and highlighting parts that I thought were important. As I started to get an impression of important ideas that were recurring, I made a list of these *temporary constructs*.
3. I read through the data again, using the list of temporary constructs from my first reading to check against. I drew up a grid (Appendix 18) with the temporary constructs highlighted and further divided into subthemes, with quotes from the interviewees evidencing the construct.
4. I combined two of the temporary constructs (role of siblings: levels of support; and role of siblings: adaptation). The remaining constructs became my *second-order constructs*.
5. After further readings of the data, I was satisfied that these second-order constructs captured the essence of my data, and labelled these as my *themes* and *subthemes*.
6. Figure 6 (on p.55) illustrates the overall conceptual map, showing overarching themes and subthemes.
7. Appendices 13, 16 and 17 show examples of how the overarching themes are reflected in the answers to the student, parent/carers and staff questions.

APPENDIX 15: EXAMPLE OF RAW (PARENT) DATA

P6 (parent's words in red font)

1. Tell me a little about your child and his/her special needs.

Special needs, yeah, she's 3 years behind a normal child, that's why she had to come to this school...luckily I didn't have to fight because X Education didn't cater for it, and she couldn't cope in the big school, so that's why we picked this one

So it is moderate learning difficulties, she's not got anything else?

No, not as far as I know

2. Can you tell me about how you feel these special needs affect his/her life?

Do you think it's had a big effect on her?

Not really...she just carries on...

She just gets on with it

She don't make much fuss

Do you have other children as well?

Yeah I've got a lad, 21...

And is he very different from X?

mmm...moody...typical lad i'n' he, he's 21...but he's protective of X

Oh good, that's nice, 'cause how old is X now?

18, yeah, she leaves this year, I can't believe it

3. To what extent do you believe your child has experienced bullying outside of school?

Well she ain't been bullied really outside of school, no, not really, not what you'd call bullying, she just walks off, just takes no notice of the children...if they say anything I just say 'just walk on', and she does

And she doesn't get upset or anything, or doesn't come home and tell you that she's been upset?

No

And does she go out quite a lot on her own, or is she mostly with you or with her brother?

Me, it's mainly me, yeah...'cause she's got no road sense...I have to watch her 'cause of the road, that's why I have to...I only bring her to the gate now, that's as far as I bring her, but this morning I brought her up 'cause it's a bit icy, but she's doing quite well

So generally she's with you, and she's not generally on her own when she's going out?

No

There's no medical needs that she's got, are there?

Just asthma

Oh she has asthma, ok. So she has an inhaler does she?

Yeah

4. How well do you feel your child has coped with bullying?

She just ignores it

So you're not aware of any particular bullying (parent shakes her head), and she's 18 isn't she? (parent nods). So would you say that X's a pretty resilient character anyway, I mean is there any...does she get bothered by...is there anything that upsets her?

Not really

She's a fairly happy-go-lucky girl then, fairly easy-going?

Yeah...she's as young as 10, my sister spoils her...instead of treating her like a niece, she treats her like a sister...she gets spoilt...and my lad says 'it ain't fair, X gets this, X gets that', like Christmas she had a load of things, but he had money, so you can't win both ways

So you say she gets treated like a younger child? Is that by...

My mum and sister...if she does any jobs, she says, if my mum says 'oh I'll go do dusting' or something, she says 'leave it alone, I'll come and help you', so she's really helpful, and she likes the little ones, the little ones don't want her to leave...she goes to work experience down the bottom there, Xxxxxx nursery, she does it Friday

Does she enjoy that?

Yeah, the first week she got a bit upset 'cause being new, 'cause she was a bit late...that I can understand...and she said she's fine, she stopped all day last week, and this is her second week, this week coming...she loves it

And do you take her up there did you say as well?

Yeah I just drop her off, 'cause that road there...and you got all different school coming, but I drop her off and the school knows so, she's doing fine And that's like a nursery, you say?

Yeah

So that's obviously the kind of thing she enjoys, working with little children, and do they have any special needs, or is it like a mainstream nursery?

I think it's just a mainstream nursery, because it's really little 'uns, she loves them. Last week, not last week, the week before she did painting...last week, because I tell her to take spare clothes, so she took spare clothes, and I said 'what are you doing?': 'I've had to change, I've been on the mud, the little 'uns'...'come on X, on the mud', but she says she enjoys it, and the teacher's very pleased with her

Well that's good to hear. So generally what sort of things does she enjoy then? It sounds like she enjoys helping people like your sister, and just generally being helpful really

Yeah

Does she have any hobbies that she does outside of school?

Well she used to...sometimes she stops after school on a Tuesday, arts and crafts

Ok, does she enjoy that?

Yeah. She's done quite a few things since she's been here, little things like...but she enjoys it

Does she ever get upset about anything in particular, or does she generally not get upset at all?

Sometimes she gets a bit upset if somebody's being funny with her in class, or when she's on her period, that's when she mainly, she gets a bit moody, but I said to her 'that's natural'...do you know what I mean, that's natural, she's brought her hot water bottle in with her this morning, 'cause I says to the teacher 'X's brought her hot water bottle', she said 'that's fine', 'cause they're not allowed to give anything...

You mean medicine?

Mmm, if you have to have medicine, you have to sign a form, but X prefers taking it at home when she wants it

Oh I see, so she brings her hot water bottle? (parent nods). Ok so generally she doesn't get upset, she's not the sort of girl to get upset really

Not really, she used to when she first started here, but now she's grown up, she, as I said, she's more grown up now, and the staff says she's not getting upset like she used to, but she's doing quite well

That's good, and it sounds like you're a very close family

We are

So there's you and X and your son, and you mentioned your sister?

Yeah, me younger sister

And is there wider family as well?

Umm, I come from a big family, there's umm...7 of us

So there's lots of aunts and uncles and grandparents

She's only got my mum, 'cause I lost me dad 18 years ago, and she's got...me and her dad's separated so she sees her dad weekends and holidays, and she keeps in touch with her dad every day

By phone?

Phone...he comes over once a week, but she goes over there...when she has holidays she stops with him overnight, but she loves him

And where does he...does he live near here?

He lives by Xxxx so it's not too bad, 'cause we can get the bus down to Xxxx and then the 14

So it's Xxxxxxxx area?

Mmm

And you mentioned...does she have a mobile phone...does she text her friends

Yeah, she does, and she don't bring it to school, I have it in me bag, 'cause she says 'oh I've run out of credit', and I say 'what are you texting about?', you

know, I'll keep your phone 'til you want it', 'cause they have to give their phones in anyway

Do they, when they come to school they hand them in, do they?

Yeah, they hand them in when they go into class 'til home time, but some of them put them in their pockets and so they're doing lessons and they're on the phone, because she says quite a few does it, and I said 'you don't do it' and she says 'no...'

So she doesn't have any problems with cyber bullying, like people texting nasty messages?

No, they don't do that, no

What about...is she on Facebook?

No

And is that something you've actively discouraged, or is she just not interested?

She's not interested...she knows how to work the computer, as I says they got the only laptops in class for the lessons, she does a lot of work at lessons, but when her brother's not there, she goes on the computer, but he says 'just watch what she goes on, on the computer, 'cause you never know what's on them...', but he checks it and he says 'that's all right'

Oh good, so her brother kind of keeps an eye on her?

He can do it quicker than me, he says 'there's no point in you going on there 'cause you might press the wrong button', so I says 'that's all right then'

So no bullying issues that you are aware of, not when she was smaller at all, was she at mainstream before she came here?

Yeah she was at XXXXXXXX

And did she have any difficulties there, being picked on?

Not really, no 'cause we, if there was any bullying we used to go in and see the teachers, but she did quite well, and she sat with the little ones at dinnertimes

When she was at mainstream? Did she? She sat with the younger children. Is that because...?

They used to say you know they wanted someone to help, and they'd say 'X do you wanna come and help?', and she'd sit with the little ones and make sure they eat their dinners

5. How does your child see him/herself? What is your child's understanding of her/his learning difficulties?

Does she understand she has learning difficulties?

Yes she does

What's her understanding then, does she just understand that she's got MLD, or that she just learns a bit slower than other people?

She...umm, we found this out when she was in nursery at her old school, people used to come out...the kids used to come out with reading books, and

one day me and her dad went in and asked, and she said 'no, the reason why X hasn't got a reading book...they used to give X little words and they was always the same words, and I says 'why', and they says 'well she's got like a...she can't cope in a big...in the 30 odd classes', so I says 'in other words she can't cope', and she says 'that's it 'cause she's 3 years behind'...I went to a special school

Did you?

Yeah, but she's doing quite well, she does the reading, she likes maths, she likes most of the lessons, she likes cooking

And what were your experiences like at school? Did you have any bullying issues at all?

No

So you say she understands that she does have...she just learns a little bit slower than others, is that kind of the understanding...

Yeah

...and she's not bothered by that at all

No

And presumably she knows that you went to a special school as well?

Yeah

And so she thinks she's just like mum?

Yeah, she just gets on with it

- Do you believe her/his learning difficulties detract from their quality of life?

Not really, no

And would you say that's because it's just in her nature, just to get on with things?

Just get on with things yeah

And I guess that's the way you've brought her up as well, you know, you just make the most of what you've got!

Yeah, 'cause her brother says, you know, at the end of the day, it's...you gotta learn...you go to school to learn, and the only time she's off really is when she's bad, and the school knows she has time off, 'cause when she's really bad, that's the only time she has time off really, but she's going away in March

Where's she going?

Yorkshire Dales, I think

Is it like a residential with the school

Yeah

Oh, it is.

She goes...any trips she goes on, she's been to London, to the Olympics for disabled people, she went there, and she goes on most of

the trips here, she enjoys it. She brings the forms home, and she says, before I sign, she says 'I've told the teacher I'm coming'!

And how do you feel about her going, do you get a bit worried?

I do when she's away, but she phones...as long as I get a phone call to say that she's arrived and the school keeps in touch, if you get worried you can phone the school, and they said they're fine. She enjoys it.

- Do you believe her/his learning difficulties make her/him more susceptible to bullying?

No

6. What sort of activities/clubs does your child take part in outside of school? Are these mostly mainstream activities/clubs, or activities/clubs for other YP with some form of educational needs?

Only what's in school, yeah, that's the only thing

And does she take part in school activities after school?

Yeah

What sort of things?

She does arts and crafts, she used to do trampolining, now she's in 6th form, they can't do that, and she does art and craft. Whatever she does she's used to doing in school anyway

Ok, so there's nothing that she's involved in outside of school that's separate from school?

No

So of an evening and a weekend, would she mostly be with family and be at home?

Yeah

She's a bit of a home girl, is she?

(laughs) She likes her bedroom 'cause she's got her own TV and everything and she goes up...mainly upstairs when she watches telly, but she does her puzzle book, and she reads, I just leave her, she goes in her room and stays and about half past 8 when she's tired, she says 'I'm going to bed now, goodnight', and I just leave her, she goes to bed herself

And does she have friends round at all?

Not where I live, no

Not where you live

No

Is that because you live further away from her friends?

Yeah

Oh ok, cos where do you live then?

Xxxxx Xxx

Oh right, is that a bit further away?

Mmm

Ok so she's not really near to her friends then?

No

Cos she was quite friendly with umm...now what was her name?...was it Xxxxx?

Xxxxx?

Is she at college now?

Xxxxx...?

Is it Xxxxx? I think it was Xxxxx.

There's Xxxxx, there's XXXXXXXX, XXXX XXXXXXXX

It was definitely Xxxxx that I met last time in May, I remember X and X came in together

She took...she's clingy to all of them...they all come to X...they all keep, 'cause as I says, most of them don't want X to leave

So she sees them in school, but doesn't really see them when she's not in school?

The only time she sees them is if she's in XXXXXXXX XXXX or anything like that...

She goes shopping and stuff? But would she go with her friends, or does she always go with you or her brother?

She goes with me

And what sort of things does she buy, clothes and stuff?

Yeah

I wonder how she'll be when she leaves XX? She'll find it quite a wrench won't she because obviously a lot of her life is based, if she's not at home then it's all centred on XX, so that's obviously gonna change when she...do you know what she's going to be doing when she leaves here?

No, she can't make up her mind. She keeps changing her mind, and I say 'what do you wanna do?', and she wants to do this, and then he says 'no, I wanna do that', and I says well, as I says when I've had parents evening and I say well, X comes with me anyway and I say 'what do you wanna do?' and she says 'I'd like to do this', and I say 'do you?', and she says 'no, I've changed me mind'...she changes her mind that quick

What does she change her mind between? I mean obviously one of the options is probably working with really young kiddies

Yeah, she likes that

What sort of other things?

I don't know because she changes her mind

So she can't make her mind up

She can't make her mind up

And is she aware that she's got to make a decision by the end of...by the summer, she's got to try to come to a decision?

Mmm

What would her options be? Would she continue in education or will she try and get a job somewhere?

I think they're gonna try and get her into college cos really X Education pays for X to come to here 'cause she's...as I said she's under X Education umm but XXX Connexions don't have much to do with X 'cause she comes from a Xxxxxxxx school

So she's got the funding to go to college?

I think so, that's what...Mr X and Xxxxxx will sort that out, come the time for X to leave, they're gonna sort it for me

Ok, so she might well go on to college, and have you any idea what sort of thing she would do there? I mean could she study something like childcare?

I think so, she could

She likes that doesn't she? She also likes the arts and crafts, and cooking

She likes animals

They do animal care, don't they, at Xxxxxxx College

Yeah

There's a few options she could do then

- To what extent do you think your child integrates with the community?
- How important is this (integration with the community), do you think?

Would you like her to integrate more?

Not really, not where I live it's different...how can I put it...you get a lot of well not a lot of trouble, but you get a lot of people you know joyriders and all these and some of them do drugs, 'cause there's a pub down the bottom, and they have a lot of trouble there

Right, so there's quite a lot of anti-social behaviour then, so you'd be worried if she was out on her own, getting into trouble and that, so she's quite vulnerable in that sense

Mmm

If you lived in a better area though, would you be encouraging J to do more things out of school, more sort of in the community, or do you think

I don't know...might do, if we lived closer, but as I said Xxxxxx Xxx...it ain't that bad but as I said you get problems down there

You'd worry when she goes out?

Yeah, I worry when the lad goes out, and he's 21...yeah same as my mum, she worries about my sister because she works in town, and she's 38 and she worries about her

7. How independent is your child outside of school compared with other YP of his/her age?

Not very independent because she's normally with mum, and that's because of her difficulties, and because she's more vulnerable if she's out on her own

8. Where do you see your child in the future?

- Will they be living independently?

I think she'll still live with me

And do you think about what'll happen when you're not here anymore?

I ain't thinking about that just yet

And you said your mother's still alive? Do you ever talk to her about that kind of thing? Do you ever have discussions about X and how it'll be whenever she's a bit older and, you know, maybe having to be on her own more...

I don't talk about that...I just wait 'til it comes

Yeah well I can see where you're coming from...what's the point of worrying about something that you can't do anything about...

Yeah

...just live day to day really

Day to day, that's what I do, yeah

- Which qualities make them an asset to society?

She loves to help, she seems very easy-going, happy-go-lucky you know happy girl. What other qualities would you say she had...kind?

She's very friendly, and she talks to people who she knows, that is because we've taught her, when she was young not to talk to strangers, but I've seen some girls same as X's age, talk to lads older than them, and X says, and I say 'well take no notice, just carry on' I said you ain't bothered, she says I'm not into boys...so she doesn't talk to strangers, unless she knows if I'm with her or some relation with her, it's like my sister, her boyfriend is 6 foot, and he's up here and she's down here, and when she first met him, she spoke to him, and my mum turned round and said 'you're lucky she'll speak to you', 'cause my sister was there, and he says 'why?' and she says 'well the way she's been brought up to not talk to strangers'...he says 'I don't blame you', but she gets on with them all

- Which qualities would make them a good employee?

I don't know

Does she turn up on time?

Yeah

She does as she's told and she knows what's expected of her

Yeah, if she's late she panics

Does she? Oh bless her, so she likes to be in good time

Yeah, it's like not last week, the week before, she only done half a day 'cause she didn't get there 'til gone 5 past 9, but they says it's ok, and she just burst out...it was nerves...she only done half a day and I brought her to school, and she didn't feel well, and they says you might as well take her home and let her have a rest, I said 'are you sure?' and

he says 'yeah', and you see when we get the first day over...well the second day, it's normal...she loves it

It sounds like she's fairly conscientious then, you know wanting to get in on time and do well. Is she good at getting herself up in the morning and getting herself ready and that sort of thing?

Yeah

She is

Yeah, sometimes she lies in bed and pretends she's asleep but she's not really and her brother shouts at 7 o'clock, 'you up Xxxx?', 'I'm up', and he makes sure she's up

Sounds like he has a nice relationship with her. He lives at home then, does he? Does he work?

No, he's looking for a job, he's been to college for 2 years, got nowhere. He's been to all these different places, he goes somewhere up the ivy (?), like a Connexions thing, and they give him a list and he goes round the charity shops, but nobody's taking him on

Must be frustrating for him if he's looking for work and he can't get any

Yeah, and he's a right moaner...he'll come home and he's got no money

9. As typically developing adults ourselves, what do you feel we and typically developing YP can learn from YP with learning and/or communication difficulties?

It's like some from here go to XX for maths or anything and some from XX come here for different lessons if they can't cope, they work in between them

Oh that's good. So has X ever been over there?

X's been over there a few times

How does she like going over there?

She likes it

Does she go over for certain subjects...maths?

No she does all her maths here

Right, so what does she go over there for then?

I can't remember. She's been in there for a few things but she says 'I wouldn't stop over there all day'...she couldn't cope, 'cause it's more children over there

But she's never been worried about being picked on or anything?

No

It's just the sheer numbers that phase her a little bit?

Yeah

So she's never come back from being over there and said 'oh I've had a horrible time?

No, 'cause they've been warned. When they come together, XX, XXXXXXXX and this school, they've been told, they go to school to learn like you do, it's just like you learning...and apparently there's no trouble.

I think that's good

There was at first, but umm you know kids used to be spiteful to...they used to call these kids 'Mongols' and all this, and I used to say 'well, they've come to school to learn', and I went to see the Headmistress XXXXXX and she put a stop to it, she had a word with the Headmaster over there, and he says 'I'll have a word', so one day he had them all in the hall, all the teachers, all the kids, and he says 'they go to school to learn like you do, they're getting their needs'

That's right, 'cause I think sometimes children in mainstream they don't really understand what it is like to have learning difficulties and they have this misperception of these YP, and actually they're just the same

Just the same as them, but in a smaller group, yeah

10. What do you feel you have gained from having a child with learning and/or communication difficulties?

- What has helped you to cope?

So you don't feel you've had to cope any more than when you had your son?

Not really, I treat them both the same

Oh yes, I know you would treat them both the same, but I just wondered whether it was more difficult with X?

No not really, no

And what support have you had? I guess you said you're from a very close family, so I guess you've had support from like your sister or your mum and that, so they've all been supportive?

Yeah, and the school's been helpful

Yeah, people say that the schools are very helpful

Yeah if you've got any problems you can always go and speak to the Headmistress or one of the staff, but they're very helpful

Ok

We had a bit of a problem with J when her dad left, we had a big problem then, she used to say 'I'm not coming to school, I'm not coming to school', and I used to have to bring her in to reception and they used to say 'X's ok now', and I used to have a phone call, 'X's ok now', cos you worry

Of course you do

It's like if she goes on these trips and they say there's been an accident and I say 'oh what's X...', 'cause she's done her arm 3 times

Has she, what's she done?

Broke it 3 times, yeah she had...broke that finger, 'cause by accident at basketball and her finger come out, and the nurse said, 'you can have needles' and she went 'no': next minute she put it back in, that's what she...that's what I say to them: 'watch her when she climbs', 'cause she's got an habit of climbing

Right, she likes to climb, and then she tends to hurt herself...That's interesting though...I mean is that something she'd be interested in doing as a hobby then, doing climbing or something, you know you can climb up these ropes and things can't you?

She has done climbing...she's done that here, you know these things what you put on, go on walls...rock climbing, whatever you call it, she's done it

She likes that, does she?

She's more devil than I would

Yeah it sounds like there is a side to X, she is quite adventurous isn't she, she likes to try these things?

Yeah, it's like when she first went they used to say, 'I'm not going in, Xxx, and she'd say, 'I'm going!'...and she went

No fear! Just goes for it! Ok, mmm you mentioned when her dad left, was that a while ago?

It's been over 5 years

So she would have been 13

Yeah

So that was a little bit of a tricky stage for her?

That's when she really, really, when she started here, that's when it happened, yeah

So that was a difficult time, and what helped her to get through, family and school being supportive?

Yeah

Brilliant, well, thank you very much...

APPENDIX 16: EXAMPLE OF RAW (STUDENT) DATA

YP2 (young person's words are in red font)

1. On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is 'not at all', and 10 is 'very badly', how much do you think bullying outside of school affects your life? **Bullying for me doesn't really tend to happen to me because I have mates and if anyone does get bullied, I report to the teachers, or to any member of staff**

Excellent. So it doesn't happen to you, that's really good, I'm glad to hear that. And do you have friends that it has happened to?

Yeah

But it doesn't happen to you that much?

Yeah it doesn't happen to me that much

That's good. Why do you think that is?

I am a fairly confident person

So on a scale of 1-10, would you be right down there on a 1 or a 2?

I think I'd be in the middle

A 5

Yeah, a 5.

- Are you ever worried about bullying when you go out?
- Does the worry of being bullied stop you going anywhere?

2. On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is 'not at all', and 10 is 'very well', how well do you think you manage bullying outside of school?

If I do get bullied, I don't just...I take it in but I actually don't take notice

Ok, so you take in it as in you hear what they are saying. Is it mostly verbal? Is it mostly stuff that people say?

Yeah, but I don't particularly listen...I just think well they're not being very nice and it doesn't really affect me that much

So you don't let it affect you. So would you put yourself in the middle again?

I'd put myself on a 10 'cause I can manage it quite good

Oh, a 10, that's brilliant, so you manage it very well. Excellent. And you said you will tell teachers?

Yeah, I will tell teachers or my father if I am being bullied

Excellent. And do you get a lot of support from teachers, and from your dad?

Yeah

- Does it upset you/make you feel bad?
- Do you tell anyone?

3. On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is 'none', and 10 is 'a lot', how much help do you think you need to manage bullying outside of school?

I would put myself as a 4.

So you acknowledge that you do need help but you are pretty able to...

Confident

Confident, so in the middle, super

- What help do you get?
- What sort of help do you think you need?
- Who do you think is/are the best person/people to help you?

4. On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is 'not at all', and 10 is 'very much', how happy are you with yourself as a person? I am feeling pretty confident, because I've had a pretty like distressing life, but I've pretty much raised myself from the ground to being a proper adult 'cause I've turned 18.

Ok, that's an interesting observation, so you feel you've had a distressing life, but maybe that's made you perhaps more resilient?

Yeah, and more confident

So you've come through the difficulties

Yeah

Excellent, and again, is that because of support from family?

Yeah because, whatever, my family say to me, 'don't let people bring you down': I actually don't let people bring me down because I don't take any notice of them

That's fantastic, so that's what makes the difference – your family saying 'don't let them bring you down'?

Mmm

So on a scale of 1-10?

I'd put myself in the middle

So, a 5?

A 5, or a 6

So there's still things about yourself you'd like to change?

Yeah

Ok, are you able to say what sort of things?

Yeah because I'd like to put myself as more confident because my dad is getting now a divorce for the second time, but umm, I do feel like I should help him, so I usually do help him through this hard time, by getting him through, and I would like to become more mature and make myself become a more independent person, yeah

That's really good. So, did you say you were 18?

Yeah, I'm 18

So it sounds like you and your dad are really close, and have got a really good relationship. That's excellent, ok. And that helps you get through life, you can support each other, like you are trying to support your dad...

Yeah I am supporting my dad and he is supporting me trying to get me into residential college.

Excellent, and do you have brothers and sisters?

Yes I have a sister

Is she older or younger?

She is older. She is 20 and turning 21 in December

Does she work?

She is at Southampton University

What's she studying there?

Law

Oh wow, law! Any ideas what you'd like to do at college?

Probably drama. I'm a drama type, but I would like to be working in politics.

Wow, that's very brave. I don't understand politics! I try to...

I know where you are coming because it's really hard because I was in a lesson once, and people said, 'do you...how many...do you know what the red thing is', and I was like 'Ed Milliband' and blah, and G was like shocked how many times I knew, and I was like 'oh I watch loads of politicians on television, even Nick Frost'...

Wow, so maybe politics, or maybe...

Drama

Wow, excellent.

- Do you think you are an OK person?
- Would you want to be anyone else?
- What do you like most about yourself/other people?
- Is there anything about yourself you wish was different?

5. Now we are going to look at some photographs that you and/or some other young people have taken of places in your community. I would like you to look at the photographs and think about the places where you'd feel most safe, with no fear of being bullied, and the places where you feel less safe and worry that some bullying may happen. We will try to put these in order (from 1-6) from most safe to least safe. I can help you if you would like me to.

The first picture is restaurants, like pizza hut?

Wouldn't be worried there as I usually go with friends

So that would be a 1. What about leisure centres, swimming pools?

Well that depends 'cause my dad and me used to go to ____ and we never got bullied, so...

So that would be a 1. And you mostly go with your dad to places like that?

Yeah

What about cinemas?

I have never been bullied in a cinema. So it's actually quite easy for me to say that I haven't...

That's good, so a cinema is not a place where you'd be worried at all. What about a theatre or a concert hall? Have you ever been to a concert?

I have. I've actually been...I actually did acting at The Albert Hall.

Oh wow!

When I was in year 12 so...and I never got bullied in my acting career.

So you wouldn't be worried there, so that would be a 1. What about bowling alleys, do you go there?

Yeah, I do

Would that be a place where you'd be worried about bullies?

No, I'm actually pretty confident in myself saying that I don't get bullied.

Do you think that's what makes the difference, between yourself and YP who do get bullied? Do you think that's the difference? Do you think it's the confidence?

Yeah, I think it's the confidence, because I think people who actually do struggle, umm, they don't want to tell their parents in case they actually do actually go and...like I think they struggle more, but umm I've always been like the like...umm telling person who...I never say who it is unless it's serious, gets really like out of hand...

Then you would definitely say?

Then I would definitely report.

Ok, so if it's not too serious, you wouldn't necessarily report them...

If it was like name calling, I would tell miss...

...and if it was more serious..?

...if it was more serious, I would tell the headteacher

...and tell?

...and tell

And with the confidence issue, do you think sometimes bullies can pick up on people who are less confident, do you think they pick up on that and think, 'ah there's someone...'

Yeah, there's a victim...there's a victim and...they...want something

Whereas with someone like yourself they might think well she's very confident so we're not going to be able to get through to her.

Mmm

So it definitely seems to be something around confidence, isn't it? What about...I don't know if you ever go to market places?

I go to the German market

Oh excellent, I like the German market!

I do! (laughs)

There's one now isn't there 'cause it's Christmas time.

Yeah

Is that a place where you'd be worried about bullying at all, 'cause it's quite an open place...

It depends...it depends on how busy it is and who is there. So I might be because you don't know who's out there.

Ok, so would it be up here on a 6?

Yeah

And it's because you don't know who's there?

Yeah

And it's busy?

Yeah, and if it's dark and there might be strangers out there

Ok, what about areas like parks...just general parks or skate parks?

I've never been affected...I've never...'cause I used to do rugby in S Park, it's near there, and I was never umm like harassed or anything when I was playing, so I never had an issue with it

That's good, so that's a 1. What about shops, supermarkets? Would you be worried there?

No, because I go to the shops every single Tuesday.

So that would be a 1? What about shopping centres, like in X?

Oh, when my sister and me usually go there, we don't actually struggle, so we stay together

So you'd stay with your sister

I'd stay with my sister or a friend

Would you ever go on your own to that sort of place?

No, I wouldn't

And would that be because you'd be worried about bullying, or because you never have any occasion to go on your own

I never have an occasion

Mmm, I guess when we go shopping, we often go with friends. What about...do you ever go ice skating at the ice plaza?

I never (laughs)...I'm not very good at it.

Sports stadiums?

Oh, I do go rugby... I did go to rugby stadiums and my dad and his friend and his friend's son, and I've never been bullied. I had my dad's friend's son there and he always used to look after me if I got lost.

So it wasn't a problem?

No

What about museums? Do you go to museums?

Yeah I do.

Would that be a place where you'd be worried about being bullied?

No, they have security

What about shopping centres like Touchwood in Solihull?

It just depends because if you think about it if it happens at night time, but I would put as not regularly because I usually go there, actually I'm going there this Saturday...(laughs)

So would evenings be more...

...be more willing because umm...that's when they actually start to like come out if it's like nightclubs and _____. Teenage drinking can get really bad and they can go like hassling people

Yeah? What about town centres, like just in the streets, like in X?

It wouldn't actually be a hassle to me 'cause I'm quite used to it, and I've grown up living in X, so...

...it's an area you know very well...

...it's an area I know, and people have never harassed me.

Good, what about theme parks, circuses, carnivals, fairs?

I just stay with my mates...that's really fun

So it's not a problem 'cause you stay with your mates

Yeah

What about youth centres?

I never actually go to youth centres except to the youth club here, but I usually stay with my mates

Oh yes you have one here don't you on a Tuesday?

Yeah and I stay with my mates. They stay here.

Central library...do you know this area?

Yes I know this area 'cause it joins up to the theatre and I used to do some acting

Oh yes, of course, and is that an area you'd be worried about?

Not particularly 'cause I know libraries and theatres pretty well

Ok, what about cash points, do you use them?

Yeah I do.

Is that a place where you'd be worried about bullying?

No, but I always keep like a look-out, just a quick glance, to make sure no one is looking

I do that as well, so it's not an issue for you then...? What about buses, public transport, buses and taxis?

I usually stay with my mates. Once, I went nightclubbing with my sister for the first time, and I had to get my sister home because she was out of her mind

Oh dear

And I actually had to call a taxi and I said, 'can you take us to X?', and I actually had to carry her on my shoulder all the way home, and he was like 'fine' and I wasn't bullied at all

No issues. Do you use a taxi when you come to school at all?

Yeah but there's no bullying going on. If there is, I usually say, because I'm the eldest, I say if anyone does actually get bullied...I actually do write it down and I actually do report it...

Excellent, do you use buses at all?

Not independently because I haven't ever...I mean I don't usually because I don't ever travel...I usually get my dad to drop me off at a drop-off point

So you don't tend to use buses?

No

Right, well that's really helpful. So the area you picked up on where you might be bullied was the market, parks you wouldn't be worried about at all, but with markets you said it depends how busy it is, you don't know who's going to be there...

Yeah, because umm, it could be really dark and...

Yeah, dark and strangers...there could be strangers there. So you'd be more wary about somewhere like that, would you?

Yeah, that's why I usually go with family or friends or schoolmates, we usually go down like holidays...not holidays...I mean like a trip thing

Yeah, and would there be anything you think could be done to make those places feel safer for you?

No...except umm I do worry if there's not enough security in the evenings because if you think about it they've got like alcoholic things and it can get a bit rough...I don't tend to get drunk because I have epilepsy and I only have 1 or just 3...well 3 glasses of...like vodka or something, but I don't do over the top like my sister

Yeah, so it helps to have extra security, and police. I don't think there are as many police on the streets as there used to be

No, except for the riots

So that might be something that would help. Well, thank you L, I think we are done now.

APPENDIX 17: AN EXCERPT FROM A SUMMARY OF ANSWERS TO PARENT QUESTIONS 1 TO 10, WITH THEMES HIGHLIGHTED

1. Tell me a little about your child.
2. I understand your child has some special needs. Can you tell me about these and how they affect his/her life?

The answers to the first 2 questions are covered in Appendix 13.

Theme 1: levels of independence

Theme 2: coping strategies

Theme 3: school placement

Theme 4: role of society

Theme 5: levels of awareness

Theme 6: role of siblings

<p>3. To what extent do you believe your child has experienced bullying outside of school?</p>	<p>P1 ...stuff that happened in school when he was much younger, and it wasn't bad...they called him 'Giggles' instead of X, and then a whole group of the Year 6 started calling him 'Giggles', and I don't think it was meant cruelly...but I don't actually think on the whole that he has really suffered a lot of bullying, really... he does have quite a protected life...he protects himself</p> <p>P2 I'm not conscious that she has, I mean, I have been very protective of her, possibly over-protective...but I'm just trying to think...it's more the absence of things than doing things you know being (socially) excluded...</p> <p>P3 X's been bullied most of her...well all through school basically...so she's got very low self-esteem...X told everybody that she was adopted and that was it...they just picked on her...</p> <p>P4 I don't really know that he would have experienced that as such, I mean what he did have wasn't really based at school...</p> <p>P5 I've witnessed X being bullied by family members... he doesn't always wanna go out, I mean of late he's been asking to go to the German market in town, but because he doesn't quite know how to defend himself, if something did come to him, I've been very worried, obviously I told you about my ex-neighbours, they've bothered X in the school bus, I've had to stop him from actually getting on the school bus at times because the children were asking questions and then there were cars following him so I thought I can't do that, so I was actually physically taking him in...</p> <p>P6 Well she ain't been bullied really outside of school, no, not</p>
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	<p>really, not what you'd call bullying, she just walks off, just takes no notice of the children...if they say anything I just say 'just walk on', and she does</p>
<p>4. How well do you feel your child has coped with bullying?</p>	<p>P1 I think he's coped very well...he put on quite a little bit of weight, and I think, I don't know if he's been bullied for that...he's just decided to do his own thing, and we've always just allowed him to kind of, you know, do his own fashion thing...</p> <p>...for a child with Asperger's, he's pretty good on emotions and he's quite good at reading other people...we quite often talk about those sorts of things</p> <p>...last summer we started looking round colleges and he then said to me, 'I feel sick every day'...and I said 'well do you think you are just getting really anxious about this college thing 'cause now we're talking about the future and it's all unknown and you're going round these strange places meeting all these people trying to work out whether that's the right place for you, and it's making you feel really unsafe and unsure?', and he went away and he thought about it, and he came back and he went, 'yes I think probably...', 'and I said, 'it might be that you're actually not unwell, it might actually be that you are feeling nervous'</p> <p>P2 I think she has quite a lot of self-belief...she has a very clear sense of right and wrong...</p> <p>...she's very keen to vote in elections now ...you know she's not going to be Andrew Marr by any means but she is interested and I think again that's to do with what's right and wrong...I mean what I do want is for her to become an advocate for people with disabilities in the longer term...I'm not quite sure how I'd go about that but she's quite capable of doing that because she can articulate quite well...her spoken word is quite, is very good actually, her written and numeracy are you know much further behind, but I think articulacy she could do</p> <p>P3 the bullying has had a terrible effect on her...she hasn't coped at all</p> <p>...she had to start standing on her own 2 feet and I wasn't going to interfere, but that changed within the first week (of secondary school), because at the end of the day, she's my daughter, and I don't like her being bullied...</p> <p>X's always kept it to herself...she spills it all out to me, but I think I've always been the one consistency in her life</p> <p>...she went away for the first time ever, this January, she went skiing with the school for a whole week, umm...I didn't sleep...it was awful</p> <p>...we've lost so much money over the years paying for trips especially in senior school that we found out the bully's going, and we've lost money... last year was the first time she'd ever</p>

	<p>been on her own...but yeah she loved it</p> <p>P4 It's more anxiety than bullying. The psychologist helped with the exercises. I mean initially he didn't cope well with it, because there were periods where he wouldn't eat, he'd be sick in the morning, he couldn't walk to school by himself and it was affecting him around school as well because he was constantly worrying...</p> <p>Family helped... and the school...I think the school were actually very good, yeah...they were sort of straight onto it ...now if there's anything that will occasionally happen...he's more assertive now</p> <p>P5 He cuts off, he just switches off, he'll just go upstairs into his room and play his games or literally live in his phone, he just cuts off really, you know</p> <p>He goes into himself as a way of protecting himself</p> <p>Going into himself has helped because there was a time when X was suggesting I'm gonna kill myself, everyone's picking on him, he did, he went through a horrible stage of that and up until about a year and a half to 2 years he was saying it yeah, 'I might as well not bother, I might as well just kill myself' ...at the moment I'm sort of like telling him to put his shoulders back and his head up and look a little bit more confident, but I think even that's beginning to get on his nerves, it's like 'oh mum, just stop it please'.</p> <p>P6 She just ignores it</p> <p>...she gets treated like a younger child</p> <p>...the staff says she's not getting upset like she used to, but she's doing quite well</p> <p>...when her brother's not there, she goes on the computer, but he says, 'just watch what she goes on on the computer 'cause you never know what's on them...', but he checks it and he says, 'that's all right'</p>
<p>5. How does your child see him/herself? What is your child's understanding of her/his learning and/or communication difficulties?</p>	<p>P1 I think he's got quite a good understanding of his difficulties. I always talked about it a lot with him being around when he was small</p> <p>...when he got to secondary school and they said 'now what do you know about your own condition?', and quite a lot of people knew nothing and he knew quite a lot</p> <p>I think really if he was a neuro-typical child, he would have got O-levels...he'd have got GCSEs...so I do think it (his difficulties) has (detracted from his quality of life) in terms of he just can't access the capacity that his brain has, he almost hasn't got complete access to use that in the way that society would need to see it used in order to know how clever he was, do you see what I mean?</p> <p>I think socially it has limited his options, and I think his access to social networks and friendship groups are limited because of the way he comes across...</p>

	<p>Yes I think his difficulties have made him more susceptible to bullying</p> <p>P2 Yes, yes she does (have quite a good understanding)...she is aware of her condition</p> <p>I don't know whether X would recognise cyberbullying it sounds silly but I think she'd just see it as banter you know she's quite innocent in that respect...</p> <p>Yeah they (her learning difficulties) have (detracted from her quality of life) I mean...</p> <p>her sister went off backpacking...I can't do anything like that with X, it's just, you know, as I said, I was nervous about her going to Butlin's ...so it does influence life choices ...it is stressful</p> <p>...not been bullied any more than her sister...</p> <p>P3 (She believes) that she just can't do it... X self-harms terrible</p> <p>Yeah...oh God yeah (believes the learning difficulties detract from her daughter's quality of life)...X's mental state is very fragile, you know we're under the adult psychiatrist (because of emotional difficulties/self-harming), I mean God, you know I've had a whole lifetime of psychiatrists and psychologists and child therapists and you name it, we've seem 'em all</p> <p>Yes (I believe her learning difficulties make her more susceptible to bullying)</p> <p>...some days she hasn't got no emotion inside at all...you give her a hug and you might as well hug a brick wall...yet one day then she can be like a baby...</p> <p>...you'd think umm having a boyfriend would settle down now...no, no, I mean she can be quite normal one day and absolute nut job the next, that sounds awful but...</p> <p>and now we're talking about the pill and I said 'X, are you ready to go down this road?', and I'm thinking 'oh my God', you know, am I ready to go down this road yet, and I know she's nearly 18, and...yeah it's scary...</p> <p>P4 I think he knows...I think as he's got older he's sort of learned where his difficulties lie and I think he knows that...he knows that he needs help at school in certain areas and...sometimes he relies a little bit too much on that I think, but he does know that he'll need certain things explaining again to him...he knows that he forgets things...he knows he's not very good at explaining...he's more aware of his difficulties, but he tries to do things to help himself...He'll make notes at school because he'll know that he'll forget things, and you know sometimes he'll say to me 'oh I've gotta go and ask the teacher about this, can you just write it down for me, and then I'll read the note...I won't let her see it, I'll put it in my pocket and then I'll go and say to her...'</p> <p>No, I don't think so, no (doesn't think the learning difficulties</p>
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	<p>detract from her son's quality of life), I don't think it's ever really stopped him sort of being involved in anything at school or outside of school...no I don't think so...I think we've just always tried to let him have a go at things...like the cycling</p> <p>No (doesn't believe the learning difficulties make her son more susceptible to bullying)...my husband actually said 'oh I expected him to have more bullying about that sort of thing than he has', because he hasn't really had any...he might have had the occasional comment...</p> <p>P5 He says he knows he's different: 'I know I'm different, but why? But why am I different? Why can't I get it like everyone else?'...</p> <p>It's a huge worry for me because I see school as setting you up for your next stage and I, although they've always said that he's a lovely child, which X is, he's quite a likeable character, but if he hasn't been helped in the right areas, he's gonna fail (laughs), he's going to fail...I don't think X's gonna cope with it very well, he won't...I don't think they (school) think he's up for much, if I'm being honest, if I'm being honest I don't think they think he's up for much, for one I think they think his organisation skills are rubbish; two, he can't comply to the work that's set, he gives it a good try, don't get me wrong, he gives it a good try, but I believe they don't think he can comply to the work...</p> <p>He's not been treated very well, that's for sure (laughs)...</p> <p>Yes, to a degree (believes the learning difficulties make her son more susceptible to bullying)...he was called 'blackie' or something and one of the kids must have punched him in the back of his head...he's getting it still, you know it's not over, not over for him...</p> <p>...X was strangled by one of the children, by his tie, and umm nobody informed me (laughs) about this situation, I'd found out about it a little bit after and I thought 'that's ever so strange', I said, 'because I know that if you'd have done that X, I would have been called almost instantly to be told that, you know, your child has, you know, physically harmed another person...'</p> <p>P6 Yes she does (understand she has learning difficulties) ...I went to a special school</p> <p>No (not bothered by the fact that she has learning difficulties)...she just gets on with it</p> <p>Not really, no (doesn't believe the learning difficulties have detracted from her daughter's quality of life)</p> <p>...any (school) trips she goes on, she's been to London, to the Olympics for disabled people, she went there, and she goes on most of the trips here, she enjoys it. She brings the forms home, and she says, before I sign, she says 'I've told the teacher I'm coming'!</p> <p>No (doesn't believe the learning difficulties make her daughter</p>
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	more susceptible to bullying)
6. What sort of activities/clubs does your child take part in outside of school? Are these mostly mainstream activities/clubs, or activities/clubs for other YP with some form of special educational needs?	<p>P1 ...the only club really that he goes to is there is a learning difficulties club in xxxxxx somewhere down xxxx Road...and it's Saturday morning...you see there's a back room and all the boys play Yugioh</p> <p>...they're allowed to stay until about 19 I think...18,19...and then they have to leave which is a shame because then if they're not careful they lose contact with each other...</p> <p>...he quite enjoys golf, so he's started playing golf and he's gone off to the golf course by himself...</p> <p>I think it's limited (the extent to which her son integrates with the community). I mean he goes to play golf but he likes to play on his own because I think he finds it quite hard to manage his own competitiveness and I think when they all played golf at school, he didn't really like how competitive he was, or he didn't like how it made everybody cross that he was competitive (laughs) I'm not sure quite what happened but I got the impression that he found it difficult to manage his competitive spirit around other people and so he's much rather play golf on his own, so quite a lot of the time when he does go out into the community and does do stuff, he's solitary, so he'll go for a walk but he'll either go with me or he'll go on his own, umm or he'll go and play golf or he has driving lessons now, umm or he'll maybe organise to go to the cinema with a couple of friends but they're all friends from school, so they're friends that are like him.</p> <p>...sometimes his brother had had a few parties here and he's got on really well with quite a lot of his brother's friends and sitting and chatting and then we go camping quite a lot and we have a group of friends we go camping with but other times then there's been umm one of our friend of friends he's brought his 2 teenage girls and X was sitting there chatting to her for hours, and she seemed quite interested to chat, so umm you know there are times when it's surprising, so I think it's difficult to get him to the right kind of social situations where he'd, you know, where that would happen, that's the tricky bit, umm but when he is thrown into those social situations he manages quite well.</p> <p>(interviewer asks how important P1 feels integration with the community is) I want him to be happy, and you worry about the future and you worry about when you're not there to kind of mastermind it all (laughs) so umm I want him to have a good enough group of friends so that he stays mentally healthy, umm and I want him to feel happy in his own level of social interaction, you know, and if that's really limited then I'm happy with that, I you know, as long as he's happy and content and he's got what he needs to stay happy and content...I'd like him</p>

to go out with his friends a little bit more, I think he'd quite like a girlfriend umm but, and I'd like to see him with a girlfriend but I'm not sure, I'm just not sure whether that would really happen, but umm you know umm I'd like him to feel fulfilled in his life and have the right level of friendships...but as long as he's content...

P2 Well she has been in theatre groups but at the moment we're having real problems getting her to do anything umm but I think it's just that she's reached that point where most teenage girls get to where they're too old for youth clubs but too young to go out clubbing and...X doesn't have many friends around here – this is one of the reasons I'm absolutely desperate to get her in a residential college next year because any activities she does tend to be school-based now, like I say she's going skiing...

until about a month ago she had been going to XX Theatre Group for 2 years and prior to that she was doing XXX Theatre Group for about 5 I think...certainly 4...they were her 2 main activities...

...she has played rugby...and she did that for about 18 months...they were very friendly with her and she did, you know, they always brought her on at some point in the game but it tended to be for the last 10 minutes umm but you know she enjoyed it and it was nice, social, and it was just trying to find different things for her to do...

...it would be a huge problem if she didn't have Facebook and she wasn't able to talk to her friends from school, you know, after school...

Her sister will have some responsibilities but I don't want her sister's life to governed by X...so I know it sounds a hard tactic you know...I don't know whether I mean it or not...I don't think I do but it is my nuclear option because at 16 I don't have to be responsible for her...you know she becomes the council's responsibility and if they're not going to you know fund her there, they can fund her here

...I'm very conscious when she goes skiing or when she goes to Butlin's, for the 2 or 3 weeks after she has been away she is so much more grown up... so I know she can learn...she learns to be responsible

Integration with the community is important if it can be done safely...

X wants...she doesn't want to be living with me, she wants to be living with ...you know I want X if possible to have a relationship with you know...I want X to have as normal as possible a life as she is capable of and I think living in sheltered accommodation with other people her own age who she can have friendships with and have fallouts with...'cause well you learn from them...I think it's really important, you

	<p>know, just from a social, you know, for her socially</p> <p>P3 No (daughter doesn't take part in activities outside of school)...she loses interest</p> <p>Oh we've done the lot – dancing, umm swimming, umm tennis, umm gymnastics, umm God what else, we've done ballet, tap, modern, umm hold on, cycling, umm God what else...karate, judo, umm she's into kick-boxing now...for 5 minutes...</p> <p>She stayed the weekend (with her boyfriend) and he lives with his nan and granddad and mum lived there, and umm he's got special needs of his own...</p> <p>Doesn't really go out...keeps herself to herself...spends time with her boyfriend...does things but can't sustain the interest...</p> <p>Oh God yeah (believes integration with the community is important), umm otherwise she's never gonna be able to communicate, umm or interact...it's quite scary when you think you know she'll be an adult, umm and being told to do adult things but with the mental age of a primary kid, umm and that's quite scary...as parents it's...we walk a thin line I suppose of not being overbearing but trying to keep them as safe as humanly possible</p> <p>P4 Cycling, and doing things with family...It's a mainstream cycling club. Initially when we started we made the coaches aware of his difficulties, just so that they knew to sort of repeat instructions and...and X's been in the cycling club since he was about 8 so he's very highly regarded there by them, and now because my daughter's started to do things there as well, X will go along and they'll quite often use him to help with the little ones and things, and he loves that, 'cause he just loves telling somebody what to do</p> <p>I think he integrates well...he's been involved...school have a group, it's called 'the Wednesday club' and it's for the over 60s in the local area, and through school he's been helping out there, so he loves to do things like that...our church has something...it's called Messy Church and it's something...its craft things for younger children...and we've been to it on a couple of occasions, and X always love to come...he always loves to come, because he just likes to do that sort of thing...he likes to get involved, he likes to go somewhere and you know, 'I'll go there, I'll help'...being sociable and wanting to help, and because it's helping the ladies in the kitchen or it's helping the little ones with the craft...he enjoys doing that</p> <p>...they'll (X and friend) go to the cinema by themselves, I've dropped them at bowling before so they do do things, which is nice, but they're not the sort of 'let's go and walk around the streets' or stand in X Shopping Centre, he's not like that</p> <p>Yeah I think it's important (integration with the community), and he gets a lot from it, you know he does enjoy doing it, so yeah just...he likes to be involved in things, he seems to get quite a</p>
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	<p>lot from that</p> <p>P5 No, he started doing a umm a kick-boxing class, but it was so late and X was so tired, he kind of like had to knock it on the 'ead, but anything else no, he tried umm the umm the XXX, they've got like a database club there, but because of...the children are quite streetwise, he can't...he just doesn't fit in...so he tends to be at home mostly Not much at all really (doesn't integrate with the community), unless he goes to the shop and bumps into a family member or probably one of my friends, not really, no... I would say it is important (integration with the community) because I mean I would say so definitely because I'm quite a sociable person, but over the years as I've felt umm the stigma attached to my own family I've had less friends come round as well, through the fact that they don't understand my own children as well, I can't be bothered, I tend to be...if I need to see somebody it's when the kids are at school, so they don't get too...too involved with anything really, to be fair with you, it's not...it's a shame but it's not their fault 'cause I'm tired of kind of not making excuses, but having to explain all the time, why the children do...act or do the things they do, it's just like, and people kind of look at me like I'm just always 'oh you're always umm defending them you know (laughs), you're always defending your children' you are kind of thing...I just find some people very rude, they are really rude...the children have picked up what the adults think of my kids and they're treating them a certain way...</p> <p>P6 Only what's in school, yeah, that's the only thing...She does arts and crafts, she used to do trampolining... She likes her bedroom 'cause she's got her own TV and everything and she goes up...mainly upstairs when she watches telly, but she does her puzzle book, and she reads, I just leave her, she goes in her room and stays and about half past 8 when she's tired, she says 'I'm going to bed now, goodnight', and I just leave her, she goes to bed herself Not really (doesn't want her daughter to integrate with the community), not where I live it's different...how can I put it...you get a lot of, well, not a lot of trouble, but you get a lot of people you know joyriders and all these and some of them do drugs, 'cause there's a pub down the bottom, and they have a lot of trouble there</p>
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APPENDIX 18: AN EXCERPT OF A SUMMARY OF ANSWERS TO STAFF QUESTIONS 1 TO 7, WITH THEMES HIGHLIGHTED

Theme 1: levels of independence

Theme 2: coping strategies

Theme 3: school placement

Theme 4: role of society

Theme 5: levels of awareness

Theme 6: role of siblings

<p>4. To what extent do you feel their learning and/or communication difficulties make them more susceptible to bullying?</p>	<p>School 3 I'd say it depends on the student really...depends on what they look like...some of them, you can see some of them walking down the street sometimes and you know they've got a learning difficulty...but then the others you know someone like Xxxxxx he's got loads of friends, street dancer, he's got friends at like XX (mainstream) School and he gets on, I mean he hangs round with them as well so, for him, less...he wears the right clothes...</p> <p>...it depends on how they present themselves...teenage life's survival isn't it and, you know, and sometimes you've gotta play the game...you've still gotta look the part and fit in, haven't you?</p> <p>...not many of them go out independently</p> <p>...sometimes like she'll storm round the classroom and I'll say to her, 'come on Xxxx, you're a young lady, stop going around like a bull', and you know, 'walk a bit more sensibly'...and she's like, you know, 'oh yeah Xxxxx', and she is softening actually I think parents do that with kids anyway... you know whether they've got learning difficulties or not, you know, I've got friends whose kids are, like, when they start senior school, it's like, you can walk to a school on your own and, you know, if you're walking home, you've gotta have a bit of purpose about you, you know, and they'll go, 'right don't just dolly daydream in the gutter, you know, like kicking stones, you know, like 'cause then you're gonna get either picked on or like, you know...more susceptible', you know, so it's being streetwise, isn't it?</p> <p>...he's like really passionate about the army...wants to join the army, that's his focus, so he's kind of, everything he does is about getting strong, he wants to be strong and that's great...you know whether he's going to go in the army or not, the fact that he's got that kind of focus in his head and that determination, I think, is brilliant</p> <p>School 1 ...our students thankfully, for the most part, they don't sort of show outward evidence of having difficulties and</p>
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	<p>therefore don't tend to get picked on</p> <p>...we shared a section of the arena...with a number of other schools where the students were sort of far more physically impaired...you could actually see one or two people thinking, 'oh we'll go over there and have a look at this stand', seen the students and literally you could see the effect where they would just turn round and walk off in the opposite direction</p> <p>...people are still...seem to have this thing where they can't see beyond the disability and that's rather sad, you know, you would think that in the days of the special Olympics and all that, that this sort of thing would be got round, but unfortunately it doesn't, it's still there bubbling underneath</p> <p>The only thing that you can hope is, if you think back to the days where people had this thing about people of another race, if you think about the older generations back to our grandparents and their parents, they had very, very strong feelings about racial matters, but as the younger population came up, it's been part of their life and just become the norm and more acceptable, so problems over race are actually diminishing over time, whereas the people's feelings towards the disabled doesn't seem to be diminishing at the same rate</p> <p>...you've got another added problem now where, if you look at the jobs market, there is another huge difficulty where we don't need as many people to be employed nowadays, because obviously mechanisation and modernisation and all the rest of it has taken huge strides forward, so the actual jobs market is so restricted now that anybody with a disability or with some sort of educational impairment is gonna find it even more difficult to get a job than before, and obviously the government is wiping their hands of responsibility by getting rid of establishments that have been with us for donkey's years to support people with disabilities...they're no longer in place and the government are expecting those people to go out into the normal everyday job market and expect them to be able to cope, and it's such a short-sighted thing...it really is awful, so obviously we have to redouble our efforts now where our school curriculum now is based far more on employability than it is on obtaining certificates...which is the reason why we've got this room here where they do hairdressing, land studies, animal studies, mechanics, painting and decorating, that's all the sort of stuff that we're doing now purely to try and get them a foothold on the ladder when they leave school...otherwise they're really going to suffer like people who are already out there who can't get a job</p> <p>School 2 ...some of them stand out as having difficulties</p> <p>Some of the children themselves can be umm unkind to each other, umm because they've suffered unkindness or bullying and therefore they'll find somebody a little less able than</p>
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	<p>themselves and transfer it onto them...it's understanding why they bully, why they have the need to, you know this power thing</p> <p>Yeah, well I do that in ASDAN, we were doing it yesterday, about the reasons why and umm and that there are so many reasons why, and I show them the video of 'the scary man', and they really like that because he was a bully in his past and you know he was reformed and it, you know, they quite like...they do quite sort of umm, I mean I'd love to get him in here because he's quite charismatic</p> <p>...they're in forms with mainstream, they're in teaching groups with mainstream for a lot of their time, and Year 10 to 11 they do a lot of subjects where they are together as a group, but they are also integrated in other subjects in their options...it does help them because the mainstream young people are so used to having teaching assistants in the classroom...some of the children with learning difficulties don't like having the assistants in there because it feels...they feel singled out...that they are very different, and that they do need a lot of help</p> <p>...the TA helps in the room, and will help everybody that needs help, but maybe umm the child who's got the entitlement would be their main focus</p> <p>It does (it helps having special needs children in the class with the mainstream young people) , I mean we've still got some children who umm are really aware of what this corridor (the ARC) means, and they think if they have to come up here for umm anything that it's a real umm they hate it, they really hate it, but we have a lot of children who do come through learning support who umm for example may be very bright but have umm dyslexic difficulties so come up here for help with organisation of writing and reading or what have you, so, you know, it depends on the child, it's very individual...different perceptions</p> <p>...they have more contact with children who have special needs, which has got to be a good thing</p> <p>...because we are an ARC school, we have a lot more children with difficulties so, you know, it is more the norm than the exception</p> <p>Oh it (integration) happens a lot here, I mean even, we have a child with Down's Syndrome and she's, you know, in mainstream lessons, I mean she has a lot of support, and this year she's in less mainstream lessons, but it's really umm so that her needs can be met as far as learning's concerned, but she's fully integrated into the school...I don't think people see her as somebody with Down's syndrome any more, they're just so used to her</p>
5. To what extent do you	<p>School 3 I think they are vulnerable but also more resourceful than other people, because they've had to be...it's survival</p>

<p>see the YP as primarily vulnerable, and susceptible to bullying, or as resourceful YP with a lot to teach their typically developing peers/society in general?</p>	<p>instincts...someone like Xxxxx, I think she'd be quite resourceful...I think a lot of them would because they've had to be throughout their lives</p> <p>...a lot of them...don't go out that much on their own, you know, if they walk home from school they'll amble along, because that's it, because when they get in that's it, their life's just on the internet then</p> <p>...if Xxxxxx was by herself somewhere I'm not sure she'd be able to deal with a situation if there was, for instance, a man, you know, who wanted to have her number or whatever, I don't think she'd be able to deal with it</p> <p>...I think Xxxx'd stand up for herself, you know, she's got a lot about her...some things she doesn't understand but...it's quite hard when you're like... 'cause we just see them here and it's...a safety bubble isn't it, in a special school</p> <p>I think the group this year are less vulnerable than the ones last year, someone like Xxxx and his parents used to say, 'one of the reasons we'd never let you go out independently is 'cause if someone had a dog, you'd follow them, 'cause you love dogs...no matter how much we told you', he would do it, you know, and I think someone like him is very vulnerable 'cause of his learning difficulties, but then whether that's a product of him having a learning difficulty or not having that independence over the past 18 years...</p> <p>...but then somebody like X was quite an independent person, but she'd never go out on her own because her parents worried that much, whereas someone like Xxxxx is a lot more severe in her learning difficulties, but her parents, you know, allow her out and go to the shops independently, so she's more streetwise and would handle things better</p> <p>...is it the learning difficulties or is it the environment? - that's the question</p> <p>...it's a bit of both, isn't it, I mean X's probably the classic example because X's a lot more independent than Xxxx is, well obviously they're not, but I think X has a lot more potential to do a lot more, but...Xxxx walks to school by herself and, you know, and yet X comes with her mum and waits with her 'cause she's scared that someone's gonna pick on her on the way to school</p> <p>X would be...whenever you say to her, she's like, 'yeah, I'd do that no problem'...I think the mum kind of wraps her up in cotton wool really, I think she makes decisions for her and umm it's a hard one really, she has so much potential, you see her on Friday in Xxxxx and she can walk off, you can leave her to walk around the Xxxx Xxxx and meet up at a certain time, and it's a shame really...I think her parents kind of stop her doing a lot</p> <p>In that respect it'd be the same for any teenager, I mean any</p>
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	<p>16 year old who'd never been allowed out before would probably be more vulnerable than someone who's like been quite semi-independent from the age of 8 you know going to school</p> <p>...I think...if mainstream students came in and...I think they'd really get on and really warm to a lot of the students...XX (mainstream) School have been over and there's been like workshops with the mainstream as well...I think they learn themselves that there's not that much difference...they learn to be more accepting</p> <p>...I think...when you're young, disability can be quite frightening and when you're a teenager, you handle it by different ways, by like giggling, by being embarrassed, and the only way that's gonna change is through integration...I mean I remember when I got a job with learning difficulties for the first time, I didn't even know what the term learning difficulties meant, it was in a day centre and I just thought, 'oh it's people who, you know, who probably left school at 14 and need help reading and writing', and I walked in and it was quite severe...I didn't know what I was walking into</p> <p>I think there's a place for all of it (mainstream and special schools), some children thrive really well in mainstream school, but I think these (special) schools have a really strong position with these young people, for example, young Xxx who's joined us, she's grown in confidence since she's come to our school and she did all of her schooling in mainstream ...she's come on leaps and bounds...because I think she's probably always been bottom of the ladder in a mainstream, probably not had that many friends, because who wants to hang around the person who's a bit different at school, I mean she's come here where she's a bit more...above everyone else, and it's raised her to think, 'oh I'm not bottom of the pile'...this is part of what we do in Sixth Form, isn't it, to try and teach them and help them</p> <p><i>(interviewer asks which qualities make the young people an asset to society)</i> It depends on the level of their disability, I mean Xxxxx and Xxx they're completely fine and they've got lots of qualities that they can give, and Xxx's working in Asda, he could do a fantastic job there, I mean, and, you know, contribute towards society...they've gotta cope and look out for themselves, but they've gotta look out for each other as well, you know, and they're like normal teenagers in every other respect, but they have got that about them...it's just, I think it's just, you know, in there with them (<i>i.e. instinctive</i>)...one was like, you need to be careful because of Xxx and her nut allergy...and also going out, 'have we got so-and-so's inhaler?', so they're the sort of qualities</p> <p><i>(interviewer asks which qualities would make them a good</i></p>
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	<p>employee) ...I think it's loyalty, it's...because we try to teach them that it's ok to be different, it's ok, you know, if you are different, you are different, but you make the most of what you can do, we always look at what they can achieve rather than what they're not able to do, and I think they can bring that out in society, you know with other young people, 'cause they would look at them and say, 'oh you're really good at doing that', you know, where some young people might be horrible if you can't do something</p> <p>(interviewer asks, 'Where do you see the YP in the future? Do you see them in jobs?') Some of them...some of them you think, you know, further education and maybe jobs a long way down the line... and some of them are working...they have jobs...they have cars...some of them are driving</p> <p>School 1 I would say there is an element of students in the school who are definitely vulnerable to bullying, thankfully it's a very small percentage of the overall school...</p> <p>Absolutely, I do believe that yes (that the majority are resourceful young people with a lot to teach society in general)</p> <p>We have actually got a few of our ex-students already who belong to a group of people who go out and lecture in schools and colleges, and broadcast in general about their lives as a student in a special needs school, where they discuss all the trials and tribulations they went through, how they've come through the other side, and are now actually sort of encouraging other students not to feel as if they are being pushed to one side, if you like, or being given a lesser education than anyone else, and that's good to hear, I mean I know of at least 3 of our ex-students who are actually doing that now, so yes they do have a lot to offer...we do try and teach them how to communicate</p> <p>...a lot have passed their driving test, they're holding down permanent jobs...I know quite a few who are now married and have children of their own, and they have developed quite long-term stable relationships, so you know all these things are not out of the question, if you approach things in the right manner</p> <p>...we probably have got 3 or 4 students coming to us next year who are on the lower ability level, and who are obviously going to be...it's gonna take probably a lot more effort from the teachers and the support staff to bring them up, but we certainly never wash our hands of anybody, you know, you've gotta do your best and then that's fine</p> <p>...I think by the very nature of the way the government approach special schools we have probably tended to take students with slightly more behavioural problems than we used to, and that's been out of necessity, so obviously we have had to be re-trained to handle those students but the school again</p>
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	<p>they've been very good at making sure that that training is in place and there are strategies obviously put in place to try and get those children through, I mean you know you're not confrontational and as long as you don't confront children at this...you know you don't invade their personal space and all the rest of it then they feel safer, they feel more relaxed, but we do tend to find that some students who come to us late in life, around about Year 8 or 9, they've come from mainstream schools because they're having a torrid time, they come to us and within a year or 18 months, it's amazing you know you look at that report that they came with and you think, 'no, that's not this child', and when you think of a mainstream school where they've got 30-40 children to cope with in the classroom, they can't devote that time to one particular student so they're going to get worse and worse and worse</p> <p>I've got absolutely no doubt about it (that a lot more bullying goes on in mainstream)...I cannot understand the mentality of anybody who says that our students can be coped with in units in a mainstream school. We know that doesn't work, because we've had so many students who've been through that, and they've arrived at our school almost destroyed and then we've had to spend 2 years bringing them back to become normal rational human beings again, and they've left our school and you think, 'God, what was the problem?', but when you've got a maximum of 14 children in a class...I mean when I arrived at the school the maximum was 12...so even that's crept up as you can see</p> <p>...parents are sometimes a major obstacle because we do still have a big problem with parents who are in denial...</p> <p>...we have some parents who quite often on parents' evening when they come into school you know they're in floods of tears, they can't see how things are going to go, but eventually when they've left school it's lovely to see a happy parent, and we do get quite a few of those thankfully</p> <p><i>(interviewer asks which qualities make the young people an asset to society)</i> I'll tell you one thing I have noticed and especially with something like work experience, for many many years...my task was organising work experience, and you do see that our students are more grateful for the help and support they get, there's no doubt about that because we very rarely if at all have problems when students are out on visits or they go to work experience or whatever, they seem to be grateful that somebody is actually providing them with an experience and they do actually make the most of it, and they come back with really good reports from the provider, whereas students in mainstream school just seem to use it as...well it's a week off school</p> <p><i>(interviewer asks which qualities would make them a good</i></p>
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	<p>employee) They are willing generally speaking...you know they are approachable, they are good at time-keeping, they will follow instructions, as long as they are showed what to do properly, as long as they are trained in what they are supposed to be doing, they are quite happy to do it</p> <p>The majority of them go on to lead successful lives...I mean I would say that certainly the last 2 years...95% of our students have either been placed in further education or in part-time work, when they leave school, so you know that that transition is in place and it's working</p> <p>...parents who seem to think that, you know, that life is going to be magically OK for them...that is one of the major difficulties...I mean we are encouraged as a school to encourage parents to take an interest and to take a part in their education, but unfortunately we do have some parents who really don't seem to give a monkey's, and those are the ones we have the hardest time with</p> <p>...there are parental support groups in place...we do encourage parents to come in and support in the classes as well, so they've got an insight into the work that we're doing</p> <p>...the majority of our students are working towards sort of low level GCSEs and other certificates which they're quite capable of doing...we have a responsibility to those who are high achieving as well as those who are at the other end</p> <p>School 2 Some of them have (got a lot to teach society), some of them are very resourceful...some of them have got great talents...we've got one boy who's...very good at sports and he's a cyclist and he, you know he's done very, very well, and I think he was one of the fittest young men in his year group. I think that the other pupils can see some of them have got talents</p> <p>...I push them to get the best qualifications they can...they've achieved amazing qualifications, and I think they will do what's expected of them, so if you don't expect much of them, then you won't get much from them</p> <p>...it's equipping them with the tools to be able to deal with situations, because at the end of the day we're trying to make them into independent young people as much as possible...some of them will be more independent than others when they leave, but it is really equipping them with the tools and the know-how, and how to deal with situations</p> <p>...I think they learn from each other (mainstream young people and those with learning difficulties), and I think it's good when they are in groups together because, you know, they do - the more able children will support the less able, but the less able will teach them things that, you know about umm ways of doing things that they hadn't even thought of because they've had to learn that to be able to get through</p>
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	<p>...I like the integration model, I like the model we have here because we have a mixture of both integration and withdrawal...and it's down to the individual, so where, you know, for the most part...for example we have one boy who does extra science and maths who's in the 'D'-band group, because that's what he needs...so you know he's got an individual timetable which...he's got a timetable that nobody else has got the same so it's...fit for him really...tailored to his needs, I mean we can't, you know, we can't do that 100% for everybody because of the resources, but we do it as much as possible within our power, and we're very careful now about the children when they're taking options and things, so we don't put them into options that they cannot cope with...and...that they'll feel failures in, so you know we do tailor them, we do do pathways so some children, they're on different coloured pathways depending on their needs</p> <p>...parents do kind of get together (no support groups), we meet the parents regularly; in Year 7 we meet them prior to the children coming, and then when the children have been here about 3 weeks, we have an evening meeting where they all come and they look at what's gone well, what's not gone so well, and what, you know, but no, we don't run any support groups</p> <p>...we've got one child who's in Year 7 who comes from Xxxxxxxx Xxxx, and who's struggling with friendships and has real difficulties, and the trouble is even if she makes friends here, because people live so far away, that she hasn't, you know, it's very difficult so...that's one of the disadvantages of going to a school that's quite a distance away from your home, but this is the most appropriate place academically, but socially...some of the activities that perhaps she gets up to...are very different to some of the activities that the other children get up to, so they've got less in common...and her parents aren't very supportive so things like uniform...so that she does stand out, so she's somebody that, you know, we've kind of dressed for school, because we didn't want her to stand out, and so we've provided uniform for her and...</p> <p><i>(interviewer asks which qualities would make the young people an asset to society/a good employee)</i> A lot of them are hardworking, dedicated... they don't give up, some of them don't give up, they'll keep trying even though they're having difficulties all the way, which is fantastic. Their attendance here is excellent, it's superb</p> <p>...the only thing is some of them are quite immature for their age, in that they're, you know, they're not really involved in similar activities out of school that maybe some of their peers are involved in yet, but that's not necessarily a bad thing 'cause hopefully when they go to college, and we've found that most</p>
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	<p>of them when they move on to college, you know, naturally mature even though it is a bit slower than their peers (interviewer asks whether most of the ARC young people's peer group would be other young people in the ARC, or in mainstream?)</p> <p>Both, we've got some children who, it's mainly up here, but with a lot of the children it's mainstream...some of them come from their primary schools with friends as well, so that there are people they knew in their primary schools, so that they keep those friendships and then maybe make more friendships with the friends that their friends have made and because they're in forms of mixed ability and mixed age...</p> <p>...I'd go for more integration (as opposed to a special school) but it would depend on the individual, because some children would find the size of a school like this umm just alone, you know, without anything else, sort of very intimidating, very frightening, so ideally yes, here, but I do think that there are some children where special school is more appropriate</p> <p>...the groups up here are small...in lower school for learning support there's about 8 in a group...in upper school there's about 10 in a group...I think probably 12 is about the most</p> <p>...our group sizes (in the main part of the school) tend to be around 25...some are 30 ...but the lower ability groups tend to be less than 25</p> <p>...they're not set for everything, they're not set for options, but they're set for things like English now, and they're set for maths...but they'd be mixed in with other children that maybe... 'cause we've got children who have real maths difficulties but who may be in top set for English, you know and vice versa</p> <p>...they go on to college and work...we've got children doing all sorts of things...sports science, horticulture, animal care, working in nurseries as support assistants...a variety of things, one boy's just joined the army...</p> <p>(interviewer asks, 'Do you see them living independently in the future?') Yes, yes I do, and we do an independent living topic...maybe it'll take a bit longer and they'll need a bit more support, and again, not all of them, but a lot of them, yes</p>
<p>6. To what extent do you think the YP integrate within the community?</p>	<p>School 3 It depends on the family...it all knuckles down to the family I think</p> <p>...they were going out into the community and helping the environment and learning about keeping the environment clean and safe...we had been learning about travelling independently and learning really how to survive...the majority of them are all able to catch all methods of public transport</p> <p>There's a few I would say I'll meet you in Xxxxxxxx by the library and I'd have no worries</p> <p>Xxxxx and Xxxxx they were like, 'can we go and get our hair</p>

	<p>cut, and we'll come back here?'...last year some of those that went to college...it got to the point where we were saying, 'right, get the bus back to school'....we were in town and I'd say, 'I'll meet you back at school'...I'd phone Xxx up and say, 'they're on their way back', then Xxx'd phone me and say, 'they're back'...</p> <p>...it's kind of like they really quite like that responsibility, looking out for him, and they make sure he's safe</p> <p>some of the parents would not believe it</p> <p>...he's probably never been off without his parents</p> <p>We do celebrate...it's like today with cooking I'd given them a recipe and it's the first time they'd cooked it by themselves, from scratch, and they're using sharp knives and everything, so it's just getting them to that independent stage 'cause they'll leave here this year or next year, you know, in the summer some will leave...they're out there then</p> <p>X's mum is holding X back...the needs are X's mum's, not X's...she still walks her to school and leaves her at the gate, and she was 18 yesterday...it's just...it's excuses after excuses after excuse</p> <p>And you talk to the mum and she'll say, 'oh I'll do it, like, September', and then, 'I'll do it Christmas', now it's, 'I'll do it Easter'...it's not gonna happen...in June mum will still be bringing her to school...it's not gonna happen but I'd have no problem saying to X, 'I'll meet you outside XX on the ramp or whatever, I'd have no problem saying that to her</p> <p>...if mum is with her all the time, she's not exposed to the possibility of somebody saying something to her or coping in a situation where somebody's nasty to her and her coping mechanism is to burst into tears...at one time she used to cry all the time...she...can be quite independent...I was shocked when I did that independent activity with them that she just stood back and wasn't doing anything...I was like, 'come on, you need to help out, you need to...' and she burst into tears... If she was walking down the street by herself...she would probably say something to somebody, but I think if mum was there, and mum was, say, 100 yards behind her, she'd burst into tears if she knew mum was there...it's quite a strange situation</p> <p>...she just cries with everything</p> <p>School 1 We've got a few students who play football...they play football for, you know, one of the local football teams and they're playing with students who've come from a mainstream education background and they're absolutely fine, no problem...they have friends who go to mainstream schools and, it's funny really, because...a couple of those students are perhaps ones that have had this dread of having to go out on visits and be seen with the school and yet, you know, there</p>
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	<p>they are quite happy chatting and playing with people who, while they were here, they would have probably been scared to be seen with</p> <p>...we've got a young lady in here at the moment who, well and a lad who left at the end of last year as well, and they've actually appeared at the Albert Hall and the Royal Palladium even, in theatrical productions and if that's not having confidence, tell me what is</p> <p>Yes (thinks integrating with the community is important) , that's why we take them out on these trips</p> <p>The incident in the community where adults visibly turned away was a one-off...you could look at 95% of our students and think they're absolutely normal sort of teenagers...but unfortunately a lot of the other schools that were at that Xxxxxxx show they had...some of them had severe communication problems, some of them had physical problems...extreme Down's...pupils...who'd got brain damage...had it been just our school, I've got absolutely no doubt there probably would have been 1000s and 1000s of people pouring through that day and we could have probably made a fortune ...it's obviously something where, you know, people perceive this as being, 'oh I can't', and walk away, which is so sad, and yet, as I said, with the Paralympics, where that's in the forefront of everybody's mind, I can't think of anybody who wouldn't have seen some of that this year, they realise that, you know, they are the same as everybody else, they have an entitlement to live and to get on...</p> <p>...I don't think that we're ever going to succeed until our leadership, you know the government have got to take an instrumental role in this and stop cutting back on, well, it's not just education, it's everything, if you think about the aged and all the rest of it, it's all the same thing, you know it's becoming a case of, well, there's only so much money and somebody's going to lose out</p> <p>...up until a few years ago there was huge pressure to get all students back into mainstream schooling and thankfully that does seem to have gone away</p> <p>...certain people seem to come into power and they have preconceived fixed ideas about what they want to do, and of course, with every government change, those ideas change, and then you end up picking up the pieces because they may remove a facility that should never have been removed and then it's gotta be put back in place, so yeah it's very frustrating.</p> <p>School 2 That's more difficult to say...I can tell you about the community of school, but the community outside, I don't know, I mean some of them belong to clubs and things, you know, like the one boy belongs to a cycling club, and others belong to things like girl guides...scouts or...youth clubs outside</p>
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APPENDIX 19: THEMES AND SUBTHEMES WITH SUPPORTING QUOTES (AN EXCERPT)

Theme 1: Levels of independence		
Independence encouraged last year was the first time she'd ever been on her own...she loved it (P3) I can't do anything like that (send her backpacking on her own) with X...I was nervous about her going to Butlin's ...(P2) she's been to London, to the Olympics for disabled people...she goes on most of the trips here (at school) (P6) you worry about the future and you worry about when you're not there to kind of mastermind it...I want him to feel happy in his own level of social interaction (P1) desperate to get her in a residential college next year (P2) I want X to have as normal as possible a life as she is capable of...I think living in sheltered accommodation with other people her own age...it's really important...socially (P2) they'll (X and friend) go to the cinema by themselves, I've dropped them at bowling before...(P4) I still sometimes say, 'well, you know, I'm in your hands, you tell me where we're going...you get us there, and make sure it's the right train'...to try and see whether	Protectiveness ... he does have quite a protected life (P1) I have been very protective of her, possibly over-protective (P2) I wasn't going to interfere, but that changed within the first week (of secondary school) (P3) she went away for the first time ever, this January, she went skiing with the school for a whole week...I didn't sleep...it was awful (P3) she gets treated like a younger child (P6) as parents...we walk a thin line...of not being overbearing but trying to keep them as safe as humanly possible (P3) she's not allowed to go out on her own (P3) She's not very independent because she's normally with me (P6) when the kid's poorly he'll go to the bathroom and he'll leave the water running...I wouldn't even dare let him use the cooker...'cause I just think he forgets an awful lot (P5) so looked after by their families, and they're with their families a lot of the time...a lot of our really special needs	Avoidance he just doesn't fit in...so he tends to be at home mostly (P5) if I need to see somebody it's when the kids are at school, so they don't get too...involved with anything really (P5) you have to be careful as a parent...X can be very wilful...and to think she could walk out this door and there's not a legal thing I could do, well I don't know, I suppose I'd have to find out (P3) I think she'll still live with me...I ain't thinking about that (the future) just yet...I don't talk about that...I just wait 'til it comes...day to day, that's what I do, yeah (P6) you worry about the future and you worry about when you're not there to kind of mastermind it (P1) some of the parents come in and say, 'right, I've banned them at home, but they've got it on their phones, so what can I do?' (MS3) X's mum was, 'oh you know, we put sanctions on at home and Facebook, but you know, it's on her phone, so what can we do? And she pays for her own bill'

<p>he could do it or not (P1) he gets the bus to school (P5) Yes I think he could (live independently)...with some support...I think he probably could hold down a job (P1) she should be capable of being found a job...if she was a 'meet and greet' person...I think that would work (P2) I do see him living independently...I can see him being with us for a long time, but yes I could see him, I think he'd be perfectly able to (P4) some of them have got full lives, they leave here and they've got activities in clubs and things like that, so it depends on the family (MS3) ...whereas someone like Xx is a lot more severe in her learning difficulties, but her parents...allow her out and to go to the shops independently, so she's more streetwise and would handle things better (MS3) they really quite like that responsibility, looking out for him, and they make sure he's safe... some of the parents would not believe it (MS3)</p>	<p>children are taxied...or parents pick them up...we've only got a small number that actually go home on their own (MS2) their parents do stop them from doing a lot out of school...someone like X, for example, who's perfectly capable of walking to school but her mother...doesn't feel she's safe, when we all think she's safe (MS3) less likely to be allowed out...(MS3) there are only perhaps a few of the slightly more tender ones that are still under the parental wing (MS1) not many of them go out independently (MS3) I think someone like him is very vulnerable 'cause of his learning difficulties, but then whether that's a product of him having a learning difficulty or not having that independence over the past 18 years...somebody like X was quite an independent person, but she'd never go out on her own because her parents worried that much... Xx walks to school by herself and...yet X comes with her mum and waits with her 'cause she's (her mum) scared that someone's gonna pick on her on the way to school (MS3) I think the mum kind of wraps her up in cotton wool...I think she makes decisions</p>	<p>(MS3) the parents know about it, but you can only do so much, 'cause it all happens at home...any sensible person would be just, 'right, no more computer, no more phone, no more anything because you're putting yourself in danger'...but the answer is like, 'what can I do, it's her phone?' (MS3) parents are sometimes a major obstacle because we do still have a big problem with parents who are in denial (MS1) parents who seem to think...that life is going to be magically OK for them...that is one of the major difficulties (MS1) unfortunately we do have some parents who really don't seem to give a monkey's, and those are the ones we have the hardest time with (MS1) not that she's allowed to do (go on Facebook), but they've got the means, her phone does it, her iPod does it (P3)</p>
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	<p>for her...she has so much potential...I think her parents kind of stop her doing a lot (MS3)</p> <p>In that respect it'd be the same for any teenager. I mean any 16 year old who'd never been allowed out before, would probably be more vulnerable than someone who's...been quite semi-independent from the age of 8...going to school (MS3)</p>	
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