A SERIES OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE REPORTS

(VOLUME 2)

by

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1. OVERVIEW OF VOLUME 1

1.1 Introduction

The work contained within this volume forms one of two volumes of work contributing to the written assessed requirements of the Doctorate of Applied Educational and Child Psychology. The volume comprises of four professional practice reports, based on the work completed during my training. This chapter will introduce the service delivery context in which these pieces of work were negotiated and conducted, which is of particular importance due to changes in service structure that have taken place during my time with the service. It will also provide a rationale for each report drawing attention to the range of personal and professional factors that influenced the development of each report, and it will reflect on how the body of work as a whole has contributed to my professional development as an applied educational psychologist. Ghtfgjhty

Since September 2008 I have been enrolled as a full time research student on the Applied Educational and Child Psychology professional doctorate programme at the University of Birmingham. During the final two years of this programme I have been concurrently employed as a Trainee Educational Psychologist within Westshire County Council, and this employment is an integral element of the programme of professional training.

During my second year of training I was the named visiting educational psychologist for six primary schools and two secondary schools. During my final year I took on the additional responsibility of two other primary schools and a special school for pupils

with moderate learning difficulties. Throughout both years I also undertook a range of early years work from my schools and at the request of the Local Authority.

Completing the academic requirements of the professional training programme alongside delivering an effective educational psychology service in my schools was often challenging. I needed to balance the demands of the schools' needs and expectations alongside identifying and negotiating a diverse range of learning experiences that could form the basis of detailed professional practice reports. The remit of these reports was that they would allow me to utilise examples from my professional practice to both illuminate and demonstrate my developing skills as both a doctoral researcher and practicing Trainee Educational Psychologist. The four professional practice reports contained within this volume of the thesis reflect in detail the nature and range of work that was carried out in the settings described above.

1.2 Service Delivery Context

Westshire is a large rural county in the West Midlands which serves a diverse socio-economic and ethnic demographic; areas of considerable affluence are found alongside areas that contribute to the 30% most deprived nationally. Approximately 553,000 people live in the county with 60% living in urban areas, and a quarter of the county's population are under the age of 20 (Ofsted, 2008). Schools are situated within rural communities as well as in series of larger towns. Only 5.5% of young people are from a black or minority ethnic group and this is lower than both the regional and national averages (Ofsted, 2008). There is also a population of 5,000

Gypsy Travellers in the county of which just under 400 are young people aged between 4 and 16 (Ofsted, 2008). Most of these traveller families are long-term settled although seasonal travel remains a tradition. The range of schools in which I have worked reflects the diversity described, including for instance a very high achieving secondary school in a small affluent Westshire village and primary schools in an area of considerable social deprivation in the town of Kidderminster.

When I began my employment in Westshire County Council I was part of a Community Education Team (CET) in the north west of the county comprising of educational psychologists, family support workers and education welfare officers. Although there was an area Senior Educational Psychologist acting as a supervisor and professional lead, the Community Education Team Manager was from a social care background. This team was developed as part of the educational psychology service's relocation to the social care sector of Children's services and the rationale behind this was to increase multi-agency communication and collaboration which was a key aim of the Every Child Matters: Change for Children (DfES, 2004), which identified that such models of multi-agency working would contribute to better outcomes for young people.

1.3 Political Landscape

During the latterly part of my first year of employment a general election led to a change from a Labour Government to a Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition Government. The changes that were to follow were set against a pre-existing

backdrop of budget cuts within Westshire County Council being delivered through the BOLD (Better Outcomes Leaner Delivery) initiative. This change has led to further need for the local authority to save more money, meaning further revision to educational psychology service structure and to revised models of working within Children's Services.

More generally the professional role of the educational psychologist has been considered as part of a review conducted by the new Government into provision of services for young people with special educational needs (SEN). This Green Paper "Support and Aspiration: A New Approach to Special Education and Disability" (DfE, 2011) outlines a range of proposed changes to the current SEN system, which will potentially impact on the future role that educational psychologist's play in this work. The most pertinent headlines of relevance from the Green Paper include the following:

- The government will trial personal budgets for young people with SEN so that parents have greater freedom in choosing support and provision.
- Special schools will be further endorsed and parents and teachers will be encouraged to set up Free Schools to provide some of this provision.
- There is a proposal to set up a a new, single ‘Education and Health Care Plan’ for individuals; following a new streamlined assessment process (this indicates changes to the current Statutory Assessment process)
- The Government has indicated that they will provide targeted funding to voluntary and community sector organisations to support this area of work.

- There will be a consultation on the future funding arrangements for the training of educational psychologists.

Alongside this focus on SEN the new government has also published an Education White Paper (HMSO, 2011), the aim of which is to introduce widespread reform to the education system. The most significant reforms in terms of the EP role within local authorities includes increasing schools' freedom and autonomy from local authorities and dramatically extend the academies programme. This means that schools now have much more autonomy to decide how to spend their budgets and to focus their resources on areas of their choosing. Schools will no longer have to contribute to ring fenced budgets for non-statutory educational psychology services from their local authority and instead they the choice to decide whether or not to buy in such a service. This may lead to considerable change in the nature of the relationship between educational psychology services and schools as schools become direct purchasers of the services we offer.

This has been a time of great personal and professional uncertainty for educational psychologists in my service. As a result we are no longer part of the Community Education Team (CET) and since September 2010 have gone back to a more traditional educational psychology service model, under the management of a Principle Educational Psychologist within a new service known as "Early Intervention and Targeted Support". Significant budget cuts resulting from the removal of ring fenced funding from schools and have meant that we have had to become a traded

service, relying on securing Service Level Agreements with schools in order to maintain staffing levels and levels of service to schools.

1.4 Model of Service Delivery

My work is negotiated and planned termly with SENCO's (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) and a time allocation model is applied, with schools placed in bandings relating to a range of factors calculated to determine their expected level of need. Service level agreements are now in place with approximately 80% of schools to ensure non-statutory working is maintained. Where these are not in place statutory work is now required to be prioritised by schools, as their allocated hours have been reduced by one third due to the described budget cuts.

The team in which I work recognises the value of offering individual work with young people, consultation with parents, school staff and other professionals and supporting capacity building in schools through training and a commitment to project work. A consultative approach underpins our work and is well aligned with the description described by Wagner (2000) who describes consultation as a process in which " *'concerns are raised, and a collaborative and recursive process is initiated that combines joint exploration, assessment, intervention and review'* (p11).

Such a consultative approach to problem solving was also explored by Boyle and Mackay (2007) who highlighted that this consultative approach to educational psychology practice was beginning to be recognised within govenment papers.

Although my work has been primarily casework focussed I have been able to apply systemic thinking for instance developing and delivering a range of training packages to address identified needs. I also apply an ecological model of thinking in my work (Bronfenbrenner 1979 & 2005) through constantly considering for instance the influence of a child's systemic landscape on their development and learning. This type of work has been rewarding as it has allowed me to affect change at a range of levels including impacting on beliefs and values within organisational systems (Boyle et al, 2007).

1.5 Introduction to Professional Practice Reports

University guidance was provided in relation to the potential range and content of the professional practice reports. There was however flexibility to negotiate this focus of the work within my employing authority in order to ensure that they took into account my individual learning needs as well as responding to opportunities emerging within my usual service delivery to schools.

I will briefly introduce each of my PPRs individually in order to provide a coherent account of the basis for each piece of work. Despite the fact that each piece of work was completed and may be considered in isolation, as a body of work they collectively reflect my key underpinning values as a practicing psychologist, which include:

- A focus on promoting inclusion, wherever possible for young people with a range of additional needs.

- An interest at effecting change at a range of levels including effecting change for individual children and within organisations.
- An enthusiasm towards collaborative working alongside professionals from a range of professionals with a range of distinctive skills and experience.
- A desire to add to the knowledge base and practice applied within my service.

1.6 Professional Practice Report 1

Educational Psychologists' role in organisational development work, with specific reference to my role as a Trainee EP in supporting Children's Centre Support Teachers (CCSTs), through the application of the Research and Development in Organisations (RADIO) Framework for Collaborative Action Research.

My first Professional Practice Report provides an acount of a Collaborative action research project completed alongside a TEP collegue, early in my role as a Trainee EP. The focus of the work was in supporting Childrens' Centre Support Teachers in strengthening thier practice, through working collaboratively using the RADIO framework for collaborative action research (Timmins et al, 2005) to develop a self-sustaining model of group-peer supervision. The work adopted a systems perspective applying Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) and Bio-ecological Theory of Human Development (2001) as an integrating framework, informing my work which focussed on strengthening the CCST "system". This work contributed to organisational development within the Children's Centre network, through building on identified pre-existing positive cultural elements within the group.

This report presents a rationale for the use of the RADIO approach, and outlines its application and key findings. Post-hoc critical reflections consider the ways in which collaborative action research might contribute to my future work as an educational psychologist in an ever-changing public sector landscape.

1.7 Professional Practice Report 2

Raising the achievement of Gypsy/Roma/Traveller pupils, with specific reference to Westshire Local Authority.

This PPR was conducted in response to a suggestion in university guidance to explore the area of "Raising Achievement" for a vulnerable or underachieving pupil population. I chose to focus of the Gypsy/Roma/Traveller population due to their prevalence within Westshire where there are approximately 5000 gypsy travellers, approximately 400 of whom are under the age of 20 (Ofsted, 2008). I identified that this was a good opportunity to explore how Westshire worked to support this group of under-achieving population in school. The focus of this PPR included detailed exploration of issues relating to the topic area including definition, history and policy context. A literature review was conducted in order to identify the range of factors which impact on the achievement as well as the underachievement of this group as well as considering the efficacy of specific approaches or interventions which may be able to contribute to raising the achievement of this group, highlighting issues such as low participation, attendance, bullying and inadequate support (e.g. (Lloyd and McClusky, 2008). Key findings from an interview with the strategic director of the Westshire Traveller Education Service are presented in order to highlight the approached uses by Westshire to support traveller pupils and an example of good

practice within Westshire in the form of a club for traveller boys in a primary school is detailed. Finally, links are made with educational psychology practice and the role that the service currently plays in supporting these pupils. Considerations is given to the possibility for further developing work in this area, for instance through supporting schools to implement evidence-based interventions and approaches (as highlighted in the literature review) to promote the achievement of this group.

1.8 Professional Practice Report 3

The use of a cognitive behavioural approach to address school anxiety and school refusal behaviours with reference to a case from professional practice.

The focus of the third PPR is a detailed account of the application of a cognitive behavioural programme called "Think Good, Feel Good" (Stallard, 2002) to support a year 9 pupil exhibiting school anxiety and school refusal behaviours. The PPR provides a critical account of the intervention and an exploration its impact informed by the findings of the Spence Anxiety Scale (Spence et al, 2003) that was a standardised measure that was used both pre and post intervention. A review of the literature in this area is also presented which explores the efficacy of cognitive behavioural approaches in the treatment of school anxiety and school refusal behaviours. The limitations of this intervention and other work that takes place over time with individual pupils are discussed in relation to the practical constraints of Educational Psychology practice within my local authority, where there is an increased emphasis on consultation and systems level working.

1.9 Professional Practice Report 4

Meeting the Holistic Needs of our Most Intellectually Gifted Children and Young People in Mainstream Settings.

The final professional practice report presents and explores the role that I played in the multi-agency assessment of a young person in a mainstream setting who was primarily identified as intellectually gifted but also presented with additional needs in the area of social communication. The report is informed by my use of the Woolfson et al (2003) integrated framework for professional practice which was used to guide this piece of work providing a systematic structure to support thinking about and addressing the problems as it encourages practitioners to be explicit about and reflect upon the assessment tools that they decide to use (Kelly et al, 2008). This work highlighted a number of challenging questions in regard to this population of pupils including: how the intellectually gifted (IG) are defined; what the research tells us about how we can best meet the intellectual and psychological needs of these young people; the implications of being intellectually gifted alongside having other additional needs, which is referred to as "double exceptionality"; and consideration of the role of context and culture. This paper addresses these areas with critical reference to a range of relevant policy and research literature. It also explores current and potential roles for educational psychologists in this complex and interesting area of professional practice.

1.10 Reflections

The body of work presented in this volume reflects the diverse range of practice in which I have been engaged including direct work with individual pupils, through to work at an organisational level and this reflects the broad spectrum of work in which

practicing educational psychologists regularly engage. Three of the four reports (reports 1, 3 and 4) are based on accounts of work which were identified and delivered through my usual service delivery to school. I was however able to develop these pieces of work and apply research skills such as semi-structured interviewing and the use of standardised pre and post measures (report 3) reflecting my desire to apply research skills and demonstrate the value of small scale research projects in my practice. I was also able to demonstrate explicitly my use of psychological problem solving frameworks (e.g. Woolfsen et al 2003 & Monsen et al, 1998), which i find extremely useful in guiding my practice.

Through my work as a Trainee Educational Psychologist i have been able to develop my skills through my range of professional experiences and this has been supported through the use of professional and academic supervision. This supervision has added to my professional knowledge and given me the opportunity to actively reflect on my work, identifying strengths, weaknesses and areas for development. I feel that this has facilitated my development ensuring I am an increasing creative, dynamic and skilled practitioner and I look forward to further developing this skills in my professional life.

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Chapter 2: Educational Psychologists' role in organisational development work, with specific reference to my role as a Trainee EP in supporting Children's Centre Support Teachers (CCSTs), through the application of the Research and Development in Organisations Framework for Collaborative Action Research.

Abstract:

This report describes work carried out with Children's Centre Support Teachers (CCSTs) to address the group's support needs as a means toward increasing their own professional effectiveness and, in turn, contributing to the quality of work within the Local Authority Children's Centre network and contingent outcomes for children. The work adopted a systems perspective, applying Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) and Bioecological Theory of Human Development (2001) as an integrating framework, informing my work which focussed on strengthening the CCST "system". This work contributed to organisational development within the Children's Centre network, through building on identified pre-existing positive cultural elements within the group.

The overall approach to the design and implementation of this study was informed by the Research and Development in Organisations (RADIO) model of collaborative action research (Timmins et al, 2003). This report presents a rationale for the use of this approach, and outlines its application and key findings. Post-hoc critical reflections consider the ways in which collaborative action research might contribute to my future work as an educational psychologist in an ever-changing public sector landscape.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

The collaborative action research project (Timmins, et al 2003) reported in this paper, was developed following a request from a Children's Centre Manager concerned about the perceived sense of isolation communicated by Children's Centre Support Teachers (CCSTs) working in Westshire. This work was undertaken in partnership with a fellow Trainee Educational Psychologist (EP), with whom I worked collaboratively; however this account has been developed independently. The "invitation to act" (Timmins et al, 2003) came via the Children's Centre Manager, who held an operational management position within the Local Authority. She was able to request this work via an educational psychology colleague with an early years specialism, who was well-positioned to access our support in delivering this work.

1.2 Study Remit and Rationale

The remit of this study was to explore the views of the CCSTs and work collaboratively to develop an action plan for change that would address their own concerns. This was achieved through the application of the research and development in organisations (RADIO) framework (Timmins et al, 2003), which acted as a means for working with the multiple perspectives that often threaten the success of service improvement initiatives. The framework directed us to consider the needs of the organisation, its context and culture, in order to implement action that was meaningfully planned and implemented (Timmins, et al 2003). The methods adopted in the work reflect a systems perspective (e.g. Dowling, 2003, Bronfenbrenner, 1979,

2001), influenced by my understanding of the complexities associated with organisational change (e.g. Lewin, 1951, Georiades & Philimore, 1978) and were informed by theory and research relating to the complexities inherent within effective change management within organisations (e.g, Schein, 1989, Argyris & Schon, 1978 & Fullan, 2006).

Within this report I selectively consider several pertinent aspects of this action research project. I begin by describing the local context in which the study took place, highlighting the CCSTs as the focus for change, making links with a large scale research project informing the use of qualified teaching staff in Children's Centres (Sylva et al, 2004). I then introduce work from organisational psychology which influenced my choice in adopting an organisational/systems approach to promoting change, and consider how educational psychologists have adopted similar approaches historically and more recently (e.g. Stratford & Cameron, 1979; Pellegrini, 2009; Ashton, 2009). I then discuss how systems approaches specifically can be used to support EPs' work within organisations, providing a rationale for my own decision to adopt ecological systems and bio-ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner,1979 & 2001) as an integrating theoretical framework for this project.

The collaborative action research project with the CCSTs is outlined, and an overview and rationale for the development of a self-sustaining model of group-peer

supervision as the catalyst for change is presented. This intervention was developed with the aim of strengthening the group and addressing their identified needs in order, in turn, to contribute to the organisational effectiveness of the network of Children's Centres in Westshire.

Finally, I reflect on the process and its outcomes, and highlight what I learned about the conditions necessary for EPs to use collaborative action research and engage in organisational development work in their professional practice: valuable learning outcomes, which I have been able to harness and apply in future practice over my three years' full time training in applied educational and child psychology.

The research took place in my employing Local Authority, which I refer to throughout using the pseudonym "Westshire", to ensure anonymity and confidentiality.

2. Children's Centres and Children's Centre Support Teachers.

Children's Centres have been described as:

> "*a place or group of places which is managed by or on behalf of, or under arrangements made with. an English Local Authority, with a view to securing that early childhood services in their area are made available in an integrated manner"*
>
> (Apprenticeships, Skills, Children & Learning Act, 2009, section 198*).*

The core offer outlined by the government highlights that the services offered by Children's Centres should include access to integrated early education and childcare places serving the 30% most deprived communities. Beyond this population-level duty there is still an expectation that Children's Centres should provide childcare if there is an unmet demand in a community, and all are expected to have some activities for children on site (Apprenticeships, Skills, Children & Learning Act, 2009).

In Westshire there are 34 Children's Centres, all of which provide early education combined with childcare provision, and have an input from qualified teachers: Children's Centre Support Teachers (CCSTs), each supporting several Children's Centres.

The presence of qualified teaching staff in Westshire's Children's Centres is a direct result of the findings of the *"Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) Project"* (Sylva et al, 2004). This was the first major European longitudinal study of a national sample of young people's development, investigating the effects of pre-school education through collecting data on 3,000 children (Sylva et al, 2004). The research findings highlight the significant relationship between the quality of the pre-school setting and improved outcomes, specifically noting that children made more progress in their pre-reading and social development aged 5 when support from trained teachers had been available in the setting (Sylva et al, 2004). As a result of this research a recommendation was made within practice guidance documentation,

that Local Authorities had a duty to ensure qualified teacher input in all Children's Centres (DfES, 2006).

Westshire responded to this research finding and policy directive by employing CCSTs to provide support to ensure the quality of teaching and learning in Children's Centres through "*contributing to the delivery of quality provision, facilitating the implementation of early years principles, managing change for adults to ensure quality and facilitating training*" (Westshire CCST Information Leaflet, October 2006).

Information available to me describing the CCST role within Westshire emphasised how they were positioned as change agents, expected to promote organisational development and increased effectiveness within Childrens Centres, with a view to improving outcomes for young children. The role was focussed on work within the Children's Centre systems, rather than direct teaching or other forms of intervention within these settings.

Consideration of the complexity of the overall structures within which the CCSTs were expected to support the organisational effectiveness of Children's Centres and promote positive outcomes for children (at a time when the Local Authority and its Children's Centres were accountable for the delivery of the Every Child Matters agenda for change (DfES,2004)), orientated our thinking as Trainee EPs towards

theoretical and research writing from the domain of organisational psychology, and towards systems perspectives in particular.

3. The Challenges Inherent in Organisational Development and Organisational Effectiveness, and the Contribution of EPs in supporting Organisational Change.

In considering the request for support and recognising the early expectation that our work with the CCSTs should contribute to supporting the capacity and effectiveness of the CCST group, we were mindful of the challenges that EPs and others have faced in their role as both internal and external change agents, when trying to carry out school improvement and organisational development work, both historically and more recently (e.g. Burden, 1978; Stratford, 2000; Ashton, 2009; Fox, 2009; Pelligrini, 2009; Farnworth & Toon, 2010;). This work has taken place since the "reconstructing" movement (Gillham, 1978) when the profession began to acknowledge potential benefits of adopting organisational and systems perspectives in a move away from individual casework, with its associated focus on "deficit approaches", toward reconstructed professional practices which focused, among other things, on strengthening the environments in which children's learning and development were managed. Overall, the rationale for working at organisational and systems levels is well developed and supported (Timmins et al, 2003; Jensen et al, 2003), and the advantages are well recognised (e.g. Miller, 2003). These advantages include:

- improving the cost-efficiency of EP Services and extending service reach;

- enhanced equity, through making the potential impact of applied psychology interventions available to more than a small minority of the children and young people with greatest difficulties;
- improved scope for prevention and early intervention: working to construct healthy systems around children was considered a means toward reducing preventable difficulties in learning or other areas of development, while time saved from responding to such preventable difficulties would create more time for EPs to respond to emerging difficulties at an earlier stage; and
- the espoused conceptual affiliation to a paradigm shift from medical, toward social / ecological models of understanding individual differences (Dessent, 1978).

Indeed, in the same volume, Gillham (1978, p.21) argues,

> "*the heart of educational psychology must be the theory and technology of change" addressing "different levels of operation – the level of the individual, of the group or institution and wider context of the community and local authority."*

Drucker (1977) describes how to be effective, an organisation should be *"doing the right things"* (Drucker, 1977), while Hoy and Miskel (1991) further suggest it should *"be achieving outcomes consistent with its expectations".* However, organisational effectiveness remains an elusive goal, despite the extensive literature within this domain (Harris et al, 1997). How best to understand and apply 'the theory and technology of change' described by Gillham (1978) in order to support organisational

development and, in turn, improved experiences and outcomes for children, remains a challenge for the profession (Pelligrini, 2009).

Fullan (1997) a leading Canadian researcher who has acted as consultant to educational change initiatives at regional, national and international levels, including the UK's national strategies to raise achievement, highlights the importance of considering a range of perspectives when we set out to plan and implement school improvement work *"as the assumptions that we make about change, are powerful and frequently subconscious sources of actions"* (p. 211). In the context of the Westshire Children's Centre research project, we endeavoured to heed Fullan's counsel by identifying theoretical and methodological approaches that could guide us to make valid assumptions about how our work with the CCSTs could best be developed.

While we were mindful of Gillham's (1978) exhortation to "to understand and apply 'the theory and technology of change" at a number of levels, we were equally mindful of the cautions put forward to prospective change agents by Georgiades and Phiilmore some three years prior to Gillham's own writing, and in particular the need to avoid falling prey to *'the myth of the hero innovator: the idea that you can produce, by training, a knight in shining armour who, loins girded with new technology and beliefs, will assault his organisational fortress and institute changes … at a stroke. Such a view is ingenuous. The fact is that organizations will, like dragons, eat hero innovators for breakfast"* (Georgiades and Phiilmore, 1975, p.315).

One of the key failures to which Georgiades and Phiilmore (1975) drew particular attention was the use of training as the predominant change strategy: a note of caution since reiterated by Fullan, (2006). Specifically, Fullan (2006) built on Giorgiades and Philimore's (1975) systems-oriented strategies, suggesting that 'systems thinkers in action' should actively lead by applying ‘change knowledge’, postulating seven ‘premises of change knowledge’ which, he argued, translated into concrete strategies and actions applicable to change management initiatives. These seven core premises which Fullan (2006, p.8) describes as ‘theories of action with merit’ (contrasted with the ‘flawed change theories’) (p.4) informed our own thinking about how, in our role as trainee EPs, we night best work towards introducing sustainable change that would increase the effectiveness of the CCST group in their own role as catalysts for organisational development within the Childrens’ Centre network, as summarised in Table 1.

Overall then, we recognised that real change in organisations, whether desired or not represents a complex process and *"a serious personal and collective experience characterised by ambivalence and uncertainty"* (Fullan, 1991, pg 32) and how:

> *"Change is not a fully predicable process. The answer is not found by seeking ready-made guidelines, but by struggling to understand and modify events that are intrinsically complicated, difficult to pin down and ever-changing"* (Sarason, 1971, p. 217).

Table 1: Premises underpinning theories of change management, and their applicability within the current project (Developed from Fullan, 2006, p.8-11)

A focus on motivation: building and maintaining (rather than assuming that workers share managers' and change agents') motivation is a central foundation of effective change management. Motivation requires a shared sense of moral purpose, but needs additionally to create and sustain personal and organisational support that will keep workers on board, despite the inherent turbulence of the change process	• Use of a participant / collaborative research approach aimed to ensure that intervention would be congruent with participants' values, beliefs, experiences and priorities. • Within the RADIO process (see Section 4), a questionnaire-based survey was conducted, alongside a focus group designed to elicit the CCSTs' perceptions of their circumstances and development needs and to ensure that any planned intervention would be congruent with their wishes. • The motivational theory which informed our thinking here was Deci and Ryan's (2002) self-determination theory, which emphasises the importance of autonomy, competence and relatedness as basic needs underpinning intrinsic motivation.
2. Capacity building, with a focus on results: here the emphasis is on identifying and supporting strategies which can increase the collective effectiveness of a group in fulfilling its work roles, usually through supporting development of knowledge and competencies, and ensuring access to necessary resources	• Both these premises were addressed through the process of consulting with the CCSTs, and building on their existing strengths to promote exchange-based learning, and space for reflection. • Additionally, through the process of ongoing liaison with the CC Service manager who had commissioned this work, feedback mechanisms existed through which necessary resources to support staff and organisational effectiveness could be discussed.
3.Learning in context: here, the emphasis is on creating a culture in which learning 'on the job' is endemic, rather than a culture which assumes knowledge and skills need to be imported by buying in trainers, or sending members out on external training programmes.	

4. Changing context: characterised by an expectation that the organisation can adapt to and influence the larger external context, with the value of 'lateral capacity-building' highlighted (p.10) i.e. scope for information flow between organisations, so that schools or local authorities (or in the present case, children's centres) can learn from each other.	• The plan to work with the seven CCSTs together aimed to facilitate lateral capacity-building • We accepted Fullan's (1993) assertion that "*There is a ceiling effect to how much we can learn if we keep to ourselves. The ability to collaborate on both a small- and large-scale is one of the core requisites of postmodern society".*
5. A bias for reflective action: a necessary condition for the previous four components to 'move forward in concert' (p.10). Shared vision and ownership are viewed here as outcomes cf. a setting condition for reflective action.	• Section 5.5 notes that developing group-peer supervision was identified as a means through which to support organisational development: the value of supervision for supporting reflection is well reported (e.g. Hawkins and Shohet, 2011; Scaife, 2001).
6.**Tri-level engagement:** a belief that sustained change requires tri-level engagement, within each setting: here, each Children's Centre and the community it serves, the local authority (Westshire) and state (England/UK) in a state of 'permeable connectivity' (p.11): promoting mutual interaction and influence across the three levels (setting, region and state	• As noted in Section 2, in our judgement a measure of tri-level of engagement was a pre-condition to the project. While the Children's Centres could influence county policy and resource allocation to some extent, the capacity to influence central government was, however, acknowledged to be remote.
7. Persistence and flexibility in staying the course: resilience and flexibility in the face of adversity, given the complexities of change, and in maintaining the previous six conditions	• This we saw as a 'condition' which would be strongly influenced by the sensitivity and skill with which we navigated this project: attention to the first five premises would, we anticipated (in line with Fullan's own counsel), influence the way in which the CCSTs engaged both during our own involvement, and thereafter.

Moreover, consideration of both the cautions advanced more than three decades ago by Georgiades and Phillimore (1975) and, more particularly, those within Fullan's 'Change Forces' trilogy (Fullan, 1993, 1999, 2003), drew our attention to three inter-related theoretical perspectives relevant to our conceptualisation of our own small-scale change initiative: systems theories and ecological systems perspectives in particular and theories of organisational learning (e.g. Argyris and Schön, 1978; Senge, 2006). Moreover appreciation of the potential value of a collaborative action research methodology was further strengthened in our minds.

These perspectives are discussed a little further, with particular reference to their applicability to the current study.

The Application of Systems Theory:

Systems theory is useful in informing understanding of how behaviour and experiences of individuals influence, and are influenced by the contexts in which they are situated (Burnham, 1986), and so can provide a helpful theoretical lens through which to understand processes of change and development in organisations.

A system has been described as a *"range of interrelated parts"(Harris, 1997):*

"when taking a systems approach one begins by identifying the individual parts and then seeks to understand the nature of their collective interaction, recognising it is the whole not the parts that count" (Hanna 1997 p. 13).

More specifically we viewed the CCST group as an "open system". An "open systems" perspective which has been central within the school effectiveness movements (Harris et al, 1997) suggests that organisations as systems, share characteristics common to other living systems. Understanding these characteristics allows us to work with the natural tendencies of groups rather than again them (Harris et al, 1997). This broad theoretical perspective also views systems as being highly dependent with their environments and engaged in system elaborating, as well as system maintaining activities (Scott, 1992): a view which resonates with Fullan's (2006) fourth and sixth premises (See Table 1). An open systems perspective acknowledges the important role of the external environment (of which we were a part) and the CCSTs' potential to be influenced by, and to influence transactions with their external environment.

Here, Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory and its further development within his Biological Theory of Human Development (2001) were specifically applied in this research context, to aid the conceptualisation of the CCST group as its own system, within several broader systems, which are described by Bronfenbrenner (1979) as micro, meso, exo and macro systems (See Table 2).

Table 2: The Nested Systems of the Ecosystem (adapted from Bronfenbrenner, 1994)

Nested structures within the ecological environment	Examples
Microsystems: a pattern of activities, social roles and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given face-to-face setting with particular physical, social and symbolic features that invite, permit or inhibit engagement in sustained, progressively more complex interaction with the immediate environment	e.g. family, children's centre, school, peer group, workplace
Mesosystems: the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings containing the developing person	e.g. the relationships between home and children's centre; workplace and home: a mesosystem is a system comprising more than one microsystem
Exosystems: the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings, at least one of which does not contain the developing child, but in which events occur that indirectly influence processes within the immediate settings of which s/he is part	external environments which indirectly influence development e.g. for a child, the relationship between the home and the parent's workplace of extended family; for a parent, the children's centre and neighbourhood peer group
Macrosystems: the larger socio-cultural context: the overarching pattern of micro-, meso- and exosystem characteristics of a given culture or sub-culture. These are the cultural values, customs and norms as well as social and political contexts in which the child is situated	belief systems, bodies of knowledge, material resources, customs, lifestyles ,public policy, opportunity hazards, life course options are embedded in these superordinate systems
Chronosystems: extend the environment into a third dimension relating to the passage of time, as a property of the environment, over the life course, and across historical time	Change or consistency over time, not only as a characteristic of the developing person, but also of the environment in which the person lives: the timing of experiences is significant here, as is the length of time over which an individual is exposed to particular micro, meso, exosystemic or macrosystemic influences

This integrating ecological systems framework, that is traditionally applied to the field of child development (See Figure 1), enabled us to identify key features of the CCSTs' systemic landscape and consider the reciprocal interactions between the CCSTs and their complex work environment, comprising a range of staff and service users with whom each CCST interacted directly and indirectly, as well as the broader Children's Centre network and the socio political landscape, as illustrated in Figure 2.

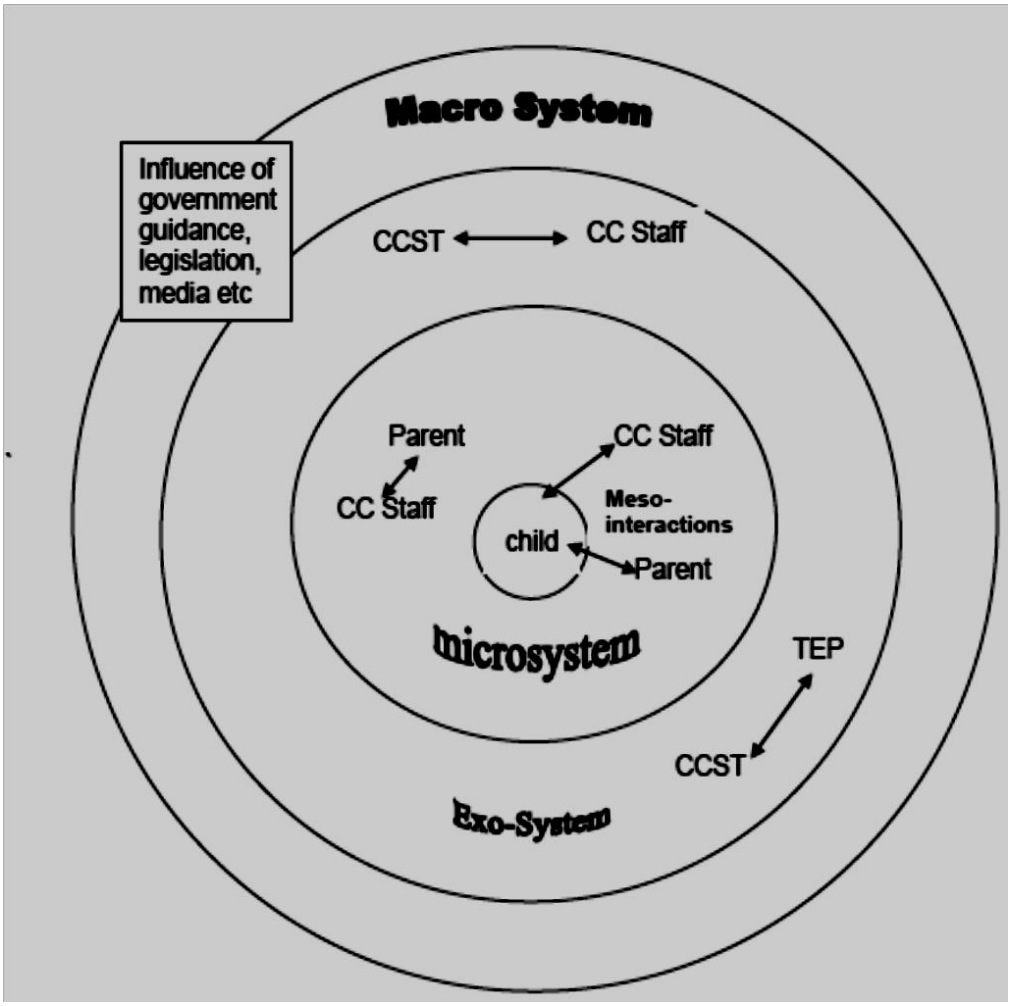
The ecology, viewed from this perspective, places the child at the heart of the nested ecological systems, with the CCSTs operating at an exosystemic level in their efforts to 'skill up' and support teachers who interact directly with children and their parents within the Children's Centres. All layers of the system are prey to macrosystemic influences. We as Trainee EPs would also be working at an exosystemic level, aiming to support the CCSTs in their work, for the ultimate benefit of the children and families which used the Children's Centres.

Figure 2 represents these nested systems from a different viewpoint, this time, placing the CCSTs who were the immediate subject of our planned intervention at their heart.

Organisational Learning and Learning Organisations

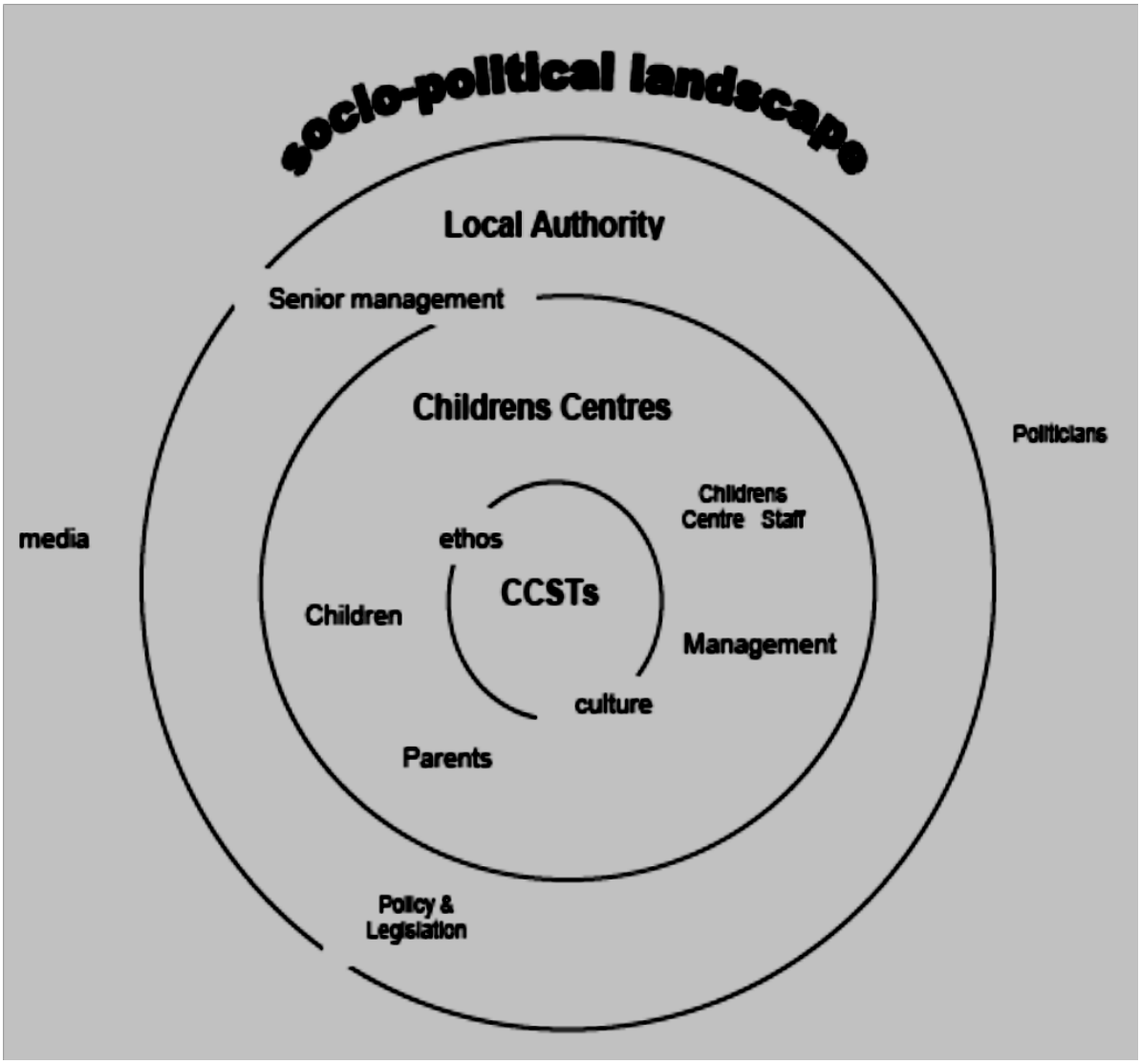
As noted in Section 3 heeding the counsel of Georgides and Phillimore (1975) and their successors, our aim was to build capacity within the Children's Centre network,

Figure 1: The Ecological Systems Model Applied to Children Attending the Westshire Children's Centres



drawing on systems theory and our developing understanding of organisational psychology. Our goal was not to 'skill up' the CCSTs, but rather to strengthen their own capacity to act as change agents within the Children's Centres, enhancing the effectiveness of practices within the Children's Centres, for the benefit of the children and local communities.

Figure 2: An Ecological Systems Perspective on Westshire CCSTs' Systemic landscape



In this context then, we also made recourse to theories of organisational learning to address Fullan's emphasis on the importance of learning in context (his third premise), capacity-building (premise two), changing context (premise four), promotion reflexive action (premise five), and supporting persistence and flexibility (premise seven) – described within Table 1.

Key ideas from, Learning Organisation t theory are briefly summarised in Table 3, with their applicability to the CCST project highlighted.

Argyris and Schon (1978, p.313) suggest that the learning organisation framework described in Table 3 can assist staff to *"extend their capacity for multiple viewing of organisational phenomena, to tolerate and deal with conflict,..... and to learn to model good organisational dialectic",* strengthening therefore not only their own practice, but improved organisational effectiveness.

Senge (1990) meanwhile notes that Learning Organisations are feedback-dependent and data-driven, while Angelides & Ainscow (2000) emphasise that the task of making positive changes in organisations should begin by collecting evidence. This offers an opportunity for subsequent scrutiny (where different interpretations and implications of the collected evidence can be considered and reviewed by different stakeholders), prior to deeper levels of questioning of the assumptions behind the different interpretations, as a foundation for development of shared mental models, vision and team learning.

Thus we move to consideration of how data were collected and utilised in order to take forward our project, which aimed to harness the philosophy and principles of Learning Organisation theory throughout.

Table 3: Key Ideas From Learning Organisation (LO) Theory (from Argyris and Schön, 1978, and Senge, 1999 and 2006) Applied to this Research.

LO's five interdependent "component technologies" that support the organisation's capacity to learn	**Applications**
1. systems thinking: - transcends isolated, linear cause and effect relationships between individuals; - is characterised by an holistic appreciation of the complex, recursive interdependence of interactions; - is prepared to explore the wide diversity of perspectives and interpretations held by different stakeholders within the organisation	The ecological systems perspective summarised above was congruent with our orientation to this project. We aimed to promote dialogue between the CCSTs which would be congruent with systems thinking: i.e. thinking in terms of system development rather than more linear cause and effect thinking and/or an emphasis on personal dimensions
2. personal mastery: an over-riding orientation of both individuals (in the case of CCSTs, themselves , CC staff, and other members of the CC community), and the CC as a whole, to learn and to develop competence	We were mindful of the risks of endeavouring to train the CCSTs, preferring to focus on approaches to strengthening their sense of personal mastery, and exchange-based learning through which their existing expertise could be shared and applied, goals set, and contextually viable means toward their realisation agreed and set in motion
3. mental models, developed through 'learningful' conversations, where each person's beliefs, perceptions and assumptions are open to constructive challenge and opportunity for reframing	

4.	**building shared vision** through dialogue which can ensure that the espoused values and vision of key stakeholders are explored, developed, and genuinely shared by members of the organisation	
5.	**Team learning**, where dialogue results in learning at the level of the individual, the team and the organisation (school or Children's Centre) as a whole.	
6.	**Leading the learning organization:** learning organizations require a new view of leadership, where leaders are 'designers, stewards and teachers', responsible for *building organizations* where people continually expand their capabilities to understand complexity, clarify vision, and improve shared mental models – that is they are responsible for learning: Learning Organisation Theory subscribes to a model of distributed leadership	Our aim was to empower the CCSTs, developing their confidence in their own capacity to lead change within the CC network in Westshire, forming a distributed leadership network.

4.0 The Choice and Application of a Collaborative Research Approach

As with all rigorous research we took time to identify a methodological approach and associated research methods aligned with our systems-oriented position, which was focused specifically on developing capacity within the CCST system to make a positive impact on the wider Children's Centre network.

The links between organisational development work such as this and action research methods date back to the social psychological writings of Kurt Lewin (1947), with his emphasis on the influence of the organisation on the behaviour of its members and the popularisation of 'action research' as the research methodology for social action and emancipation (Hopkins, 2001). Action research has been described as:

> *"a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out"* (Carr and Kemmis 1986, p. 162).

Further support for action research methodology being appropriate in this context, was provided by its emphasis on research as a process of joint collaboration (Hopkins, 2001); with three important characteristics emerging as *"its participatory character, democratic impulse and its simultaneous contribution to social science and social change"* (Hopkins, 2001 p. 25).

Collaborative action research (CAR) approaches were identified as specific action research frameworks informed by collaborative approaches to evaluation (Brinkerhoff et al, 1983; Patton, 1986), which attempt to maximise the likelihood that organisations will use the outcomes of research to improve their functioning (Timmins et al, 2003). Within this broad CAR paradigm, we identified the Research and Developments in Organisations (RADIO) model (Timmins et al, 2003) as having been particularly useful in conceptualising and managing school improvement work conducted by other educational psychologists (e.g. Timmins et al, 2003; Timmins et al, 2006; Ashton, 2009); rendering it particularly appropriate in addressing the remit of our study. An overview of the key research activities within the RADIO framework is provided in Table 4.

Specifically, the RADIO framework addresses the need for a dynamic research and development (R & D) process that is responsive, and may be constructed from the multiple perspectives that stakeholders and research sponsors bring. This fitted well with our developing understanding of Learning Organisation Theory (e.g. Senge, 2006), alongside Fullan's (2006, pp. 8-11) 'theories of action with merit', and their seven premises.

The RADIO framework adopts a social constructionist orientation to R & D that values and works readily with the subjective perceptions of reality of members of an organisation, and cautions against the view that there are regularities in the social world that can be mapped through the methods adopted by the natural sciences

Table 4: Overview of the key research activities informed by the application of the RADIO Framework (Timmins et al, 2003)

RADIO PHASE	RADIO Activities relating to this piece of work
1. Awareness of need	Children's Centre Manager requests educational psychology input to address CCSTs' support needs. Work referred to TEPs to consider.
2. Invitation to act	
3. Identifying organisational and cultural issues	Discussion with managers about CCST role and context. Focus group with CCSTs, and distribution of questionnaire survey about their current context and support needs.
4. Identifying stakeholders in area of need.	Initial meeting organised with the Children's Centre Managers who had requested EPS support.
5. Agreeing focus of concern	The initial planning meeting allowed time for discussion in regard to these phases.
6. Negotiating framework for information gathering	
7. Information gathering	TEPs design and distribute questionnaires to the CCSTs, and complete a focus group about their needs.
8. Processing information with stakeholders	TEPs share the key findings from the consultation process with the manager and CCSTs and discuss possible next steps.
9. Agreeing areas for future action	Focus of next steps discussed. TEPs to support CCSTs to develop a model of group-peer supervision.
10. Action planning	TEPs develop the supervision planning and development sessions.
11. Implementation/action	TEPs facilitate 3 sessions with the CCSTs co-developing a model of group-peer supervision.
12. Evaluating action	TEPs complete GAS evaluation.

(Reason, 1988), although the application of positivist and interpretivist methods is accepted within this "real world" approach to research (Robson, 2011).

In applying the RADIO framework of collaborative action research (Timmins et al, 2003) (as described in Table 4), we were able to go through a research process which involved exploring the perceptions of the CCSTs, and using this information to work collaboratively with them on a process of, fact finding, analysis joint conceptualisation of problems and potential solutions, planning and implementation of a change strategy and evaluation of its impact (Kemmis, 1982), with a view to improving functioning within the CCST system.

I now move on to presenting selected aspects of this collaborative research project, focussing on how the RADIO framework (Timmins, 2003) supported a process of detailed information gathering through which the CCST group's multiple perspectives were obtained and explored, needs identified, and potential action TEPs identified. Importantly, the data collection process served to illuminate the key features of the CCST group culture (Schein, 1985): information which was then used to inform the action planning and implementation stages of the research, which again involved working collaboratively with the CCSTs to develop a self-sustaining model of group-peer supervision (Scaife, 2001).

4. The Commissioned Collaborative Action Research Project

5.1 Identifying Cultural Issues

Our work during phases 3 and 7 of the RADIO framework (Timmins et al, 2003) focussed on gathering data that would inform our understanding of the shared culture of the group (Schein, 1975) and their multiple perspectives on their support needs. Throughout the research process, identifying and understand the group's culture was of particular importance. Again, going back to Georgiades and Phillimore's seminal 1975 paper, the significance of surfacing organisational culture has long been recognised, if change initiatives are to rest on secure foundations. These authors note (p.314) that *Existing behaviour patterns are part of, and are moulded by the culture of the work situation.*

Schein who is a key writer in the field of organisation, defines culture as,

> *'…a pattern of basic assumptions, invented, discovered or developed by a given group, as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid, and therefore is to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems.'*
>
> [Schein, 1990, p.111]

Culture is thus recognised as being "situationnally unique" (Beare, 1989). Culture is also one of the important forces of equilibrium within systems recognised as particularly difficult to change. Norms within a group form part of its culture and are

regarded as the unspoken rules which shape a group's reactions to internal or external change.

Building on the work of Schein (1990), Timmins et al (2006) note the importance of surfacing organisational culture, so that it can be fully understood as a force field reflecting attitudes and practices within an organisation. Understanding of culture should influence decisions about intervention, which, if congruent with cultural norms and practices, is more likely to be accepted by an organisation and take root; Intervention which clashes with cultural norms, is likely to be swiftly discarded, however.

The RADIO framework (Timmins et al, 2003) is therefore directly informed by the work of Schein, whose work provides insight into the ways in which an organisation's culture may impact on the relationships between a research facilitator, sponsors and stakeholders (Timmins et al, 2003). Culture permeates each aspect of the RADIO process and "*functions as a reminder of the power of an organisation's culture to interfere with any planned research and development process*" (Timmins et al, 2003, p.233). Therefore, within the systems perspective applied within the current study, a key purpose of the data gathering described was to identify CCST group culture in an attempt to identify factors that may support or impede the change initiative (Timmins et al, 2003).

5.2 Information Gathering

As a research framework, RADIO supports the belief espoused by Robson (2011) that research may need to be hybrid in nature in order to ensure that the research questions are addressed through the design of the research (Timmins et al 2006); in light of this position, both quantitative and qualitative methods are acceptable within this collaborative action research framework.

In the Westshire CCST study, we were therefore able to adopt a mixed-methods approach to data gathering in the form of a questionnaire survey which incorporated a range of open-ended questions and scaling questions aimed at exploring the CCSTs' individual views on the challenges of their role and their support needs (See Appendix A), and a focus group informed by the use of solution-focussed questioning techniques (Rhodes & Ajmal, 1995). In applying these methods we were able to elicit the individual and collective views of the CCST group.

5.3 Key findings and trends emerging within the data corpus

The questionnaire survey was used as an initial point of access to the individual views and multiple perspectives of the CCSTs. Analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data collected from this survey identified the following key trends within this data set.

Key trends emerging from analysis of the survey data:

- As a group, the CCSTs reported that they felt that they shared practice effectively with staff in their respective Children's Centres.
- All the CCSTs reported that they were well-supported by their manager,
- All considered that joined up thinking was promoted well within the group.
- Several reported that time constraints, staffing issues (such as absences and high staff turn-over) and (a lack of) flexibility of other staff whom they supported in the Children's Centres sometimes undermined the effectiveness of their practice.
- Six of the seven reported hat improved opportunities for collaboration, training and developing skills could be beneficial for the CCST group. Specifically opportunities to meet, share resources and tackle ideas together were suggested as valued future development.
- All reported that communication between the CCSTs and between CCSTs and the Service management tier was effective.
- A majority reported that they sometimes felt isolated in the CCST role.
- All reported that they would value more support in their roles.
- Group supervision was considered to be a potential valuable resource for sharing good practice and problem solving.

Additional comments provided by staff noted:

- "Any additional support is appreciated. I do feel we have our own strengths that we could benefit further from sharing more, possibly in a more practical way."
- "I love my job, but sometimes I feel that it doesn't love me! This is an issue as I feel as after two and a half years.
- I am now less in control of my workload"
  "We are part of a wider team of advisory teachers and early years mentors and they might like to get involved at some point in the future!"

To supplement the information gained through the questionnaire survey, a focus group using solution-focussed approaches (Rhodes & Ajmal, 1995) was used. A focus group was identified as an appropriate method to incorporate into this phase of the research (Phase 7 of the RADIO process), as it allowed us to collect further information from the group, in parallel to providing opportunities for us to observe the group dynamic, so supporting our developing insight into the group's culture. The group size of seven was appropriate for data collection and processing in focus groups, as research tells us that optimum group sizes lie between 8 to 12 (Steward & Shamdasani, 1990) and 6 to 10 members (Morgan, 1998). Moreover, focus groups are commonly used alongside other methods to amplify and explore the findings of surveys (Robson, 2011). A range of semi-structured solution focussed activities was co-facilitated by myself and my TEP colleague to help us elicit further information about the teachers' views on their existing strengths and on how they felt their support network could be strengthened. This included the use of popular solution-focussed consultation techniques (Rhodes & Ajmal 1995) including miracle questioning where they were given the opportunity to consider their 'ideal' support scenario, and scaling questions where they explored where they felt they were in relation to this goal.

The data from the focus group were analysed drawing on principles of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This process involved our analysing the data for key themes and trends separately and then together, to ensure thoroughness and as a check for inter-rater reliability (Robson, 2011). Key findings from the focus group are summarised overleaf.

Key trends emerging from analysis of the focus group data:

- Supervision was viewed as a desirable mechanism for increasing support and developing capacity within the CCST group.
- The CCSTs reported that existing supervision arrangements were 'fairly good' or 'good', but that these could be further developed and refined (building on strengths, in line with the solution-focused approach to the focus group meeting).
- The group identified an existing range of strengths and skills on which to build.
- The group identified that they would like to be more evaluative and reflective, and have group support that operated in a more structured manner.

5.4 Identified Features of CCST Group Culture

As introduced earlier, culture has been described as *"a basic pattern of assumptions-invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation or integration"* (Schein, 1987 p.385)

Key aspects of the CCSTs' group culture abstracted from the data corpus, included:

- a shared perspective on the group as being characterised by many existing strengths, with individual CCSTs functioning well and being well-supported by management;
- a sense that the group's cumulative strengths remained something of an untapped resource: the job was viewed as relatively isolated, with few opportunities to give or receive peer support and / or to participate in exchange-based learning;
- a shared openness to developing existing support frameworks;
- a shared willingness to accept support from the research facilitators to develop existing support mechanisms; and

- an interest in developing group peer supervision as a mechanism through which to address the two preceding points.

4.5 Developing Supervision as the Identified "Focus for Change" within the CCST Network

During Phases 8 and 9 of the RADIO collaborative action research process, we harnessed the information available from the analysis of the data corpus and from our developing understanding of the culture of the CCSTs abstracted from the Phase 7 data analysis, and considered in detail the *"areas for future action"* (Timmins et al, 2003). Consideration of a range of change initiatives took place in an attempt to identify a focus for action that would enhance the identified existing positive individual and cultural attributes of the group. Recognition of the potential inadequacies inherent in traditional training approaches previously discussed were weighed up alongside the emergent view from the CCSTs that they already functioned effectively and were confident in their existing skill base.

This process directly informed the activity that took place in RADIO Phases 10 and 11 of the "organisational change, and implementation and review" phases (Timmins et al, 2003). These phases were focussed on working collaboratively with the CCSTs to develop the existing strengths of the group further: an area that they had identified as a welcome development, and which appeared congruent with espoused cultural norms which valued openness and commitment to develop their support frameworks. This was achieved, following further negotiation with the CCSTs through the collaborative development of a model of group-peer supervision (Scaife, 2001): an approach which reconciled the important issues we had considered, and emerged

consensually as an appropriate area for focus during Phase 11 of the action research project.

Supervision has been defined by Inskipp & Proctor (1988) as:

> *"a working alliance between a supervisor and a worker or workers in which a worker can reflect on herself in her working situation by giving an account of her work and receiving feedback, and where appropriate, guidance and appraisal. The objective of this alliance is to maximise the competence of the worker in providing a helping service"* (Inskipp & Proctor, 1998 p 4).

The emphasis within this definition on the outcome of supervision being to maximise quality of service delivery resonated in this research context and contributed to the identification of professional supervision as an area for development, since the systems orientation of the study was clearly focussed on improving service delivery to children via the enhancement of the CCST system.

Our rationale in focussing on the development of supervision within the CCST system was also supported by the literature within which the benefits of supervision have been considered from an organisational development perspective, and where it has also been argued that *"like individuals, organisations need supervision badly"* (Carroll et al, 2001 p. 52). The Association for National Organisations for Supervision in Europe (ANSE) has also commented on the ways in which:

"supervision is making an important contribution to the development of quality in organisations. Supervision is contributing essentially to learning organisations and will lead into processes of team development and organisational development"

(ANSE, undated)

Seven key reasons why external supervisors supporting organisations can be of considerable value have been outlined by Carroll et al (2001) as:

1. to help organisations think through the theory behind what they do;
2. questioning the myth that movement is always good;
3. understanding the language of organisations;
4. working with emotional organisations (or the emotions within the organisation);
5. remaining neutral;
6. focusing on what is good for the organisation; and
7. focusing on the individual within the organisation

   (Taken from Carroll et al, 2001 p. 51)

When considered in relation to our work with the CCST group, the values and roles outlined by Carroll (2001) aligned well with our aim to develop a supervision model that would support the CCSTs as individuals and strengthen the CCST system of which they were a part, within the wider Children's Centre network.

These values underpinned our approach to addressing this task, which focussed on developing their thinking, reflexivity and problem solving skills via structured group-peer supervision (Scaife, 2001), thus contributing to development within the organisation. As noted in Section 1.2, our aim was to build capacity within the group so that, when we left our placement within Westshire some five months following the start of the project, the CCSTs would be established as a more fully functioning learning organisation with the role of the CCSTS as change agents independent of ourselves and our short-term support, secure.

The model of group-peer supervision was collaboratively developed within three sessions, during which we were able to introduce the CCSTs to a range of solution-focussed and problem-solving approaches to supervision (e.g. Rhodes & Ajmal, 1995), which were modelled and then co-facilitated. Each of the three sessions gave the opportunity for collaboration between us as the researchers/facilitators and the CCSTs as co-researchers within the integrating collaborative action research paradigm (Timmins et al, 2006). The process adopted within these sessions involved cycles of collaborative planning, acting and reflecting, followed by further planning and refinement of the model of supervision that was being developed. This approach reflected the "spirals" or "cycles" of action, data collection and analysis (Kemmis & Wilkinson, 1998) which are a central feature in action research: a research methodology recognised rarely to comprise a neat or linear process (Robson, 2011).

5. Outcomes of the Collaborative Action Research Study

The outcome of the collaborative action research project was that a model of self-sustaining group-peer supervision (Scaife, 2001) was developed collaboratively between ourselves and the CCSTs as co-researchers.

A Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) evaluation (Roach & Elliott, 2005) (a subjectivist approach to evaluation capable of yielding quantitative data through participant rating of the extent to which outcomes of an intervention meet, exceed or fail to meet its a small set of predetermined goals), was also conducted with the CCSTs some four months after the inception of the project. This evaluation of the research and development project highlighted how, at the end of the research process four of the seven CCSTs agreed from their perspective with the descriptor: "Carefully structured model of supervision occurs regularly, which impacts positively on practice", while the remaining three CCSTs agreed with the descriptor: "A carefully structured model of supervision is set up and occurs more than once".

Eighteen months after the change within the CCST system had been implemented, a semi-structured interview with the CCST manager and research sponsor revealed that the supervision model had been sustained following our departure. From her perspective the benefits of this change within the CCST system had been recognised both within and beyond the CCST group as contributing to development within the wider Children's Centre Network, via enhanced practice within the organisation.

Therefore the evidence available, although far from comprehensive, suggests that the changes that took place within the CCST system as a result of the collaborative action research process (Timmins et al, 2003) strengthened this CCST system by building on existing positive features of the group culture (identified through a process of rigorous information gathering using a range of methods) and contributed to wider organisational development. The work therefore addressed the initial remit of the study as developed early in the collaborative action research process with the research stakeholder.

6. Post-Hoc Critical Reflections and Implications for Future Practice:

The feedback received from both the CCSTs and from the research stakeholder a considerable time after our involvement in the project had ceased, allows me cautiously to conclude that this study, undertaken using collaborative action research methods (Robson, 2011 & Brinkerhoff et al, 1983), and supported by the RADIO Framework (Timmins et al, 2003) enabled my TEP colleague and I to negotiate an intervention that was attuned and responsive to organisational realities and aligned with the cultural norms (Schein, 1985) of the CCSTS, within their wider ecological landscape (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1994, 2001). The change initiative judged to be effective by its commissioner in supporting organisational development that was sustained over the 18 month period between our departure and my request for post-intervention feedback.

However, I also recognise that the study was unusual, in that it was commissioned as part of a project from two Trainee EPs, with no cost to the sponsoring service (The Westshire Children's Centre Network). I am aware that the viability and the extent to which I may be able to undertake work of this nature in my role as a qualified employed by Westshire County Council may be constrained by the perspectives of potential commissioners, since such work is necessarily time-consuming and incurs contingent financial costs.

Reflecting on this collaborative action research project 18 months following its completion has highlighted some of the particular opportunities and challenges faced by educational psychologists (EPs) in working systemically to support change within organisations. Force field analysis (FFA) is used to structure this review. FFA is based on the work of Lewin (1943), providing a framework for identifying and assessing the direction and relative impact of the various forces for and against a proposed change, weighing the relative impact of driving forces (positive forces for change) and restraining forces (obstacles to change). Use of this framework when reflecting on this study enabled me to consider these forces and explore their alignment with those highlighted by other educational psychologists who have provided accounts of their work from a similar perspective (e.g. Fox et al, 2009; Ashton, 2009; Timmins et al, 2006 & Pelligrini, 2009)

Potential barriers (restraining forces) to my future work in supporting organisational development and change in my role as an EP within Westshire are summarised in Box 1 overleaf.

Alongside the challenges that this study has highlighted in regard to my future application of systems and organisational approaches to promoting change in my practice in Educational Psychology, the force field analysis has also highlighted some potential benefits and facilitators (driving forces) to my continued use of these approaches in my practice, as described in Box 2.

Key aspects of this force field analysis have been integrated into a force field diagram (Figure 3), which provides a diagrammatic overview of how these forces have the potential to influence my future practice as an EP in Westshire. Although the arrows on this diagram are presented as being of equal size, it is recognised that each of the forces may have variable impact on the situation. It is likely in this context that the restraining forces relating primarily to organisational factors and the views and expectations of other professionals, may have more influence than the positive forces which are primarily-based on factors relating to myself as an individual in my future EP role.

Box 1: Potential Barriers (Restraining Forces) to Promoting Organisational Development and Change in My Future Work as an EP within Westshire:

- Systems approaches and organisational development work require ongoing contact with the system and the people within it or related to it over time (e.g. Pelligrini, 2009). This may be difficult for EPs to achieve within Westshire with its model of service delivery which is focussed on delivering to individual schools, where it is the norm for commissioners (e.g. head teachers or their delegated representatives) to have an expectation that services are directed to supporting individual children whose needs have been identified as problematic.

- Therefore, how EPs and other professionals within Westshire view the role of the EP may act as a barrier that prevents my being commissioned to contribute to organisational and systems-orientated work. Jensen et al (2002) argue that to some extent EPs have become typecast as professionals who predominantly work with individual pupils. To address this perception, which was identified within the two most recent national reviews of educational psychology service delivery in England (DfEE, 2000; Woods et al, 2006) is likely to require coordinated action by EP Services, rather than the efforts of individual EPs such as myself.

- One consequences of HM Treasury's 2010 Spending Review, which aimed to take forward the Coalition Government's goals of localising power and funding, including 'removal of ring-fencing around resources to local Authorities and extending the use of personal budgets for services', has been a reduction of monies received by Local Authorities, and contingent reduction of Local Authority funding for educational psychology services. In Westshire, as in other local authorities, this has, in turn, resulted in the need for Services to 'trade services' with other purchasers: to date, predominantly schools. With schools as commissioners, it has become increasingly important for EPs, including myself to ensure that we maintain our positive relationships with schools, and, in the short term at least, deliver the services which they perceive as most valuable: such priorities are likely to centre upon the individual children about whom school staff are most concerned. This could act as a barrier to my developing alternative ways of working, and perhaps render work with a systemic, organisational development focus and methodology less likely to be commissioned than has previously been the case. In the context and climate of traded services within Westshire the incentive to change the individual-focussed approaches to practice that parents, schools and the Local Authority communicate that they want, will be a particular challenge warranting careful consideration.

- In Westshire the demands of day-to-day service delivery give limited time for the consideration of professional development and alternative approaches to practice to be explored. This is likely to inhibit scope to plan collegially for significant change to service delivery within the Westshire service, despite the fact that within the service there are some strong examples of systems orientated and organisational development work (again an issue raised by Jensen et al, 2002).

- Jensen et al (2002) also highlight how leadership from someone in a position of power is often required to effect change within educational psychology services. However, in the Westshire context senior colleagues are currently focused on supporting the transition to traded services and so it is unlikely that they would have the resources to support a significant change to the model of service delivery in the near future.

Box 2: Potential Drivers (Supportive Forces) Promoting Organisational Development and Change in My Future Work as an EP within Westshire:

- Skills in action research methodology as a mechanism for promoting change provides a potential platform for me to negotiate my work differently and to work collaboratively with schools, moving away from individual child work and a training relationship to a more responsive, dynamic and inclusive approach to meeting the needs of the school community, in line with the original vision of the 1978 Reconstructing Movement (Gillham 1978).

- Conducting systems-orientated work in my future role as an EP affords an opportunity to provide a psychological perspective which involves an holistic, interactional view of pupil functioning as part of the wider school and community contexts (Stratford, 2000).

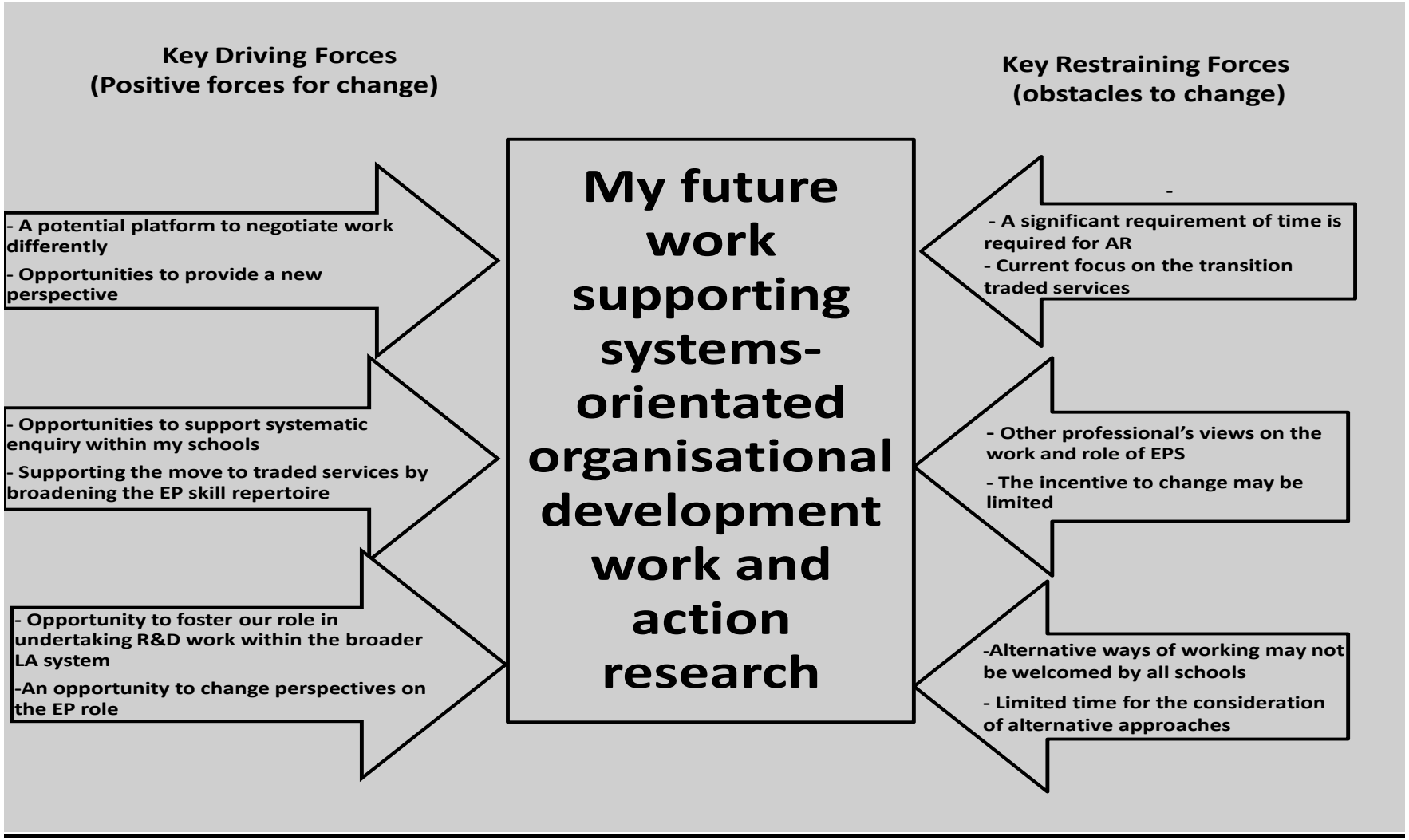
- Working within this perspective could provide future opportunities in my role as an EP to engage in systematic enquiry into aspects of practice in schools and other settings relevant to outcomes for children (highlighted by Timmins et al, 2006).

- Completing work from within an organisational and systems perspective may allow me to begin to change the perspectives of my schools in relation to the types of work that I undertake to support the children and young people in these settings.

- Engaging in this type of work within Westshire may contribute to a shift in perspective within the Local Authority on the work that EPs undertake, and potentially foster opportunities to become involved in research and development work within the wider Children's Services system as advocated by the DfES (2006) report by Farrell et al (2006). It could be argued that EP's own use of the group-peer supervision used by the CCSTs within the current study, has the capacity to mobilise concerted joint action towards this end.

- Fox et al (2009) suggest that the move to integrated Childrens' Services afforded new opportunities for EPs to work in different ways. While the recent move to a traded model of EP service delivery was identified as a potential barrier to systems-level work in Box 1 above, it could, paradoxically, open up new arenas for work, capitalising on the progress toward working with other agencies which developed within the Every Child Matters agenda (DfES, 2004). Within Westshire, scope to market EPs' services to other agencies, including health, social care and third sector organisations could support the Service tapping into alternative funding streams within and beyond the Local Authority, within which our skills in research (including CAR), organisational psychology and supporting organisational development could be harnessed to positive effect.

Figure 3: Force Field Diagram



7. Reflecting on the use of Action Research Methodology:

My choice of action research (Lewin, 1947) as a methodology, and the use RADIO (Timmins et al, 2003) as a framework for this collaborative action research project, was directed by their alignment with the overall aim of the research, which was to change an aspect of the CCST system. The RADIO framework's emphasis on collaboration (Timmins et al, 2003) provided a strong foundation for the collegial nature of the work that took place between ourselves as the researchers and the CCSTs, whose participation in the process was central to study and an identified strength of the research.

In completing this research I have developed my understanding and appreciation of how action research methods can support learning about organisations, through trying to change them (Robson, 2011). The RADIO focus on the important role of identifying and applying an understanding organisational culture (Schein, 1985) emphasised the importance of my work taking full account of existing positive features within a group or organisation, a learning point that will be influential in my future work with groups and organisations as an educational psychologist.

The democratic focus of collaborative action research is well-aligned with my existing consultative approaches to practice (West & Idol, 1987) and therefore offers a useful framework for future collaborative work and research with my schools. My appreciation for how collaborative action research methods can be used by

educational psychologists keen to avoid the identified pitfalls associated with traditional models of training, whilst still addressing the identified needs for development within schools and other settings has been considerably strengthened through this research, which provided me with first-hand experience of how practitioners are more likely to engage in changes in their practice if they have been active participants in the research that has guided the change. I intend that in my future practice I will further emphasise the value of the groups with whom I work carrying out their own enquiries into situations, which I will support.

8. Conclusion:

In a climate were educational psychologists nationally are working within a context of considerable pressure following the implications of HM Treasury's spending review (October, 2010), this study provides an example of how collaborative action research within a systems perspective may afford the opportunities for EPs to offer something additional to our existing professional repertoire of skills, and transcend their traditional primary function of assessment and intervention at an individual-child level. In offering services which adopt a systems and organisational development perspective, we could broaden the perception of our role in the schools and other organisations in which we currently work, as well as placing ourselves in a strong position for consideration when Local Authorities are deciding which professionals are suitably skilled and experienced to undertake organisational development work within and beyond schools.

In the context of moving to a traded services model within Westshire this represents an exciting opportunity for me, in my role as a newly qualified EP, to support the service in responding to some of the challenges it faces, through developing my skills in applying systems thinking, applying my knowledge of the conditions needed for effective organisational development work and undertaking collaborative action research grounded in a strong theoretical and evidence base.

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APPENDICIES

Appendix A: CCST Questionnaire

Dear Teacher,

We are Trainee Educational Psychologists at Birmingham University who have been commissioned to carry out a collaborative project within Children's Centres. [redacted] has commissioned us to seek your views on how you could best be support, to highlight any areas you feel require change and to make recommendations based on your views. We are hoping that you will be willing to give us your views and perceptions about your role as teachers working within Children's Centres.

This survey has been piloted on colleagues at Birmingham University and will take approximately 4 minutes or less to complete. Please do not write your name or centre anywhere on the questionnaire, as no individual school or teacher will be specifically identified in the report. However, if you would like to be involved further in this study and are willing to take part in a follow up focus group , please indicate so at the end of the questionnaire. All information will be treated with the utmost confidence

It would be most beneficial if you answered it as fully and accurately as possible. If you would like more information about the research please do not hesitate to contact us.

Finally, may we thank you in advance for completing the questionnaire. It will be immensely helpful to us and we hope, to future work of CCSTs.

Many thanks for your help.

Kindest Regards,

[redacted] and Helen Tyson

1. How long have you been working with young people?

_____ years

2. How long have you been working as a CCST?

_____ years

3. Please list below how many settings you work with and the allocated time per week you have with them:

Children's Centre	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Days per week					

4. What were your reasons for becoming a CCST? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. On a scale from 1- 5 (1 = not effective, 5 = very effective) please indicate how effectively you consider CCSTs share their practice with others (Please tick the corresponding box)?

1 extremely ineffective	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 extremely effective

6. On a scale from 1 – 5 (1 = not effective, 5 = very effective) please indicate how effective the promotion of joined up thinking is amongst CCSTs?

1 extremely ineffective	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 extremely effective

7. What issues/challenges do you think may impinge on your current practice? (please rank the issues in order of importance – 1 being most important)

Order of Importance

a. _____	
b. _____	
c. _____	
d. _____	
e. _____	

8. **What ideas/opportunities do you think could support your current practice? (please rank the ideas in order of importance – 1 being most important)**

Order of Importance

a. _____ | | _____

b. _____ | | _____

c. _____ | |

d. _____ | |

e. _____ | | _____

9.	**How do you think that effective communication could be promoted among CCSTs?**
10.	**How could communication be promoted with your professional manager?**
11.	**How could communication be promoted with Cath Ellicott?**

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements, if you neither agree nor disagree please explain your reasons in the 'other' column: (*Please tick one box in each row*)

	Strongly agree	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**	**Other/any additional comments – please briefly explain your reasons**
CCSTs are well supported in their role by management					
CCSTs are well supported by each other					
There is effective communication between CCSTs					
There is effective communication between CCSTs and management					
There is effective communication between CCSTs and other Children's Centre staff.					
I would like more support in my role as a CCST					

Group supervision would be a valuable resource for sharing good practice					
Group supervision would be a good opportunity for group problem solving					
There is a need for greater consistency across districts					
I consider that I am isolated in my role					
I enjoy the autonomy of being a CCST					
Training on peer supervision would be useful					
	Strongly agree	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**	**Other/any additional comments – please briefly explain your reasons**

An Online forum may be useful to share ideas with other CCSTs					
An Online forum may be useful to discuss issues with other CCSTs					

<u>Thank you very much</u> for completing this questionnaire.

Please use the space below if you wish to write anything else about your role or write any other ideas, not listed above, that could support your role.

CHAPTER 3: RAISING THE ACHIEVEMENT OF GYPSY/ROMA TRAVELLER PUPILS, WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO WESTSHIRE LOCAL AUTHORITY

1. Introduction

"I had one teacher who used to pick up my homework between her thumb and her finger as if it was dirty. As if to say, that's' the dirty Tink's homework. At the school I was pals wi' this group of girls from the toon, until they found out I was a Traveller. Then everybody started saying I was a Gyppo and they dinnae speak to me anymore"

(Young Traveller, cited in McKinney, 2001)

Travelling families have only recently been recognised as an ethnic minority group whose needs should be investigated and addressed in their own right. Both English Romani Gypsies and Irish Travellers were formally recognised under the Race Relations Act (1976) and as such have protection under Race Relations legislation (HMSO, 1977). However, regardless of their legal status it has been argued that much of the exclusion experienced by this group is due to the denial of this status and their corresponding rights (Cemlyn & Clarke, 2005 in Preston, 2005). The exclusion experienced by travelling families has been described as taking many forms and has been said to operate on a day to day basis for many families who may be perceived across a range of service providers, politicians and the public alike to be social (rather than ethnic) 'dropouts' or as living within 'deviant sub-cultures' as opposed to a group who have actively decided to reject sedentarist norms (Derrington 2005). Literature on traveller's experiences of education suggests that these experiences of exclusion also pervade educational experiences.

All children have the right to access education and this is reflected in Article 29 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) which states that:

> *"Education shall aim at developing the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to the fullest extent. Education should prepare the child for an active adult life in a free society and foster respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values and for the cultural background and values of others".*
>
> (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 29 (1989))

It is therefore the legal duty of each Local Authority to ensure that the needs of travelling children are met within a British educational context and that they are provided with the same opportunities as other pupils.

A recent surge in interest, research and policy in this area has meant that educationalists are beginning to take responsibility for addressing the fact that travelling children are one of the most underachieving groups in schools (Tyler, 2005). Westshire Local Authority will be the Local Authority of focus in this paper. This is a mixed urban and rural authority, which incorporates areas of outstanding beauty and also pockets of extreme deprivation. The rural nature of much of the area has acted as a pull factor for travelling families from a range of cultural backgrounds. The report will critically explore the ways in which Westshire Local Authority are responding to this group and attempting to meet their needs in light of the political,

research and local contexts. The role of the Educational Psychology Service will also be considered in regard to the role they currently play and how this could potentially be developed in order to better support these pupils and their families, with an overall view to raising travelling children's achievement.

2. Issues relating to definition

Much longstanding confusion exists around the definitions of Gypsy and Traveller groups. None of the existing definitions are neutral and they are often heavily contested, within and outside their communities (Cemlyn & Clarke, 2005). The Minority Rights Group refers to the following:

- 'Gypsies' as ethnic groups that have been formed by a dispora of commercial and nomadic groups from India in the tenth century, who have subsequently mixed with other European Groups.
- 'Travellers' are described as predominantly indigenous ethnic groups whose culture tends to be characterised by self employment, occupational fluidity and Nomadism
- 'Roma' are described broadly as European Romani-speaking groups.

(Liegeious & Gheorge, 1995)

These definitions have been further broken down to include "Travellers of Irish heritage", "Showmen", "New Travellers", "Circus Travellers". This tells us that the travelling population in the UK is a diverse minority community (Lloyd et al, 2008). It

is argued that it is therefore important to acknowledge the cultural distinctiveness and coherence of Gypsy/Traveller communities without assuming a false sense of homogeneity (Abajo & Carrasco, 2005).

Throughout this paper the term GRT will be used to refer to pupils from a Gypsy/Roma/traveller heritage. This has been chosen as it is the most widely used abbreviation in the literature and it is hoped encompasses and reflects the homogeneity of this group in a respectful manner. Sound definition is important is very important as ethnicity and cultural heritage are closely linked to an individual's sense of identity, and it should therefore be a matter of careful consideration in order to avoid confusion or offence through ignorance.

3. Raising the achievement of Gypsy/Roma/Travelling (GRT) Pupils. Historical Context

It is important to consider GRT families' experiences throughout history, as these may have come to influence their constructions of the world, including their views and beliefs about education. Travelling populations have been widely pathologised throughout history. They have been defined in terms of having a negative economic relationship with the state and such popularised notions have tended to embed themselves into British culture, strongly influencing the thinking of much of the settled population (Cemlyn & Clarke, 2005). Much of the continued and pervasive perceptions of traveller communities are based on assumptions pertaining to their economy, which are widely believed to be characterised by family-based self-employed activities, and are flexible, adaptable and opportunistic in relation to gaps

and opportunities in mainstream economic markets (Clarke, 2002). However, counter to these perceptions Traveller communities operate on a range of economic levels. Although there has been a decline in traditional work opportunities for some travellers (e.g. farm work), new markets have emerged such as car boot sales and market trading, and there are many Gypsy and Travelling families who have achieved economic success (Clarke, 2002). Therefore, income poverty cannot and should not be used as a defining characteristic of the Traveller culture, although that is not to say it does not exist for some (Cemlyn & Clarke, 2005).

The exclusion of Gypsies and Travellers from mainstream culture may also be said to be linked to the spatial element of their culture, which for many lacks secure accommodation, safety and access to services. Such social exclusion which occurs from society's definitions of 'community' and 'society' may be played out through the attitudes and behaviours of the public, institutional policies and service provision (including education). This means that the GRT population experience both geographical and cultural isolation (Sibley, 2000). This marginalisation also relates to travellers' educational experiences and it has been argued that historically the needs of travelling children have been ignored and even marginalised by a British Education system that was designed to serve the needs of sedentary communities (Hawes and Perez, 1995).

4. Statistics

Traveller pupils are the most under achieving minority group in our schools (Tyler, 2005), and so raising the achievement of GRT pupils is an issue that has to be taken seriously if the statistics are considered. Ofsted (2003) recently estimated that as many as 12,000 travelling pupils of secondary school age are not even registered with a school and that this represents around 50% of the travelling pupil cohort (Ofsted, 2003). An earlier survey conducted by Ofsted (1999) found that in half of schools surveyed no GRT pupils had ever taken a GCSE examination and many had opted out of education by the age of 14. However it is recognised that in the ten years that have passed since this survey changes have taken place to address some of these issues, due to an increased recognition of the needs of this group (Ofsted, 2003). Statistics also suggest that travelling pupils are four times more likely to be excluded due to issues with their behaviour (DfES, 2005). Even the briefest look at the statistics reflects the level of need for tailored support for GRT pupils. For instance a more recent report produced by the DfES (2005) highlighted that GRT pupils (alongside black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi peers) consistently have lower levels of attainment that other ethnic groups across all key stages.

5. Political context through history to the present day

Policy developments over the past 30 years have considered the needs of this group and impacted on practice in education. As far back as 1967, the Plowden Report *"Children and their primary schools*" (Plowden, 1967) was responsible for challenging and changing attitudes towards the education of young children. Significantly it

identified Romany children to be probably the most severely deprived children educationally in the country and estimated that at that point in time 90% of that population did not attend school (Plowden, 1967). The author of the report Lady Plowden went on to become chairwoman of ACERT (the Advisory Council for the Education of Romany and other Travellers). Around this time concerns were raised by the Ministry of Housing, and Local Education Authorities (LEAs) were urged to consider how they could work towards improving educational access, but it appears that they were slow to respond (Derrington et al, 2007). This alongside urbanisation and planning legislation such as the Caravan Sites and Control and Development Act (1960) and the introduction of Designation Orders led to a shortage of legal stopping places and effectively outlawed the traditional way of life for Gypsies and Travellers (Derrington & Kendall, 2007). Over 15 years later in 1983, an influential discussion paper produced by the Government (HMI, 1983) estimated that there were between 12,000 and 15,000 traveller children of school age, and suggested that as few as 40% to 50% of the primary aged pupils attended school and only a few on a regular basis. The secondary aged group was as low as 10% - 15% registered in school, with attendance being even lower. The paper suggested that whilst schools were claiming to have an 'open door' policy for this group, in practice it is argued that this was often underpinned with unacknowledged discrimination due to lack of awareness (Derrington & Kendall, 2007)."The Swann Report" (1985) in the mid 1980's considered the education of all ethnic minorities, but specifically highlighted the difficulties facing travelling children in regard to accessing education, commenting that:

"*In many ways the situation of travellers' children in Britain today throws into stark relief many of the factors which influence the education of children from other ethnic minority group – racism and discrimination, myths and stereotyping and misinformation, the inappropriateness of the education system."*

(DES, 1985 p. 756)

6. Recent Policy Developments

Nationally the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) have recognised that Gypsy/Roma pupils and Travellers of Irish Heritage have very low attainment throughout key stage assessments and that they are the lowest achieving Ethnic Minority Group (DfES, 2003). This issue has become especially evident since 2003 when for the first time Gypsy/Roma pupils and Travellers of Irish Heritage pupils were included as categories in their own right in the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) since 2003. Since this time the data generated has highlighted concern for these pupils (e.g. DfES, 2006) and schools are expected to be able to demonstrate how their GRT pupils are being supported to enable them the reach their full potential. They are also expected to have a system in place to support them identifying, monitoring and tracking these pupils. Central Government began to offer a lead as to what this work should look like via the "Aiming High" agenda, which advises schools on how they may be able to raise the achievement of Ethnic Minority pupils. Their proposals were published in *Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Minority Ethnic Pupils* (DfES, 2003). More specific advice was provided in *Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Gypsy and Traveller Pupils: A Guide to Good Practice* (DfES, 2003). This guide contains practical advice to schools on the type of support they should be offering. The guide refers to the experiences and best

practice of the Travelling Education Service as a basis for their recommendations and makes explicit links to the National Strategies. However, it does not make explicit reference to the body of research literature in this area, which weakens its credibility as it does not present itself as an evidence-based document.

The extent to which the needs of Gypsy/Traveller pupils are actually addressed in response to policies past and present is an issue that has been scrutinised in the research literature. For instance Thrupp and Tomlinson (2005) argue that the policies impacting on GRT families and developed by New Labour lack depth and authenticity of commitment due to the contradictions within them as well as significant silences. This discrimination is said to be highlighted when GRT families come into contact with the structures within the British education system, which have been said to highlight this continuing level of discrimination (Lloyd et al, 2008).

7. Literature Review

7.1 Overview

Over the last decade researchers in the fields of education, psychology and social policy have begun to examine and investigate the educational experiences of GRT pupils. This research base has helped to shed light on a range of influencing factors which impact on the achievement and underachievement of this group, as well as considering the efficacy of specific approaches or interventions which may be able to contribute to raising the achievement of this group.

A literature review conducted by Wilkin et al (2009) was funded as part of a DCSF study investigating the issues faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils with a specific view to identifying what may be done to improve their educational outcomes. The review entitled "Improving the outcomes of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Pupils: A Literature Review" (DCSF, 2009) summarised a total of ninety one sources, clustering them into one of ten areas. The authors of the literature review report that they identified relevant studies from 1997 onwards relating to the following criteria:

- Empirically-based research
- Policy documents
- Evidence exploring academic and social issues
- Evidence of improving educational experiences and outcomes
- Good practice examples
- Implications for future policy and practice

A specific strength of the review is the way in which the authors are explicit about the parameters of the literature search that they have conducted. They provide justification for the search strategies used, including providing the key search terms in the appendix. The authors are also explicit about the fact that their review may not be exhaustive. The authors report their findings in relation to ten key areas, which is helpful for the reader as it helps the researcher to digest the key areas of information relating to each study whilst at the same time allowing studies to be featured under more than one heading. These key areas include: pupil perspectives, pupil attainment, relationships and teacher expectations.

The strength of this review paper lies in the breadth of information that it has been able to include and synthesise, introducing the reader to a range of key themes. However, like many reviews of this nature what it offers in breadth it lacks in depth. The findings are presented and summarised out of context and the reader is unable to consider the methodological issues that may have influenced the individual researchers, and is unable to access detailed information regarding research design, sample sizes etc. This means without seeking out each piece of research individually it is impossible to critically analyze them which would allow one to make an informed decision regarding their merit. However the review acts as a helpful starting point for highlighting key researchers in the area, and it introduces key themes and issues raised in the research findings, helping the reader to begin to explore the possible role that a range of variables may play in GRT pupils' achievement. However a significant weakness of this review is that it fails to include key features of a rigorous literature review. For instance it does not identify areas of controversy in the field, gaps in the research any other weakness; it also fails to formulate questions for further research.

Individual research papers have explored specific issues and factors relating to the education and achievement of GRT pupils, many exploring the themes highlighted in the literature review discussed above but in more detail. However, the research base exploring effective strategies and interventions for raising achievement for this specific group is very sparse, possibly due to a lack of work in this area. The literature that is published has mainly attempted to explore travellers' experiences of education and identify barriers and challenges that may prevent them from accessing

the curriculum. The common theme emerging from the research literature include the fact that there has been and still are serious obstacles to ready access, regular attendance, continuity of educational experience and satisfactory education experience for the group of pupils (Bhopal et al, 2000).

In more recent work exploring the research and policy in this area, Lloyd et al (2008) outlined the key themes that have emerged from the research as including low participation/attendance (particularly at secondary level), low attainment, disproportionate exclusion, racial harassment and bullying, a lack of continuity of work, interrupted learning, inconsistent/often inadequate support, problems with multiple registration, the failure of schools to pass on records/evidence of attainment; and children identified inappropriately with special educational needs. This list itself is indicative of the range and complexity of factors impacting on GRT pupil's educational experiences and achievement. The authors conclude by arguing that policy formulation and delivery in this area indicate increased recognition of social justice claims, but also that educational research findings identify continuing tensions, contradictions and silences (Thrupp et al, 2005).

Secondary education is identified as a time of considerable challenge for all young people including GRT pupils, in terms of their capacity to maintain engagement and attendance. Derrington and Kendal (2003) explored these challenges and barriers to secondary education for GRT students through a qualitative exploration of their experiences. This longitudinal research study examined factors other than mobility

that may impact on attendance and engagement, with the aim of uncovering a range of aspects of educational policy that fail to meet the needs of traveller pupils. The study was qualitative in its approach, using four rounds of face to face interviews and interim questionnaires that aimed to explore the experiences of forty four traveller pupils, from fifteen Local Authorities as they transitioned into and experienced secondary education. The research adopted a multi-perspective design eliciting the views of pupils, teachers, parents and SENCos. The authors are explicit about their use of a phenomenological design in order to gain insight into the nature of identified difficulties, however they fail to explore their empistemological position in any details or justify it in relation to previous research. The transcripts of the interviews were analysed using WINmax data analysis software. The authors describe the analytical technique as *"an approach informed by interpretative phenomenological analysis",* however this process is not described in any detail.

This piece of research identified a range of factors associated with poor attendance in travelling children at secondary level, and they explored each of these in turn with reference to other pieces of research allowing them to draw links. The identified factors were racism, cultural dissonance and low expectations, and again these are themes that are echoed in other research papers (e.g. Wilkin et al 2009). There are however certain aspects of this work which require critical consideration. For instance the participants of the study were all self-identified GRT pupils and the majority were now engaged with a sedentary way of living. This may suggest that the sample is not representative of and generalisable to the wider Travelling population as it is reported that many families do not disclose their GRT ethnicity to schools (Wilkin et al 2009).

The study experienced a drop-out rate of 50% which is very high, especially considering the majority of the participants were 'settled' travellers and the authors do not make any attempts to explain a rationale for this.

7.2 Experiences of Racism

Experiences of racism in schools by GRT pupils were highlighted by Derrington and Kendall (2003), but have also been reported in other research papers (e.g. Wilkin et al 2009, Bhopal 2004). Derrington and Kendall (2003) found that illness related absence was often linked to retrospective disclosure about bullying, racism or other social and emotional difficulties and that many of the participants (although it does not specify exactly how many), had been victims of racist bullying. When interviewed for this research teachers felt that this represented a wider pervasive community issue. Teachers felt that travellers prompted mistrust and hostility within the community. 80% of the GRT pupils said they had been called names or had been subjected to racist bullying, which for some (especially girls) was experienced as social exclusion by their peer group. The authors present their findings in the context of other research, For instance there is evidence that cultural bullying is often under-reported (e.g. Smith and Shu, 2000) and this too was found in this study where two thirds of the pupils admitted instances when they had not reported racist bullying or harassment because they had little faith in this achieving a positive outcome, and some even felt that certain teachers harboured and conveyed racist attitudes towards them. Another issue highlighted by the research was that travelling pupils were often reprimanded when they responded and retaliated to unreported incidences of

bullying or harassment, either physically or verbally. The authors conclude that this highlights that the system of support and official procedures to address bullying rely upon reporting of incidences by children and /or their parents.

Other researchers have further explored the educational practices that may influence or mediate a GRT pupil's experience (such as the experiences of racism described above). They have explored how these practices may impact on attainment, recognising the interactive nature of the identified factors. For example in their work Lloyd and McClusky (2008) explored how the 'difference' of Gypsies/Travellers is constructed in the context of school and how the power of schools and teachers to understand and construct difference impacts on the educational experiences of travelling pupils. They consider each of the issues highlighted by the DCSF literature review (DCSF, 2009). A key area of discussion in this paper is lack of self identification by GRT families. It explores how this may act as a considerable barrier to effective research and practice, due to the fact that it means that population statistics and are likely to be an underestimate of the amount of GRT pupils in schools, as well as those who do not attend. In 2001 Save the Children estimated that there were 10,000 GRT children in the UK who are not attending school and Derrington and Kendall (2003) cite official estimates that claim that only 1 in 5 traveller children aged 11-16 are enrolled in school. This research also supports the finding that participation is a very large barrier preventing educational profession meeting the needs of travelling pupils. This body of evidence suggests increasing participation should be an area of focus for local authorities aiming to raise the achievement of their travelling population. The authors link this lack of participation

with experiences of racism highlighted by other researchers, arguing that these factors cannot be considered in isolation and that there is a need to develop:

> *"A multilayered understanding that locates this educational failure within the social and economic context of Gypsy/Traveller lives and in the institutional racism of schooling, while still acknowledging those fears and reservations expressed by many Gypsies/travellers about wider participation in schooling and of the impact of education on their lives".*
>
> *Derrington & Kendall, pg 33 (2003)*

7.3 Curriculum Relevance

The relevance of a British education to travelling families is also considered in the research literature. Lloyd et al (2008) highlight how travelling families have very different experiences of education and may have different views about the value of schooling, which may also impact on levels of engagement and attendance and has implications when practitioners consider the type of provision they are expecting their GRT pupils to engage with. Again it appears that there is a high degree of variability across the travelling population in regard to their views with some families highly valuing their children's education experience, with others being highly critical seeing it as irrelevant to their needs and preferring to educate their children from home (Derrington and Kendall, 2003; Jordan et al 2003). Research has found that negative attitudes towards schooling held by both pupils and parents increase as pupils enter the secondary phase of their education, which may also help to explain the decline in attendance and engagement at this time and may be due to the change of curriculum

emphasis at this stage. Lloyd et al (1999) found that both parents and children expressed support for basic literacy and numeracy skills taught in primary schools, but that many remained sceptical about the relevance of their educational experiences at secondary school. Parents may also fear that their children's identity may become diluted through their experiences due to the adoption of their peer groups values and morals, with a consequent lessening in valuing their own culture (Derrington et al, 2003).

7.4 The role of the Travelling Education Services (TES):

Travelling Education Services (TES's) are operating in many authorities across the country supporting GRT families and schools with the overall aims of raising achievement, improving attendance and promoting equality of opportunity. There has been some research into the services they offer and their efficacy. Bhopal et al (2004) explored inclusionary processes and examples of good practice with GRT pupils and their work included an examination of the role of the TES, using a qualitative approach, using interview methods. They found from these semi-structured interviews with parents and teaching staff that where there are strong Travelling Education Services their support is very often valued by Traveller pupils and their parents, but that the availability of these services varies substantially (Bhopal, 2004). They also stresses that although it is important for schools to have access to this type of support, the TES is not a substitute for the schools educational and welfare responsibilities.

7.5 Government Backed Interventions

A range of interventions have been out into place to support the achievement of GRT pupils and although the body of research base is small there has been some attention paid to their effectiveness. As well as examining the role of Traveller Education Services Bhopal et al (2009), who were commissioned by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE), also researched a range of interventions designed with the purpose of raising the achievement of this group. They examined six schools who were aiming to raise the attendance and attainment of GRT pupils, with a view to identifying the successful elements of these schemes. The research paid particular attention to the role of the Travelling Education Service and found that their work can address difficulties with attendance, access to the curriculum and achievement. The research utilised a case study approach in which the focus of analysis was the school explored through interviews with individuals. The authors justified this methodological approach by arguing that it was the appropriate way to explore the individual perspectives of those involved with the specific projects. When reporting the results they do not claim that the findings are typical or representative of the wider population. The researchers used semi-structured interviews covering a range of topics including project history, barriers, family involvement, evaluation and the future. The research also gained the views of parents but there contribution was limited, meaning that this area is a weakness for this study. A strength of the study was that it managed to explore the experiences of primary and secondary schools, from across rural and inner city areas. The researchers identified good practice, by comparing the views of the respondents, checking for agreements and disagreements. The authors highlight four key areas of good practice identified

through their research and describe these as access to school, factors influencing attainment, staff responsibilities and the role of the travelling education service. A key strength of this research is the way in which it uses the evidence to inform key recommendations that are provided at the end of each section.

Overall, the results of the research highlighted good practice in schools including when schools have managed to establish trusting relationships with GRT parents and the community and have built up cultural knowledge amongst school staff over a long period of time. In specific regard to raising achievement of GRT pupils Bhopal et al's (2009) research paper highlights the importance of schools having an equal opportunities policy that is explicitly inclusive of GRT Pupils, and the research paper even provides an example of what they consider to be a good example of an effective policy. The research also identifies that a key factor of success in all schools relates to the strong leadership of the head teacher and their inclusive ethos, because these factors were found to contribute to GRT pupils in a multitude of ways including impacting positively on attendance and on the development of positive relationships. The authors also suggest that the Head Teacher should also be seen to promote the recognition and acceptance of cultural and ethnic status across the school, as this was identified as leading to the development of confidence and trust, as an institutions vision of valuing its richness is said to contribute to how GRT pupils are seen by others. The authors also describe the importance of 'listening schools' where the interaction between the Head Teacher and the Travelling Education Service (TES) is positive. The authors also report that parental inclusion is as an important factor in raising achievement and that schools should work to build links

with the parents of GRT pupils. Clear behaviour policies were also identified as influential, with the authors suggesting that good behaviour should be promoted, through the use of clear behaviour policies and anti-bullying policies which confirm rules and expectations for all.

It is clear from this research that the experiences of education encountered by GRT pupils varies widely and is impacted by a range of interconnected variables operating at individual, family, school and societal levels. This suggests that any form of intervention that aims to improve the educational experiences of these pupils with a view to raising their attainment, must also act at a range of levels. In many local authorities key deliverers of this type of work are the Travelling Education Service (TES), the nature of which is variable across the country. However, these services aim to recognise and respond to these barriers to education for GRT pupils. Westshire's Travelling Education Service (TES) serves as an example of how a Local Authority is responding to national policy, research and local needs.

8. Raising the Achievement of GRT Pupils in Westshire

As outlined previously the Aiming High agenda (DfES, 2003) has increased the impetus on schools to consider the ways in which they may be able to raise the achievement of their GRT population, and schools are expected to achieve this 'in house' and with support from external agencies if they have an identified need in this area. Westshire Local Authority is currently part of the largest Traveller Education consortium in Europe. The consortium is made up of eleven Local Authorities that

work together to support, coordinate, monitor and supervise the educational provision of GRT pupils. The primary aim of this service is to support access to schools, build capacity and establish positive relationships between home and school. The consortium is also able to deliver systems level work including training and awareness raising in schools, again supporting access and achievement.

The consortium is able to provide the participating Local Authorities (including Westshire) with a range of functions including a pupil education record transfer system, a system of monitoring records and access to social and welfare services. Their pool of advisory teachers who are experienced in teaching communication skills and assessing children with gaps in their learning due to intermittent learning are available in order to support raising the achievement of GRT pupils in Westshire through for example the provision of training, assessment and intervention. The consortium also provides a resource centre which houses a range of appropriate learning materials which are available for teachers and families to access.

The consortium has existed since the 1970's and at its height it was made up of fourteen Local Authorities and was considered a model of good practice. However through discussion with the strategic director of the Westshire Traveller Education Service (TES), using a semi-structured interview method, it emerged that due to financial cut backs Westshire will be meeting the needs of its GRT population independently from 2010. This change of practice appears to contrast with the emerging recognition of this group in the literature. These cut backs have meant that the Westshire TES is now delivering its services with fewer staff and resources,

meaning that their role involves less direct work than previously. The service is now prioritised for the most highly mobile pupils, of whom the numbers are decreasing. When children are mobile the service is able to support the families in delivering the curriculum at home, with the hope of positively impacting on their achievement.

The diversity of the travelling population within Westshire also influences the support that the Travelling Education Service delivers. The range of literacy and social skills in the population varies widely depending on the specific experiences and backgrounds of the families. For instance, it was reported that children from Eastern Europe who are travelling due to being members of the circus are reported as having very good social and literacy skills. Circus' have tended to bring school work with them and have a system in place for educating their travelling pupils, often with their own teacher. This has been in marked contrast to other travelling families who wish to educate their children at home, but the parents themselves have limited literacy skills, thus impacting on the quality of this teaching. When this is the case there has been much more of a need for the TES to ensure that effective teaching practices are in place, or to support the family in accessing educational provision.

Several of the experiences described by the director of the TES echo the themes identified in the earlier review of the literature. For instance the decrease in attendance and engagement with school when GRT pupils enter the secondary phase of their education as reported by authors including Wilkin et al (2009) appears to be evident in Westshire. The service report that they find it much easier to deliver

services to families of younger children, but that GRT families are often resistant to secondary education, considering it to lack relevance to their needs. Within Westshire this was said to be further hindered by the three tier system that still exists in much of the Local Authority, which means that pupils have to complete two transitions during their school life rather than one.

The Travelling Education Service also identified the collection of data as a source of difficulty. Again in line with the review of literature (e.g. DCSF, 2009) they felt that this was due to many families not wanting to disclose their GRT heritage for a range of reasons. Although as a service the TES collect data on a termly basis there was some concern that the figures do not adequately reflect the size of the actual population, even closely. This is particularly prevalent with the housed population, who although their cultural background/ethnicity is GRT they may not report this due to their current sedentary status.

Due to the reported lack of capacity within the TES in Westshire, many schools address the needs of the travelling population without TES support. An example of good practice was identified in a Primary school in Stourport, which is a region known for its travelling population. The school has responded creatively to the needs of its travelling population through the setting up a "Boys Club", for vulnerable and/or underachieving boys mainly from GRT backgrounds. This group meets daily first thing in the morning (to promote attendance) and includes opportunities to celebrate and explore their cultural backgrounds, develop social skills and deliver targeted support for basic skills. This group has been running successfully for several years

and has had a marked impact on the attendance and achievement of this group. The SENCo has reported that the influence of the group throughout the school has been positive, and relationships with travelling families have improved. The group has been so successful that it was specifically recognised during an OFSTED inspection. The inspection report specifically acknowledged the higher than average numbers of pupils from GRT backgrounds and commented on the provision made for them, commenting:

> *"Excellent provision for pupils from Traveller communities ensures that they are not disadvantaged when they go travelling, and they too make good progress." "They show great respect for each other's heritage and backgrounds, and all get on well together." "The work and resources provided for pupils from Traveller communities when they go travelling ensure that the impact of the time lost at school is minimised. They receive intensive support when they return which helps them to catch up with their peers."*
>
> (Ofsted Report, June 2009)

This is an example of how schools can work effectively to recognise and address the needs of GRT pupils as well as demonstrating how Ofsted are also addressing this group specifically during their school inspections.

9. The Role of the Educational Psychology Service

The Educational Psychology Service in Westshire may become involved in supporting GRT pupils in schools via the normal consultative service delivery model. This may include work negotiated with schools at termly planning meetings or as part of their statutory duty to contribute psychological advice for Statements of Special Educational Needs. An important aspect of the role is to gather and put forward the views of the child and parents as part of this process and it is therefore important for Educational Psychologists to be aware of and sensitive to cultural issues, experiences of GRT families, as well as the evidence base that may be able to inform recommendations to support GRT pupils. Another key role for EPs may be in supporting schools in distinguishing whether a GRT pupil has a Special Educational Need, or is simply experiencing difficulties due to gaps in their learning due to travelling/attendance etc. If this is the case they may be able to advise schools on evidence-based interventions that may be able to support the pupils with their learning for example through the use of approaches such as assessment though teaching. However, the needs of GRT pupils are not explicitly referred to during initial EP training in the same way as other vulnerable groups of pupils such as EAL (English as an additional language) pupils or looked after children (LAC).

Although the GRT population is higher in Westshire than many other Local Authorities there is no specific guidance provided to EPs about how they may be able to support this group in raising their achievement. The TES provided training to the service several years ago, but since this time it had not been re-addressed as a priority. It is therefore up to individual EPs to address the needs of GRT pupils on a

case by case basis. The model of service delivery may allow for joined up work with the TES if this were negotiated during a planning meeting. However, due to the small staff numbers in the TES it is no longer the case that TES staff routinely attend these meetings. EPs could potentially support schools in raising the profile of GRT children and supporting school in meeting their needs through for instance supporting a process of assessment, monitoring and review.

10. Conclusion

A review of policy and literature has demonstrated that there is clearly a consensus between educationalists and policy makers regarding the vulnerable position of travelling children, especially in regard to their capacity to access education and achieve optimal success. Research has shown that the British education system has often failed to respond to the specific needs of this group and in doing so this has lead to generations of educational marginalisation and under achievement for many people of Gypsy/Roma/Traveler heritage. This also relates to wider societal issues regarding prevailing negative attitudes and discrimination towards this group in society.

Recent focus on raising standards for children from ethnic minority backgrounds as outlined in the Aiming Higher documents (DfES, 2003) has advised schools specifically on their role in raising the achievement of ethnic minority groups and provides specific guidance relating the GRT pupils, and schools have begun to respond to this with support from other a range of specialist agencies. It is also clear

from the literature that addressing the needs of this group is complex as the population is heterogeneous and the factors that have been identified as mediating educational access and experience appear to be complex and interactive in their nature, operating at individual, familial, school and societal levels.

However, the research in this area is growing and has shed light on areas that need to be addressed in order to improve attendance, engagement and educational experiences for GRT pupils. Westshire Local authority addresses the needs of its GRT population with support from the TES and there are clear examples of expertise, commitment, initiative and good practice that have been identified through the undertaking of this piece of work. However a wider picture of budget cuts and under-estimates of the GRT population has meant that the TES in Westshire is now smaller than it was and so the nature of the support on offer has changed in light of this.

Educational Psychologists have a role to play in supporting raising the achievement of all children, including those from GRT families. At the current time there is no specific guidance within the service advising EPs on issues that they should be aware of when working with GRT families, and this could be an area for future development. Potentially this role may include asking schools about their travelling children during planning meetings to ensure that their needs are being recognised and addressed. It could also include sharing the evidence base with schools regarding strategies and interventions that may support raising the achievement of

this group, and helping them to implement individual and group interventions as appropriate. At a systems/community level they may also be able to work in conjunction with other agencies, such as the TES to support schools and families or work with schools in addressing wider issues that have been identified as impacting on this group such as inclusion and whole-school ethos.

Children from Traveller backgrounds have the same right to achieve as all other children. It is the responsibility of all educationalists to work together to ensure that they are provided with positive and appropriate educational experiences, which will meet their individual needs, acknowledge and celebrate their heritage and help to equip them with the skills they need to lead fulfilling and successful lives.

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CHAPTER 4: THE USE OF A COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL APPROACH TO ADDRESS SCHOOL ANXIETY AND SCHOOL REFUSAL BEHAVIOURS, WITH REFERENCE TO A CASE FROM PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Abstract:

Educational Psychologists are trained to be able to carry out therapeutic interventions in educational settings. This paper provides a critical exploration of the use of a cognitive behavioural intervention used with a secondary-aged pupil presenting with school-refusal behaviours and school anxiety, and delivered by a trainee educational psychologist. The impact of this intervention was explored through the application of a standardised measure of anxiety (The Spence Anxiety Scale), enriched though the use of reflective questioning. With critical reference to policy and research literature the paper considers the efficacy of cognitive behavioural treatment approaches in cases of this kind, and considers the role of educational psychologists in the delivery of this type of work in schools.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and Policy Context

Recent research such as that carried out by UNICEF (2007) has raised concern about the subjective emotional well-being of British children, and has identified that it is a significant area of need. In UNICEF's research "Child poverty in perspective: An overview of child well-being in rich countries" (UNICEF, 2007) researchers conducted a comprehensive assessment of the lives and well-being of children from twenty-one economically advanced nations, including the UK. A key finding was that overall

British children had the lowest levels of emotional well-being compared to all other participant nations on six dimensions of well-being: material well-being, health and safety, educational well-being, family and peer relationships, behaviours and risks, and subjective well-being. However it is acknowledged that a range of criticisms have been made regarding this source of data as it was not carried out by UNICEF themselves but was collated by the organisation from research using a range of research designs and methods and so the rigour of the work and the conclusions drawn from it may be open to debate.

In the United Kingdom the standard on child and adolescent mental health is described within the National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services (DfES, 2004), which addresses this area as one of its eleven standards. The standard is outlined in the executive summary, as follows:

"All children and young people, from birth to their eighteenth birthday, who have mental health problems and disorders have access to timely, integrated, high quality, multi-disciplinary mental health services to ensure effective assessment, treatment and support for them and their families"

(DfES, 2004, p. 7).

This guidance recognises the importance of psychological well-being, explicitly linking mental-health problems in children with educational failure and distress as well as acknowledging the long-term impact on many areas of adult life. Amongst its

recommendations it outlines that education providers should be able to address less serious mental health problems, especially when these are impacting negatively on students' experience of school and progress in learning. The document also revisited the four-tier strategic CAMHS framework that has guided the commissioning and planning of services. This framework emphasises the importance of primary care at Tier 1 (including prevention and early intervention) in settings such as schools, and the role of educational psychologists at Tier 2 in delivering training, consultation, assessment and outreach (DfES, 2004), in addition to 'filtering' referral to more specialised Tier 3 and 4 services.

Following this publication, this issue of how services can meet the mental health needs of young people was again addressed in the National CAMHS (Child and adolescent mental health service) review (CAMHS, 2008) which highlighted that provisions to address mental health and psychological well-being in children were still not as comprehensive or consistent as they could be. It also highlighted the role of schools by making it clear that that after the family, schools are the most important organisation in the lives of children and as such can have a significant impact on their mental health and emotional well being (DCSF, 2009).

In response to this review the Government responded in "Keeping children and young people in mind" (DCSF, 2010) which again contained a range of proposals, including a clear assertion that schools have a central role to play in ensuring young people's happiness and well-being and being able to access specialist help when

required. Alongside these developments the Targeted Mental Health in Schools (TaMHS, 2008) programme that began earlier in 2008 became a key point of delivery of these recommendations. The TaMHS programme is aimed at supporting models of targeted and holistic mental health support in schools and is said to complement other programmes such as The national initiative: Healthy Schools (DCSF, 2007) and SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) (DfES, 2005)

This national policy context makes clear the role that schools are now expected to play in supporting the psychological needs of their pupils. Programmes such as TaMHS require the use of evidence–based therapeutic approaches such as cognitive behavioural therapy in schools as part of a process of early intervention and evidence-informed practice for children experiencing psychological distress. Depending on models of service delivery in individual Local Authorities educational psychologists may be providers of such support. Although it is sometimes disputed whether or not educational psychologists should undertake this type of work, the review of the role of educational psychologists reported by Farrell et al (2006) asserted that educational psychologists play a key role in supporting children to achieve the five outcomes identified in Every Child Matters (DfES, 2003) check date), in a range of ways including actively engaging in therapeutic work with individual and groups of children.

1.2 Remit of professional practice report

This paper will draw on an example from my professional practice where CBT has been used as a therapeutic approach to address school-refusal behaviour. I will

describe the case chosen and outline the rationale behind the decisions I made regarding formulation and treatment choice. I will then also describe the treatment process from formulation through to intervention, highlighting my reflections as a practitioner and the questions that completing this work has raised for me. I will then attempt to address some of these questions with detailed and critical reference to the research literature in this area. This will include a critical exploration of the literature on the evidence regarding the efficacy of cognitive behavioural therapy as a treatment for school refusal behaviour. At the end of the paper I revisit the question of the justification for the use of CBT, given the national context that has been introduced, and explore the role of the educational psychologist in light of this.

Key Questions addressed within the remainder of the report:

- What do studies of efficacy and effectiveness tell us about the use of CBT for the treatment of school anxiety and school refusal?
- Can the use of EPs' time in delivering CBT interventions be justified, given the policy and research context?
- Should there be an increased focus on systems level change, e.g. through the implementation of training in schools, or systemic CBT, rather than the delivery of 1:1 or group therapeutic work by EPs.

1.3 Definitions

Throughout this paper reference will be made to concepts of mental health, school refusal and anxiety. In terms of mental health several terms will be used including "emotional well-being", and "mental health". This is in order to reflect the range of terms used in this field as well as the range of difficulties experienced by young people. Most importantly this is to avoid a "within-child" focus, recognising the diagnostic process outlined in the DSM-IV-TR (APA, 2000) which recognises the interacting role of medical, environmental and systemic factors in mental health.

The terms used to describe school refusal behaviours have been defined historically in many ways (Kearney, 2007). This has meant that the area is subject to a range of terminology, which can be loaded with assumptions relating to the causality of the behaviour and allude to possible intentionality on the part of the young person. The following labels are often used:

- emotionally based-school refusal e.g. West Sussex EPS (2004);
- truancy (the term widely used to describe delinquent absenteeism);
- school anxiety;
- school phobia (Fear-based absenteeism);
- school refusal behaviour e.g. Fremont (2003), King (2000); and
- emotionally based school non-attendance (EBSNA)

In this paper the term "school refusal behaviour" (SRB) will be used. This is because this term recognises that the labels above do not represent all pupils who

are experiencing difficulty attending school. Rather "school refusal behaviour" is an umbrella term that represents a pupil's inability to engage in age-appropriate school attendance or adaptive coping to school-related stressors (Kearney, 2006).

2. School Refusal Behaviour (SRB):

Terms such "school refusal behaviour" and "school anxiety" cover various specific fears associated with school attendance. School phobia is not a formal psychiatric diagnosis but has be described as a syndrome, comprising physical complaints and avoidant behaviours related to school attendance (Peterman, 2010). A certain degree of fear anxiety about school is normal for children (King et al, 2000), however for some pupils this becomes problematic and results in school refusal behaviour that has a prevalence of 1% of all school age children (Burke & Silverman, 1987) and 5% of clinic referred children (King et al, 1995) and this tends to be equally common in boys and girls (Granell de Aldaz et al, 1984). School refusal usually develops gradually, usually starting with vague complaints and a reluctance to attend, progressing towards a total refusal to attend or stay in school (Sewell, 2008).

Authors have recognised for several decades that school refusal is a serious problem that causes much distress to the child as well as their families (Bert & Nursten, 1996), and the potential for school refusal to have major social emotional and educational implications for the child (Sewell, 2008). Long term concerns for

the well being of school refusers have also been explored with reference to outcomes for their mental health. For instance it has been reported that children with severe or chronic school refusal appear to be at increased risk of "neurotic" disturbance in adulthood as well as social adjustment and employment problems (Berg & Jackson, 1985). The complex aetiology of school refusal behaviours is also recognised in the research literature including the suggestion that there may be some biological vulnerability or predisposition as well as the impact of a range of environmental factors such as stressful life events (Bert & Nursten, 1996). However, it appears that regardless of the underlying causality which may differ for each young person, the anxiety reduction associated with avoidance or escape from unpleasant events, and the positive reinforcement received from staying at home may become powerful motivating conditions for the young person to continue to refuse to go to school (Kearney & Silverman, 1990). Developments in the treatment of such behaviours are often hampered by their essentially heterogeneous and multi-factorial nature (Sewell, 2008). However cognitive behavioural approaches that focus on the functions rather than the symptoms of school refusal behaviours are now increasingly accepted as an approach to treatment (Elliott, 1999).

3. Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

3.1 Key Concepts

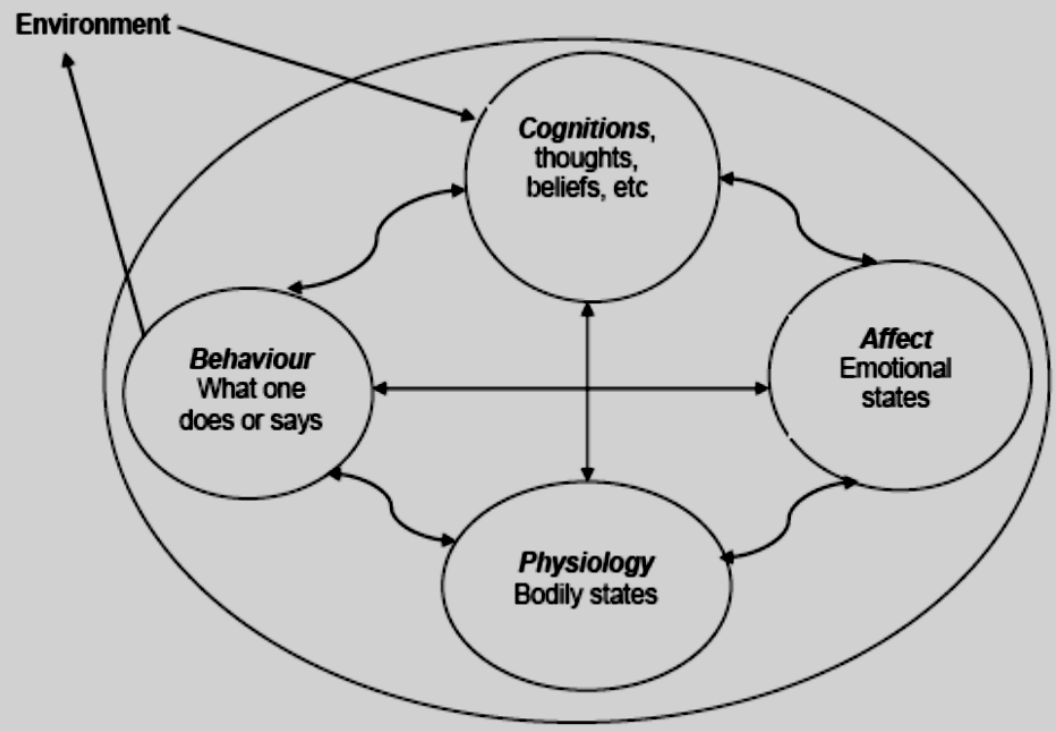
Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) includes a wide range of techniques that are based on the principle that there is a close interrelationship between thoughts, feelings and behaviours. The approach suggests that modification of distressing

feeling states and problematic behaviours may be accomplished by altering patterns of thinking (Brent et al, 2002). CBT embraces elements of cognitive and behavioural theories, and has been identified by Kendall and Hollon (1979) as seeking to:

> *"....preserve the efficacy of behavioural techniques but within a less doctrinaire context that takes account of the child's cognitive interpretations and attributions about events"*

(Taken from Stallard, 2002, p. 1)

Fig 1: Basic CBT Approach



Reproduced from "Introduction to CBT Formulation", Richards (2009).

The figure above (Richards, 2009) provides a visual representation of the theoretical assumptions of the CBT approach and the interplay between cognitions, affect, physiology, behaviour and the environment.

3.2 Models of CBT intervention:

The evidence base for CBT suggests that it can be used in preventing and treating a range of psychological difficulties including child and adolescent anxiety and depression (Brent et al, 2002); however regardless of the difficulty, the overall purpose of CBT is to increase self-awareness, facilitate better self-understanding and improve self-control through the development of more appropriate cognitive and behavioural skills (Stallard, 2002).

Figure 2 (appendix 1) represents a range of approaches and techniques that may be utilised in differing sequences and permutations in a CBT programme. The figure demonstrates the way in which CBT formulation is both informed by and acted upon by strategies that monitor and address 'faulty' or unhelpful cognitions which are contributing to or maintaining a problem. It shows how CBT seeks to improve emotional understanding, expression and regulation and/or review and develop behavioural responses to identified triggers in the young person's environment and maintaining factors that lead to the continuation of the problematic situation. The chosen components of an intervention should always be determined by the problem formulation that has been developed, which the therapist will then use to inform the focus and nature of the intervention (Stallard, 2002). In taking this approach it ensures that the intervention is tailored to meet

the specific needs of the child of young person, within the life contexts within which problems are subjectively experienced and/or manifest.

4. CBT as a treatment for school refusal behaviours with anxiety – A review of the literature:

Alex (pseudonym) is the young person presented as a case study in this report. He was a pupil exhibiting school refusal behaviour, and anxiety was identified as a key component of his difficulties with attending school (as outlined in the formulation and maintenance diagrams). Research has investigated the efficacy of CBT as a treatment of anxiety generally and school refusal behaviours more specifically, and some of the key work in this area is critically explored below. As evidence-based practitioners a key element of educational psychologists' role is to draw on research evidence when identifying the most appropriate treatment and intervention options for the pupils with whom we become involved, and so the ability critically to evaluate research in relation to psychological interventions is imperative. A range of research from systematic reviews and individual studies in relation to this topic area are presented and explored.

A range of psychological interventions have been utilised in cases were young people present with school refusal behaviours, including play therapy, psychotherapy and CBT. However CBT has emerged as a cost-effective and clinically effective treatment. In a recent CAMHS publication "Drawing on the Evidence: Advice for

mental health professionals working with children and adolescents" (Wolpert et al, 2006) the researchers attempted to systematically review the available research evidence relating to the efficacy of CBT. Key statements from the evidence in relation to the treatment of anxiety were reported as an outcome of this process (although it is noted that school anxiety is not specified). In its introduction, the document highlights that the evidence contained within it is based on several key reviews and publications including:

- National Health Service Executive (2000). A Review of the Outcomes of all Treatments of Psychiatric Disorder in Childhood. National Health Service Executive;
- Fonagy et al (2003). What Works for Whom? A Critical review of Treatments for Children and Adolescents;
- NICE guidelines;
- Cochrane reviews (2006);
- Major randomised trials published since 2002 (specific titles not provided).

The key statements were developed through a process whereby reviewers read through the research and identified key points in regard to treatment and then provided a description of the defining characteristics. Once this has been done the statements generated were circulated to the whole review group and discussed until everyone considered that a fair representation of the evidence had been developed. Each statement from the evidence and associated practice implications were then

weighted according to a set of criteria relating to the perceived value of that evidence described in Appendix C.

Several examples of the key statements from the evidence relating to the use of CBT for anxiety are provided, including the following:

- Overall for half of the children treated in RCTs, the anxiety disorder reduces with CBT.
- CBT may accelerate spontaneous improvement in children under 11 with specific phobias.
- Cognitive behavioural therapy for childhood anxiety disorders can be successfully delivered in a group, or family, as well as in an individual format, and it may be especially helpful if parents are included for children under 11 and where there is high parental anxiety.

The standards applied in this review of the evidence (Wolpert et al, 2006) are based on ideas grounded in a positivist epistemology. However the limitations of this are stated within the paper as follows:

> *"Evidence-based practice is the integration of individual practitioner expertise with the best available external evidence from systematic research in order to reach decisions about client care"*
>
> (Wolpert et al, 2005 p. 5).

Further to this it states that decisions should be made in light of the appropriateness of an approach within a given context, its acceptability, costs, risks and benefits compared with other approaches (CAMHS, 2006).

It is reported that in anxiety disorders there is often the presence of cognitive distortions which lead to the individual overestimating the probability of an unlikely but dangerous event (Brent et al, 2002). The affected individual may also perceive the world as risky and unsafe and feel unable to cope with these threats. Brent et al (2002) outlines that when this occurs the individual experiences anxiety when certain situations trigger these danger-laden thoughts accompanied by negative self talk and further danger-focused cognitions. This pattern of response may spiral out of control when the young person does not have the skills to cope with these thoughts and feelings. In some cases this response style may be further reinforced by significant others (e.g. parents may also amplify risk and/or encourage avoidance). CBT treatment for anxiety includes key components such as generating a graded hierarchy of anxiety-provoking experiences and learning techniques to manage and cope with anxiety (Brent, 2002).

Brent et al (2002) reviewed the efficacy of cognitive behavioural therapy for the treatment and prevention of a range of child and adolescent psychological difficulties including anxiety and school refusal. Their review of the literature is positivist in its approach, restricting its focus primarily to studies that have used a randomised controlled trial methodology and other similar designs. These studies aim to identify

observable and quantifiable change in order that the findings may be generalised across similar populations. This epistemological position ignores the individual experiences and narratives of both the therapists and clients and focuses instead on quantifiable outcomes assessed using a range of tools and criteria including whether or not a child still meets diagnostic criteria for anxiety post-intervention, based on parent and self-reports and behaviour observations. They report a range of studies (including Hayward 2000 and King et al 2000), which all investigated the efficacy of CBT. Hayward (2000) reported a clinical trial of group CBT versus waiting list controls for 35 female adolescents with social phobia. The girls were randomly allocated and those allocated to the CBT group received 16 sessions incorporating psycho-education about anxiety (learning more about it in order to reduce stigmatisation and diminish barriers to treatment), development of coping strategies, assertiveness and cognitive re-structuring and exposure. At the end of the sessions a lower proportion of those participants allocated to the CBT condition still met the diagnostic criteria for social phobia (55% versus 96%). However although these gains were maintained at a 1 year follow up, the waiting list control group had also improved spontaneously, and so the two groups were no longer significantly different with regards to the rates of social phobia (40% versus 56%). However Hayward (2000) also points out that the CBT group had lower rates of recurrence of depression in participants who has previously experienced depression as well as school phobia (17% versus 64%). Brent et al (2002) conclude their review by suggesting:

> "There is *strong and consistent evidence that a structured CBT intervention is more helpful than WLC in reduction of anxiety symptoms and restoration of functionality, and that these improvements are sustained over follow-up"*
>
> (Brent et al, 2002, p.930)

Other individual research studies have addressed more specifically the effectiveness of CBT for children who are experiencing school anxiety and school refusal. In a review of the topic of school refusal, Elliot (1999) investigated the use of a range of treatments including behavioural approaches, cognitive behavioural therapy, family therapy and pharmacotherapy. He highlighted that although the goal of treatment was clear the focus of interventions often varied from the child themselves, to their family or a combination of both. The emphasis of treatment may also vary, for instance emphasising behaviour, cognitive, psychodynamic and/or pharmacological approaches. The author also suggests that the use of case studies in the evidence base for these treatments may also create difficulty due to the fact that these may vary, in terms of their focus of emphasis. Elliot (1999) concluded that cognitive behavioural approaches are widely accepted in treatment, owing to the fact that it is considered that the child usually perceives an aspect of school attendance as threatening. They suggest that in challenging these thoughts and beliefs the therapist assists the pupil in identifying and monitoring self-statements that result in anxiety. However they also suggest that it is unclear to what extent cognitive methods enhance behavioural techniques, and go on to make a valid observation that controlled evaluations employing CBT with school refusers are rare.

King et al (1998) delivered a 4 week CBT intervention to 17 schools refusers, and another 17 were assigned to a waiting list control group. The treatment involved individual CBT plus child management advice for teachers and parents. The researchers found that the CBT group demonstrated significantly greater school attendance gains, and improvements presenting as reductions in levels of fear and anxiety, alongside increased levels of coping as measured using self-reports. However these findings are not able to isolate the effects of the individual CBT from the impact of the parent and teacher training components of the intervention.

Not all RCTs using CBT have identified such positive effects. Last et al (1998) did not find a significant difference between 56 school refusers who were allocated to either a CBT or "educational support" treatment group, with both demonstrating meaningful outcomes at 12 weeks. The authors concluded by suggesting that until further large-scale RCTs are conducted, it will remain unclear whether specific elements of CBT are key for pupils with school refusal and the extent to which these are mediated by particular socio-demographic or clinical characteristics (Elliott, 1999).

So in conclusion it appears that although there is a literature base pertaining to efficacy of CBT for school refusal behaviour, the evidence is not entirely clear and appears to be mediated by a range of factors. Although the literature may be useful in guiding a practitioner in responding to school refusal behaviour, the current state of knowledge concerning assessment and treatment is still rudimentary (Elliot, 1999).

Elliot (1999) also suggests that a shift from a focus on symptoms to the functions of school refusal may result in more sophisticated approaches and treatment, and further research would need to be conducted to test this assertion.

5. Case Study, Pen Portrait:

Alex is a Year 9 boy , aged 13 years, attending a rural secondary school in a shire county local authority. Alex experienced a difficult transition into high school and has had ongoing difficulties with literacy. In Autumn 2009, following a period of involvement from the Educational Psychology Service he received a Statement of Special Educational Needs, which outlined his primary needs as a Specific Learning Difficulty (Dyslexia) presenting co-morbidly with school refusal with anxiety. Records indicate that Alex has a history of anxiety relating to school, resulting in considerable periods of school refusal. There was also an incident when Alex was in Year Eight which resulted in him hitting another child who had commented on his literacy ability in front of a classroom full of pupils. His worry about an incident like this happening again also appeared to be a considerable source of anxiety. Alex had had significant periods of time when he was unable to attend for several successive months, but when I became involved he had recently begun to make progress, increasing the amount of time he was spending in school. However, he was still finding the experience of being in school and attending lessons very anxiety-provoking.

Following consultation with the SENCo and several 1:1 sessions with Alex, focussed on rapport building and gathering initial information, it was agreed that I would offer several sessions of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. Through previous educational psychology service involvement, parental consent had also been obtained allowing me to work with Alex. However letters containing information about CBT and the purposes of the intervention were sent out to Alex himself (using accessible language) and his parents, with my contact details in case they wished to obtain any further information.

During my first session with Alex and on several occasions during the intervention process I reiterated to Alex that he could stop the sessions at any time, in line with the British Psychological Society (BPS) ethical guideline on the right to withdraw (BPS, 2009); however he always communicated orally and through his behaviour (i.e. turning up), that he was happy to continue engaging.

I considered cognitive behavioural therapy to be appropriate as it has an evidence base attesting to its efficacy in meeting the needs of young people with needs such as Alex's. Pragmatically the model fitted easily into my weekly schedule as a trainee educational psychologist who was visiting school on a regular basis and would allow for me to complete sessions weekly at a regular time.

6. CBT Formulation:

The first stage in the planning of a cognitive behavioural intervention is the development of a case formulation. Case formulation has been defined as: "....a hypothesis about the nature of the psychological difficulty (or difficulties) underlying the problems on the patient's problem list" (Persons 1989, p.37). Creating a case formulation (sometimes described as a case conceptualisation) is important as it links CBT theory with treatment strategies (Richards, 2009) and is considered to be a crucial part of evidence-based CBT (Beck, 1995). The function of a case formulation is to develop a clear and shared understanding with the young person about their situation, which suggests directions for change. Formulations change throughout the course of treatment and help the therapist to move from the specifics to the general and back, predict potential obstacles and act as a basis for testing, elaborating and correcting thinking. By the end of the CBT programme the aim is that it can also act as a blue-print for identifying areas that have changed and areas for further work (Richards, 2010).

My initial sessions with Alex were focussed on rapport-building and information gathering, which I used in developing a formulation. The information gathered in these sessions was further supplemented and triangulated with references to other data sources including his educational psychology file (which included his recent Statement of Special Educational Needs, incorporating a recent Psychological Advice in (Appendix d). The initial formulation was subsequently shared and checked out with Alex, and this was important as formulations are continually evolving, and this process is intended to be active and shared (Richard, 2009). In Appendix 2 is the

second formulation which was developed after several sessions with Alex This proved useful as it provides a visual representation of the case for both the child and therapist's reference. The structure used in the formulation utilises a traditional formulation template. It incorporates the information that has been gathered from a range of sources and the role that each element may play in a cognitive-behavioural formulation. The formulation highlights the key areas of the cognitive behavioural model and how these areas may be collectively influencing an individual's thoughts, feelings and behaviours. Table 1 below describes the key components of the formulation:

Table 1: Key components of CBT formulation (Based on Richards, 2009):

Component of formulation	**Description**
Vulnerability factors	e.g. loss, separation, family history
Triggers	In what situations does the problem occur?
Precipitants/Critical Incidents	What made the problem start in the first place e.g. severe life events, stressors, developmental challenges.
Core-beliefs/assumptions	Beliefs about oneself and the world
Modifiers	What factors affect the problem's severity e.g. relationships, support

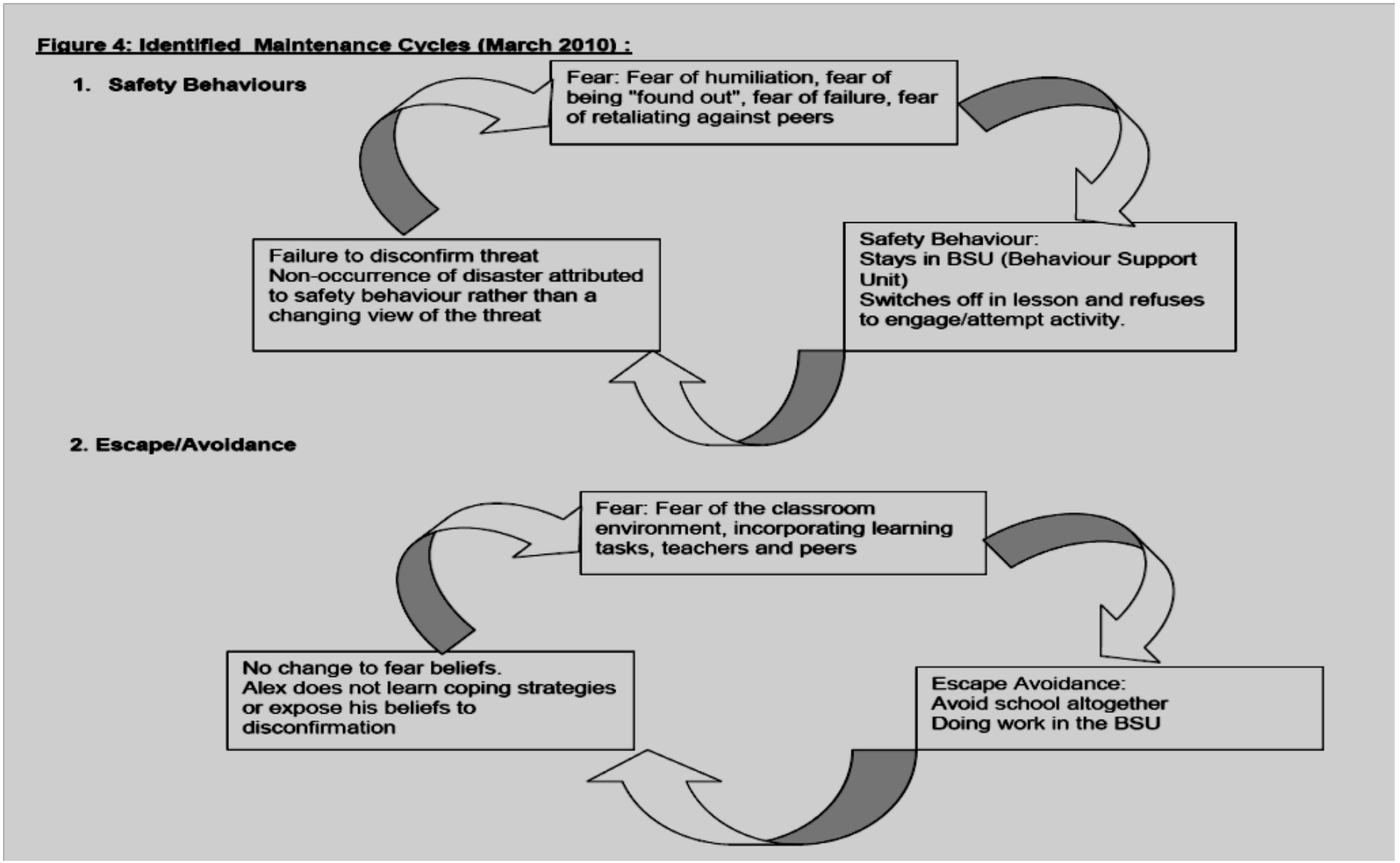
Identification of Maintenance Cycles:

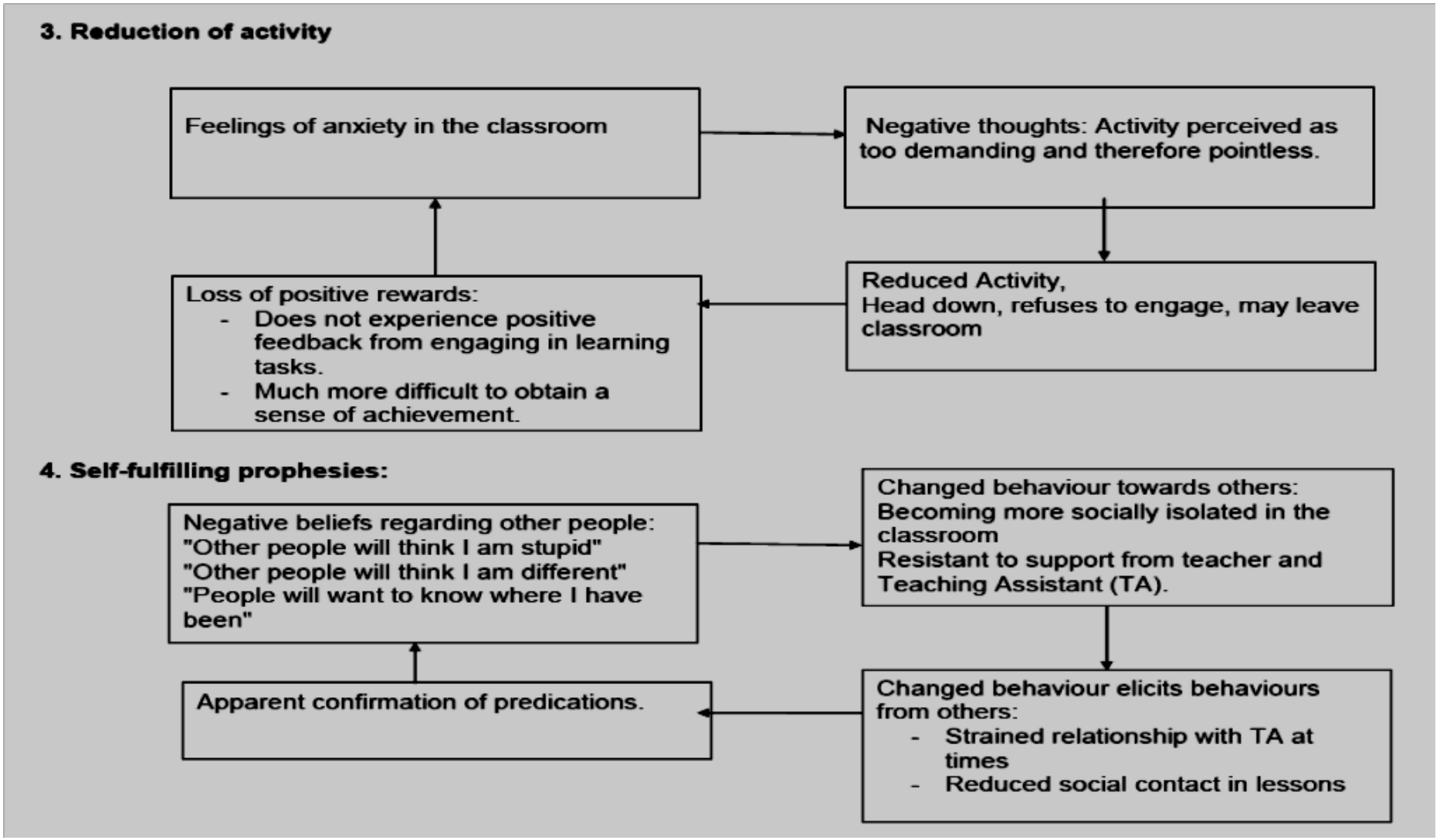
After the case formulation was shared with Alex, we worked together to discuss and describe some of the maintenance cycles that would form the target of the CBT Intervention . Through applying a CBT model and developing a formulation, the next step is to identify maintenance cycles through conversation with the young person. The aim of identifying maintenance cycles is to reinforce the young person's understanding about what might be happening and help them to identify aspects that they would like to address as a focus for change. Figure 4 overleaf describes the maintenance cycles that where identified through discussion with Alex following the sharing of the formulation and were developed collaboratively. The maintenance cycles act as working hypothesis to explain Alex's patterns of behaviours.

7. Materials

The CBT programme devised for Alex utilised many of the resources from the book "Think Good-Feel Good" by Paul Stallard (2002). This is a practical resource which covers the core elements of CBT in a child-friendly way, using real-life examples. The concepts can then be applied to a child's situation using a range of worksheets. These materials were used flexibly and supplemented a more context-specific discussion exploring Alex's week and his cognitions, behaviours and thinking around school.

Figure 4: Identified Maintenance Cycles (March 2010) :




3. Reduction of activity
Feelings of anxiety in the classroom
Negative thoughts: Activity perceived as too demanding and therefore pointless.
Reduced Activity,
Head down, refuses to engage, may leave classroom
Loss of positive rewards:
- Does not experience positive feedback from engaging in learning tasks.
- Much more difficult to obtain a sense of achievement.
4. Self-fulfilling prophesies:
Negative beliefs regarding other people:
"Other people will think I am stupid"
"Other people will think I am different"
"People will want to know where I have been"
Changed behaviour towards others:
Becoming more socially isolated in the classroom
Resistant to support from teacher and Teaching Assistant (TA).
Apparent confirmation of predications.
Changed behaviour elicits behaviours from others:
- Strained relationship with TA at times
- Reduced social contact in lessons

Eight sessions of CBT took place following the formulation stage. All sessions were between 45 minutes and an hour and took place in the school premises in a private space. A description of the content of each of the sessions is provided in Table 2:

Table 2: Description of the content of CBT sessions:

Session Number	Description of Content
1	Thoughts, feelings and what you do.
2	Automatic thoughts: Me, What I do and my future
3	Thinking errors: The downers, blowing things up, predicting failure, feeling thoughts, setting yourself up for failure, identifying thinking errors.
4	Balanced thinking, looking for evidence,
5	Core Beliefs: Identifying and challenging core beliefs,
6	Controlling your thoughts: Distraction, absorbing activities, self talk, thought stopping, turning the volume down,
7	How you feel: Feelings and what you do and think. Controlling your feelings: Relaxation and exercise.
8	Changing your behaviour: Small steps, face your fears, dump your habits.
9	Problem Solving: Stop and think, identify solutions, think through consequences, practice getting it right, plan to be successful.

8. Pre and Post-Intervention Measures:

A key component of a rigorously delivered psychological intervention such as this is to administer pre- and post measures, which allows the practitioner and young person to identify if change has occurred. The Spence Children's Anxiety Scale (Spence, 2003) was used for this purpose. This measure was devised to explore the severity of anxiety symptoms broadly in line with the dimensions of anxiety disorder as outline in the DSM- IV-TR (APA, 2000). The questionnaire is designed to be easy and quick for children to complete, usually taking only around 10 minutes. In completing the measure young people are asked to rate the degree to which they experience each symptom on a 4-point frequency scale. Alex was happy to complete the scale. His pre-intervention score was 32 (t-score of 59) compared to a mean score of 21.06 in boys aged between 12 and 15 years of age who were included in the sample. This score is just below the threshold described as "elevated". Following the intervention Alex was asked to complete the questionnaire again. On this occasion his total score was 27 (t-score of 57). This represents a slight reduction overall, but is still above the mean for boys in this age group, but again not falling into the "Elevated" range.

The Spence Anxiety Scale contains several subscales, which can each be scored individually. Each of these pre and post subscale scores is detailed in the table below.

These results show an interesting pattern of response and a shift in symptom presentation from pre to post intervention. Although an overall reduction in symptoms has been identified (as represented by the total SCAS score) there were increases on the OCD, social phobia and generalised anxiety subscales. However there were reductions on the panic/agoraphobia and physical injury fears subscales. This is interesting as the subscales where a reduction in symptoms have been identified can be clearly linked to the targets for intervention identified through the co-development of the maintenance cycles (e.g. fear of altercation

Table 3: Pre and post score on the Spence Anxiety Scale

Scale	Pre-Intervention Score	T-Score	Post Intervention Score	T-Score
Total SCAS	23	54	17	49
Obsessive Compulsive Disorder	0	40	1	45
Social Phobia	6	55	5	50
Panic/Agoraphobia	2	50	0	40
Separation Anxiety	4	60	4	60
Physical Injury Fears	2	50	0	40
Generalised Anxiety	9	60	7	57

with peers and panicking in lessons), which could possibly suggest a treatment effect. However conversely there seems to have been an increase in Alex's level of separation anxiety, which was not a target for the intervention, or an area of difficulty which had been noted previously. This data clearly indicate the need to

monitor the impact of an intervention on symptomatology in order that a CBT practitioner can shift the focus for intervention should this be necessary.

In this case it appears that despite the lack of clear quantifiable evidence from pre- and most standardised measures the intervention has had a positive impact on Alex's capacity to cope and on his attendance at school (as demonstrated in the schools attendance figures). However it is acknowledged that his level of attendance was increasing pre-intervention, and so it is impossible to directly establish whether this continued increase was as a direct result of the CBT intervention or is a correlation better explained by another variable.

Table 4: An overview of attendance figures as recorded by the school:

Term	Attendance %
Autumn 2009	50%
Spring 2010	53%
Summer 2010	56%
Autumn 2010 (1st half term)	72%

The table above shows how Alex's attendance has steadily increased over the last year, especially since the intervention began in the summer term. Although a causal link may not be established it is possible to hypothesise that his may be due to his increased capacity to cope in school and this hypothesis is supported by qualitative evidence gained during our session, where he communicated experiencing the

benefits of the intervention. This increase has been especially evident following the end of the intervention (intervention ceased the end of the summer term), with his attendance increasing to 72% which is especially given his level of identified need described within his statement.

9. Discussion:

The outcomes in this case link interestingly to the research literature in this area which indicated that CBT was the appropriate intervention choice in this case, as the research indicates that it has been found to be successful for many young people experiencing anxiety (Wolpert, 2006).

The quantitative information collected using the Spence Anxiety Scales only indicated a small positive treatment effect in relation to the domains directly addressed during the CBT sessions, and this is worthy of reflection and consideration. Using a standardised measure such as this, can be helpful in contributing towards identifying the focus for intervention, and also in measuring change over time. However, this tool was not used in isolation and rather formed part of a richer and more holistic assessment and monitoring process and I argue that it should not be considered to be a valid measure of change in isolation, due to its narrow focus. In this case there was already a wealth of information indicating a need for intervention including details gathered through consultation with parents, teachers and Alex himself who indicated a readiness to engage and a wish to address some of his areas of difficulty. I feel it is unlikely that the nuances of this information could be

picked up by a standardised measure such as the Spence Scale which focuses on the symptoms of the child. Through regular monitoring with Alex (for instance through reflective dialogue at the beginning of each session and discussion with key adults including his teaching assistant), i was able to monitor Alex's progress and tailor the intervention in light of emerging issues. This ensured that i could be confident that the intervention was having a qualitatively positive impact even if this was not demonstrated by significant changes to quantitative scores using a standardised measure. However the standardised measure was useful in indicting the direction of change and the comparative size of such changes in specific areas.

My own observations of this young person that have taken place over an extended period of time, have indicated that although Alex continues to experience moments of difficulty with his capacity to engage with attending and learning at school, there has been a reduction in the frequency and intensity of these incidents. Alex has become more reflective as the CBT helped him to consider in some detail the links between his thoughts feelings and behaviours and he has begun to change this. Alex and i also worked together to allow him to communicate his needs and concerns to his teachers and he told me that this has made his experience of school more positive.

The work of Wolpert (2006) presented in the literature review, indicated the important role of including parents in the CBT process and i feel like this is an area that could've been strengthened in this piece of work. I was only able to consult with Alex's mother on the phone and I feel that it may have been useful to meet the family

face to face and consider undertaking some family focused group work through for instance the use of systemic CBT (Dummett, 2006). This is a model of CBT that considers the impact wider systemic factors on an individual, whilst still applying cognitive-behavioural approaches. The approach is described by Dummett (2006) and recognises, in line with the ecological perspective applied by many educational psychologists, the importance of considering the impact of wider systems and the possibility that the family and wider system may need to change in order for the child's situation to improve. It recognised how important it is for the therapist to consider developmental, attachment, family and other perspectives into case formulation, identifying them as targets for therapy, if appropriate. This appears to be a model of CBT that fits well with the ecological and systemic perspectives considered in my practice and is worthy of further consideration in my work.

Hayward (2000) found that the gains from a CBT intervention were maintained at a one year follow up and this is an issue from the literature that should also be considered in regard to my case study. I will be important to maintain contact with key members of staff in the school to monitor whether the positive effects of the CBT intervention that have been identified are maintained, and to intervene if further work is required and this should be possible given my role in the school.

10. The Role of the Educational Psychologist

The intervention outlined in this professional practice report has required me to consider the role that educational psychologists may be able to play in the delivery of

CBT for young people experiencing school refusal and school anxiety, and several key issues are highlighted for consideration especially in regard to whether or not it is appropriate for practising EPs to be conducting longer-term therapeutic interventions such as cognitive behavioural therapy with pupils in schools.

As discussed earlier in this paper the Farrell report (2006) that reviewed the role and functions of the educational psychology profession, highlighted how EPs' lack of contact time in schools acts as a barrier to EPs' completing this type of therapeutic work, as there is an increasing emphasis on consultation and systems level working. An important implication of this may be that following training these constraints may lead to EPs being less competent than their clinical colleagues in conducting individual and group interventions due to a lack of opportunity and experience. This could potentially lead to a situation where EPs lack confidence in applying psychology with individual children. However, an alternative view is that EPs should be given the autonomy to take account of their level of individual professional competence when making decisions regarding their practice (Boyle et al, 2000), making a judgement as to whether or not their involvement is appropriate in each individual case. This challenge was acknowledged by Hall and Marzillier (2009) who considered alternative ways of working within the psychology profession suggesting that:

> *"There is a place for less skilled therapists to offer structured self-help and brief interventions for mild and moderate problems, where the assessment and formulation indicates that it is likely to be beneficial"* (p408).

Another key role for the EP may be in developing a detailed formulation in context with a young person, and then applying their professional training and experience to decide on the appropriate next steps for intervention. In their article, Hall and Marzillier (2009) acknowledge that there is a range of options that can arise as an outcome of an effective formulation and these are described in the table 5 overleaf. If the EP were to complete this work in school and/home rather than the clinic context offered by other professionals, enhancing ecological validity of the formulation and decision making in regard to the appropriate next steps for the young person in regard to intervention. The EP may also play a key role in sharing this assessment and formulation with key appropriate professionals who become involved as a result of this, for instance a member of Tier 3 'specialist' CAMHS as expected within the four tier model of comprehensive CAMHS services.

11. Conclusion:

The professional context within which EPs work means that as a profession we are trained to work at a range of levels and take an ecological perspective such as that described in Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model. This has meant a move away from individual case work and an approach to professional practice that does not solely focus on the individual, "within-persons" factors that are often the focus in therapeutic work. At first glance this point may appear to challenge any role we might play in the delivery of therapeutic work, such as that described in this report. However an alternative position can be considered if we are to purport that such an ecological emphasis retains its relevance in such work. For instance Hall et al (1999)

Table 5: Possible options arising after formulation, taken from Hall and Marzillier (2009):

Outcome	Description
No treatment	It is important not to offer an intervention to people who do not require it, counteracting the pervasive myth that there is a psychological treatment for everything.
Creating a therapeutic alliance	One interpretation of psychological therapy research is that a therapeutic relationship is beneficial in itself, and crucially releases and facilitates the capacity of the individual to resolve their problems from their own resources, without needing to employ formal interventions.
Seeking social and community support	When financial or social factors are prominent in the formulation, then they may need to be addressed directly by providing social and community support. This ensures that the person is accessing both the forms of economic support to which they are entitled and receiving support in the community.
A specific psychological intervention	Here the question of patient choice and the availability of diverse therapies comes into play (see below)
Help by another profession	The most obvious example is medical or psychiatric help, which will itself involve adequate assessment and formulation of diagnoses that incorporate physical, mental and social factors, and in turn lead to a range of possible medical treatments. A recent 'wake-up' article by a large number of psychiatrists makes this point most strikingly, adopting a line of argument strikingly complementary to this article (Craddock et al., 2008).

point out:

"Psychologists offer more than therapeutic skills to the healthcare system. They offer the capacity to draw upon a range of ways of conceptualising human problems, and to formulate the presenting psychological problems of

individuals – and communities – in a way that takes account of their unique multidimensional complexity."

(Hall et al, 1999, p.. 408)

Through taking an ecological perspective educational psychologists may find them self in a unique and optimal position to draw attention to systems level and societal issues that may impact on a young person's experiences of psychological difficulties recognising and communicating this multi-level complexity. We may be able to use our role and contextually based position in a child's life to challenge assumptions that the identified difficulty is simply an attribute of the young person (i.e. symptoms) that requires treatment in order to be overcome.

As Hall et al (1999) highlight, such psychological difficulties should be considered in the context of growing income inequalities, changing patterns of family life and social pressures and stresses, which all have the potential to impact adversely on a young person's mental health and well-being. For a child experiencing school anxiety for instance it is important for schools to recognise that this could potentially be a product of a range of factors within the child's environments and/or life experiences and should not simply be viewed as an individual deficit or pathology. It is possible that the child's experience is a realistic perception and/or response to exposure to such adverse experiences or environments. In light of this, educational psychologists are in an excellent position to highlight any such inequalities and promote appropriate multi-level change within the school/social system as well, as advocating individual

change that may benefit the child through approaches such as cognitive behavioural therapy.

Finally, if as EPs we see our role as making a fundamental contribution to a detailed and systematic information gathering, assessment and formulation process that recognises the influence and interaction of factors at a range of levels, and we are able to ensure that our work is used to inform evidence-based therapeutic work (delivered by ourselves or another appropriately identified professional), then the role of the EP will remain valuable and useful and will allow us to contribute to meeting the needs of young people experiencing difficulties such as school refusal/school anxiety.

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APPENDICIES

Appendix 1:

- A diagram of the "Clinicians Toolbox" taken from Stallard, 2002, pg.8

Appendix 2:

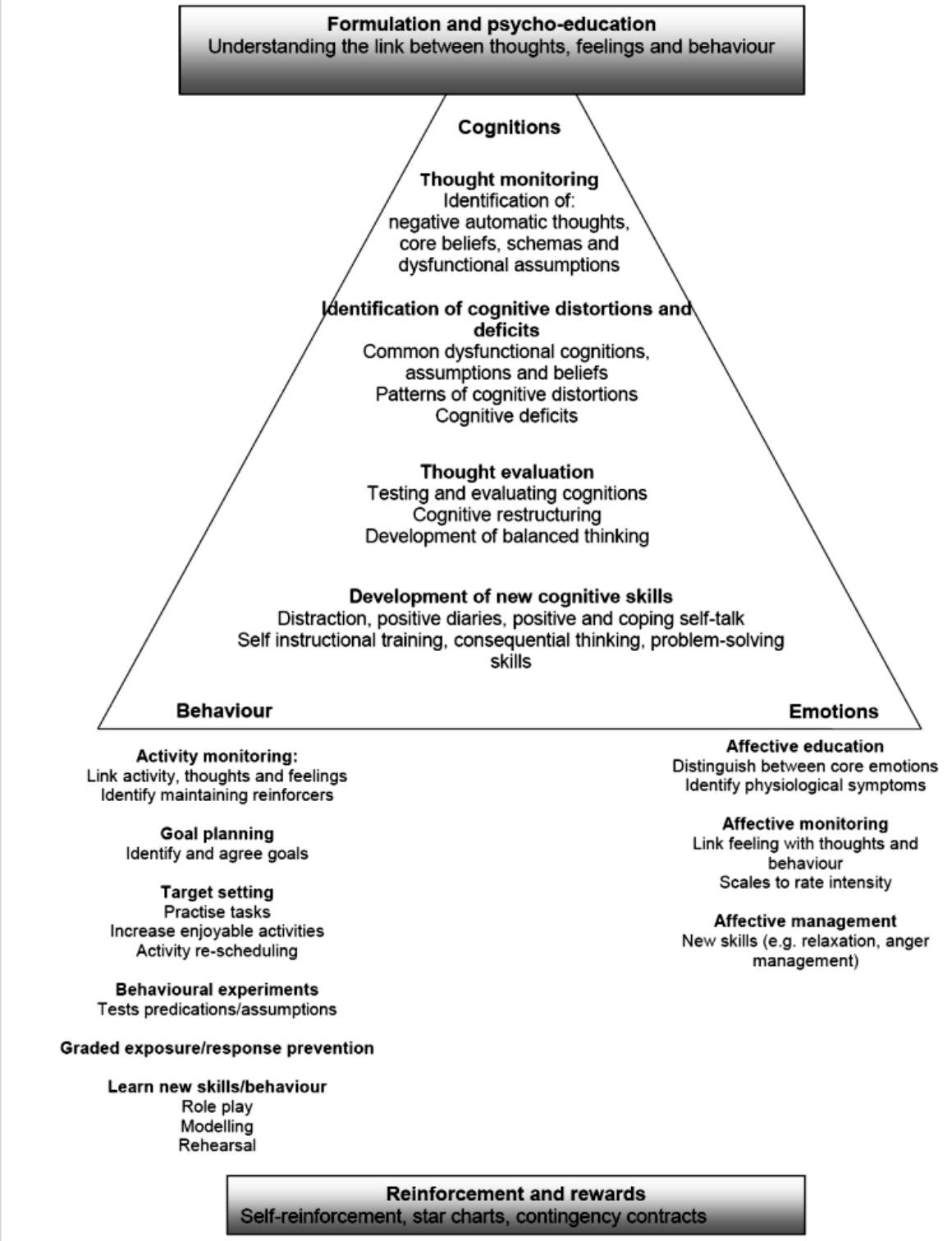
- Case formulation diagram

Appendix C:

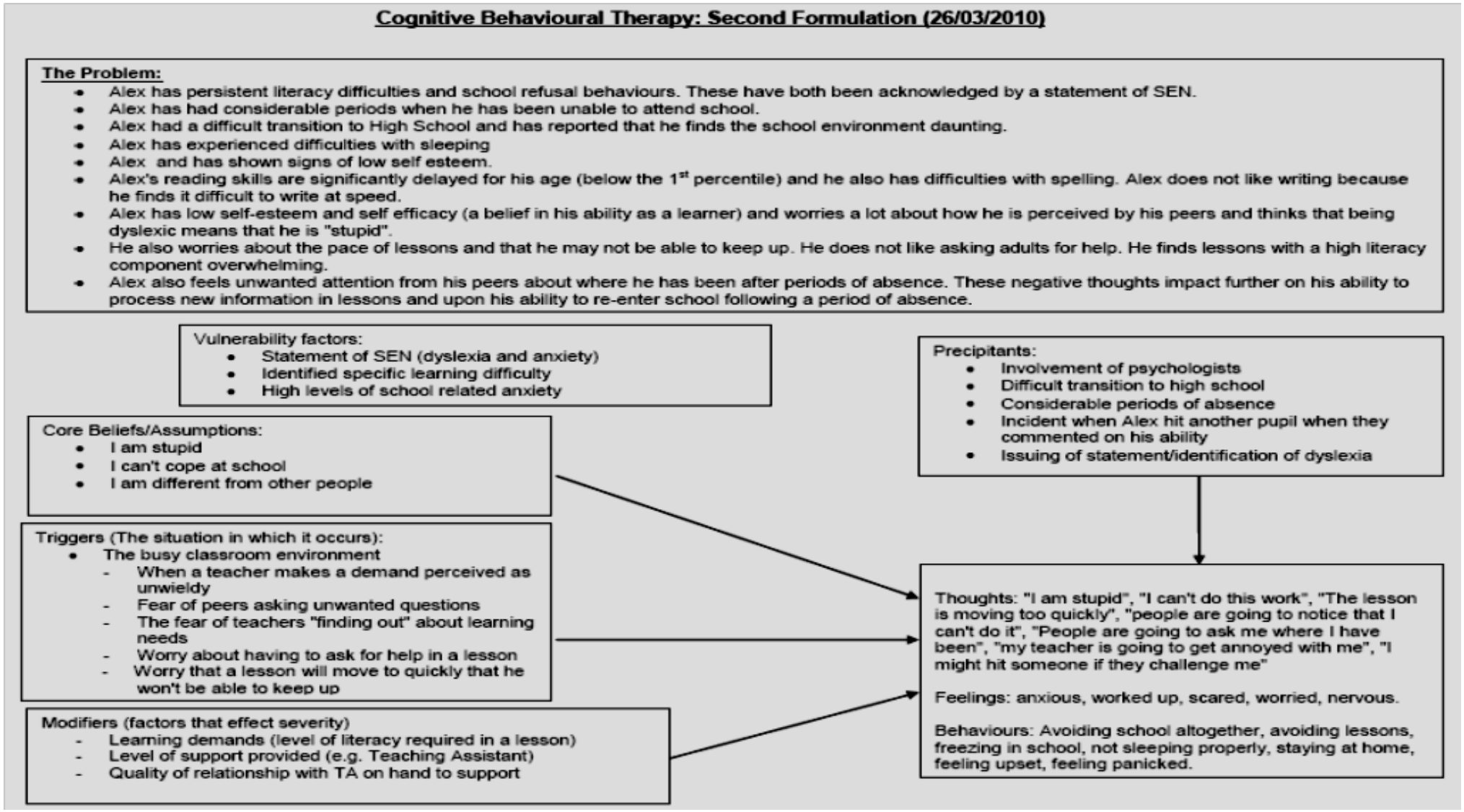
- Table 1:Outlining the four categories of evidence against which each piece of research was judged in Wolpert et al (2006)
- Table 2: Outlining the strength of practice implications.

Appendix 1:

Fig 2: The Clinician's toolbox, taken from "Think Good-Feel Good" by Paul Stallard, (2002) pg. 8



Appendix 2


Cognitive Behavioural Therapy: Second Formulation (26/03/2010)
The Problem:
Alex has persistent literacy difficulties and school refusal behaviours. These have both been acknowledged by a statement of SEN.
Alex has had considerable periods when he has been unable to attend school.
Alex had a difficult transition to High School and has reported that he finds the school environment daunting.
Alex has experienced difficulties with sleeping
Alex and has shown signs of low self esteem.
Alex's reading skills are significantly delayed for his age (below the 1st percentile) and he also has difficulties with spelling. Alex does not like writing because he finds it difficult to write at speed.
Alex has low self-esteem and self efficacy (a belief in his ability as a learner) and worries a lot about how he is perceived by his peers and thinks that being dyslexic means that he is "stupid".
He also worries about the pace of lessons and that he may not be able to keep up. He does not like asking adults for help. He finds lessons with a high literacy component overwhelming.
Alex also feels unwanted attention from his peers about where he has been after periods of absence. These negative thoughts impact further on his ability to process new information in lessons and upon his ability to re-enter school following a period of absence.
Vulnerability factors:
Statement of SEN (dyslexia and anxiety)
Identified specific learning difficulty
High levels of school related anxiety
Precipitants:
Involvement of psychologists
Difficult transition to high school
Considerable periods of absence
Incident when Alex hit another pupil when they commented on his ability
Issuing of statement/identification of dyslexia
Core Beliefs/Assumptions:
I am stupid
I can't cope at school
I am different from other people
Triggers (The situation in which it occurs):
The busy classroom environment
When a teacher makes a demand perceived as unwieldy
Fear of peers asking unwanted questions
The fear of teachers "finding out" about learning needs
Worry about having to ask for help in a lesson
Worry that a lesson will move to quickly that he won't be able to keep up
Modifiers (factors that effect severity)
Learning demands (level of literacy required in a lesson)
Level of support provided (e.g. Teaching Assistant)
Quality of relationship with TA on hand to support
Thoughts: "I am stupid", "I can't do this work", "The lesson is moving too quickly", "people are going to notice that I can't do it", "People are going to ask me where I have been", "my teacher is going to get annoyed with me", "I might hit someone if they challenge me"
Feelings: anxious, worked up, scared, worried, nervous.
Behaviours: Avoiding school altogether, avoiding lessons, freezing in school, not sleeping properly, staying at home, feeling upset, feeling panicked.

Appendix 3:

Table 1: outlining the four categories of evidence against which each piece of research was judged in Wolpert et al (2006):

Category of evidence	Type of evidence
1a (highest category)	Evidence from meta-analysis of randomised controlled trials (RCTs);
1b	Evidence from at least one randomised controlled trial;
2a	Evidence from at least one controlled study without randomisation;
2b	Evidence from at least one other type of quasi-experimental study;
3	Evidence from descriptive studies such as comparative studies, correlation studies and case-control studies;
4 (lowest category)	Evidence from expert committee reports or opinions, or from clinical experience of a respected authority, or both.

Table 2: Outlining the strength of practice implications:

Category of Strength	Associated Category of Evidence
A	Directly based on Category 1 evidence;
B	Directly based on Category 2 evidence or extrapolated from Category 1 evidence;
C	Directly based on Category 3 evidence or extrapolated from Category 2 evidence;
D	Directly based on Category 4 evidence or extrapolated from Category 3 evidence.

CHAPTER 5: MEETING THE HOLISTIC NEEDS OF OUR MOST INTELLECTUALLY GIFTED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN MAINSTREAM SETTINGS

"I have come to the conclusion that the degree of my difference from most people exceeds the average of most people's difference from one another; or, to put it more briefly, that my reactions to many things don't conform to popular patterns" (Joad, 1947)

Abstract:

There is very little guidance to inform the work of educational psychologists and other educationalists in their work with intellectually gifted and talented pupils in school. This report explores the role played by a Trainee Educational Psychologist, involved in the multi-agency assessment of a young person in a mainstream setting who was primarily identified as intellectually gifted but also presented with additional needs. This work highlighted a number of challenging questions in regard to this population of pupils including: how the intellectually gifted (IG) are defined; what the research tells us about how we can best meet the intellectual and psychological needs of these young people; the implications of being intellectually gifted alongside having other additional needs, which is referred to as "double exceptionality"; and consideration of the role of context and culture. This paper addresses these areas with critical reference to a range of relevant policy and research literature. It also explores current and potential roles for educational psychologists in this complex and interesting area of professional practice.

1. Background/Introduction:

Intellectual giftedness (IG) as a concept has been explored historically from both psychological and educational perspectives, and has been captured in a variety of terms throughout the centuries from ancient writings through to modern interpretations. Mandleman et al (2010) highlighted how the literature in this field is replete with numerous terms of reference including "gifted" which refers to a continuum of ability, as well as a range of other terms including "talented", "high ability", "able", "superior" and "exceptional". The semantic borders and overlaps in this area are very interesting, but fundamentally the range of terms utilised share the core idea which is described in the following way:

> *"There are manifestations of human potential that differentiate a person intellectually from his/her reference groups"*
>
> *(*Mandelman et al, 2010), pg. 288.

There continue to be multiple ongoing debates regarding definitions of intellectual giftedness, as well as with regard to methods of identification and intervention. However, overall such giftedness is viewed to an extent as an enduring and internal characteristic of a person, although it is recognised that this can be moderated by the environment in which the individual is immersed, such as the school or other educational context (Mandleman, 2010).

"Gifted and Talented" is the more recent term that has become increasingly utilised in policy documentation and in dialogue within schools to refer to the most high achieving and able of our school population (Lambert, 2010). The term has been

included in a range of recent government policies and supporting documents, which has resulted in it becoming embedded within our educational discourse; it can therefore be described to some extent as a socially and culturally determined construct (Hart et al, 2004).

The term "Gifted and Talented" became particularly politicised following its utilisation in the government's 'Excellence in Cities" programme (Ofsted, 2001), as well as being included in a national strategy for these pupils (Dracup, 2003). The government's vision regarding the support that gifted and talented young people should be receiving in school was defined in the 2005 White Paper "Higher Standards: Better Schools" (DfES, 2005) which sets out that every pupil, (including those who are gifted and talented) should have the right to personalised learning support in order to reach the limits of their capability.

In terms of the specific meanings behind the definitions utilised in this area, being 'gifted' is said to be equated with academic ability and 'talented' with performance/vocational ability (e.g. athletic, creative or artistic aptitude). These are the definitions used in the "National Programme for Gifted and Talented Education" (Dracup, 2008) which promotes and directs schools in identifying these young people, who are said to make up between 5-10% of the school population. The overall purpose of this programme is to encourage appropriate differentiation and access to other services such as 'out of school' gifted and talented services (Lambert, 2010).

As educational psychologists a key element of our role is to support schools in meeting the needs of children and young people, in particular those with identified SEN (Farrell et al, 2006). Currently gifted and talented pupils are not considered to fall within definitions of or provisions for SEN according to British SEN policy (DfES, 2001): which states in paragraph 1.3 that:

> "*Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.....children have a learning difficulty if they have significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age"*
>
> (DfES, 2001. P 6).

This is a definition that focuses on learning difficulty rather than learning difference. More recent government guidance "Identifying Gifted and Talented Learners: Getting Started" (DCSF, 2008) does recognise the potential links with underachievement and co-morbidity with other difficulties for young people at the other end of the ability spectrum. However, this is only a guidance document and there still remains no statutory obligation for schools to address the needs of their gifted and talented young people in the same way in which they have to make provision to address the needs of children with an identified special educational need. There is also no statutory duty to monitor the outcomes of additional or different provision for I.G pupils to ensure optimal progress in the same was as for interventions for SEN pupils, as described within the SEN Code of Practice (DfES, 2001).

2. Aims:

The focus of this paper is an example from professional practice that has drawn my attention to this area of psychology and education. In my role as a trainee educational psychologist I have worked collaboratively towards meeting the needs of an intellectually gifted (IG) pupil as part of a multi-agency approach. The focus of this report is specifically on intellectual giftedness due to its relevance in this case, where the child presented as intellectually gifted rather than talented, within the definitions of these terms summarised by Dracup (2003).

This work was professionally challenging and highlighted several areas which I consider critically in this report, with reference to policy, research literature and my practice. These include:

- What does the research literature tell us about meeting the needs of the most intellectually gifted (IG) pupils? What does good teaching involve? Is it feasible to implement intervention informed by this research?
- Double Exceptionality: How do we address the needs of gifted and talented young people with other additional needs such as social, communication and/or emotional difficulties?
- What is the role of context and culture in cases such as these?
- What are the psychological factors associated with being intellectually gifted?
- What role could educational psychologists play in this type of work?

3. Case Presentation/Summary:

James was attending a mainstream primary school when educational psychology support was initially requested in September 2008 and he was 5 years and 11 months at this time. At this point an educational psychologist began working with James and his family, a role which I would take over upon taking up my position as a Trainee Educational Psychologist in the Local Authority in September 2009. In James' file there was a range of reports and correspondence from health and educational professionals outlining his precocious development and the advanced learning skills that had been identified.

Key points from this documentation are summarised in throughout Appendix 1, which demonstrates how the Woolfson et al (2003) integrated framework for professional practice was used to guide this piece of work. This framework provides a systematic structure to support thinking about and addressing complex problems and encourages practitioners to be explicit about and reflect upon the assessment tools that they decide to use (Kelly et al, 2008). This appendix will be regularly referred to in this section as it clearly outlines the assessment processes and outcomes that took place during this piece of work. Within this framework the key features of the case are presented alongside the associated hypotheses that were generated, details of how they were investigated and by whom. Following this process the problem dimensions of the case are identified, including:

- James' precocious cognitive and educational development (particularly reading, numeracy and spelling);
- his advanced language skills; and

- some identified difficulties with interaction/social communication indicating a complex profile of exceptional strengths alongside areas of developmental delay/difficulty, suggestive of "double exceptionality" (a term explored in detail later in this paper).

A range of standardised cognitive tests were used by the previous educational psychologist to assess areas of James' underlying cognitive ability and achievement in a range of areas and details of this assessment are included in Appendix 2.

This holistic picture that developed throughout this period of assessment and monitoring indicated that James could be legitimately described as being "exceptionally gifted", as described by Gross (2004). However, this emerging picture also suggested that he had asynchronous development, which is frequently noted in children with this level of ability (Webb et al, 2005). This meant that although he had highly developed cognitive, literacy and language skills he had less developed motor and social skills as identified in assessment by the occupation therapist, educational psychologist and specialist teacher from the CCD (Complex Communication Difficulties) team.

The outcome of this period of assessment was that a detailed and holistic picture emerged upon which we could base our formulation and then use this to inform our recommendations, which are also described in Appendix 1. However, despite the range of support put in place during this period of assessment, James' parents began to describe uncertainty about whether or not a mainstream school could best meet

his learning needs. During consultations the message imparted was that their primary concern at that time was for James' learning needs to be afforded priority, through provision of more specialised instruction and accelerated progression through school, and this was found to be pragmatically challenging. Following this multi-agency assessment process taking place and the evidence-based recommendations being put forward (see Appendix 1) James' parents took the decision to educate him at home and he was removed from school. He has continued to be educated at home since this time.

The remainder of this report critically addresses the key questions identified from this piece of work and described in the previous section, with references to relevant aspects of the case summary described and elaborated in the appendices.

4. What does the research tell us about the most effective ways of teaching the intellectually gifted pupil? What does good teaching involve?

4.1 Overview

Research has been useful in informing the practice of teaching staff working with the intellectually gifted. The DfES guidance (Eyre, 2007) describes the integrated approach to gifted education that is advised in the UK. This approach highlights the importance of gifted education being delivered as an integral part of general education policy, ensuring that pupils are integrated with their peers as fully as possible. However although this guidance advocates an integrated approach, the document also states that *"When specialist provision is needed then it must be made*

*available, and lack of availability in school should not be a barrier to the progress of the individual" (*p. 1)

In this section a range of prominent research literature is critically explored which has influenced practice in meeting the needs of IG pupils.

4.2 In-school strategies:

Miraca Gross is a renowned an author and professor of gifted education who has taken an interest in exploring gifted young people's academic, social and emotional needs. She has tracked the progress of gifted children longitudinally in order to identify the strategies most associated with positive long term outcomes (Gross, 2004). In a twenty year longitudinal study of fifteen young people she used multiple case study methodology to develop and elaborate theory about the most effective ways of teaching these young people. In her work she justifies the use of this methodology (which is more traditionally used in exploratory work with an interpretivist epistemology), by highlighting that because the sample population is so small, methods based on sampling logic were not possible. However, the case study approach she used relied on inductive reasoning, meaning that expectations and perceptions were revised as the findings were studied and evaluated (Gross, 2004).

Within the study Gross (2004) used a range of methods including quantitative and qualitative information gathering in the form of standardised testing of achievement and ability, observation, and inventories exploring concepts such as self esteem and moral development. Interviews and diaries were also used, along with letters and

other documentation. Gross' (2004) study revealed the negative academic and social effects experienced by the fifteen gifted children that she attributed to inappropriate curriculum placement, and demonstrated the long lasting benefits of thoughtfully planned individual educational programmes. In her research Gross (2004) specifically explored the strategies that can be used to meet individual needs and she found that a range of strategies had been used successfully, including "grade skipping", opportunities to develop friendships with older children with shared interests, subject acceleration, in-class enrichment, "pull-out enrichment", provisions to support creative thinking and for problem solving, cluster groups and concurrent enrolment. Other key conclusions from this research include:

- Grouping similar ability students can be beneficial, resulting in higher levels of self respect, a more realistic appraisal of their own capabilities, and development of tolerance and respect for others;
- the extremely gifted benefit from a series of 'grade skips' spaced appropriately through their school career;
- once the pupil is accelerated appropriately they are more likely to be viewed as occupying the same stratum in the social hierarchy, and will be more readily accepted and valued for their academic and other talents;
- the most effective programmes were designed through close cooperation between the school, the parents and the child, and
- children will deliberately underachieve in order to gain peer acceptance, but they reported that once they had been appropriately accelerated they felt better placed both socially and academically.

Gross (2004) concluded that inappropriate curriculum and class placement were very detrimental and suggested that the way to meet these pupils' needs in the most appropriate way was through tailored individual programmes drawing selectively on the strategies described above. She was especially fervent about the benefits of acceleration arguing that *"in no case has social and emotional damage arisen even from the most radical accelerative measures"* p.g 277.

However not all researchers are as positive about these claims supporting acceleration. For instance Balson (1988) suggested that such approaches may lead to children becoming over-competitive, self-centred and socially inept, contradicting Gross's (2004) conclusion that that well planned and implemented acceleration programmes did not cause any social or emotional damage.

Rogers (2007) highlights the idiosyncratic nature of giftedness and the challenges this raises when trying to identify appropriate provision for these young people. In their synthesis of the research on educational practice in this area (including instructional management options, instructional delivery techniques and curriculum adaptation strategies) she felt it was over-simplistic to try and identify the most effective strategies for this group of pupils due to their idiosyncratic and heterogeneous nature. She argued that this means that there is no single practice or panacea that will work in every school setting with every gifted and talented learner. Instead she suggests that there are many ways in which the needs of the gifted learner can be addressed and it is up to each school to select those which will work best within its current philosophy, staff and school community (Rogers, 2007).

A recent systematic review of research in this area also explored the efficacy of interventions aimed at improving the educational achievement of pupils identified as gifted and talented. Bailey et al (2008) subjected fifteen studies in this area to in depth thematic analysis. Their findings highlighted the importance of personalised learning and differentiation, but also recognised that this type of provision within mixed ability classes presumed a positive classroom climate. This review also indicated the importance of social interactions in the learning experiences of IG pupils, highlighting the benefits of collaborative learning and of IG pupils having the opportunity to work in groups together, as they found the benefits may then impact positively on individual performance (Bailey et al, 2008). The researchers also explored the implications of their findings for policy and research as well as practice, highlighting how research such as this should be used to inform future policy by identifying empirical findings that relate to effective pedagogy rather than policy relying on conceptions of good practice by "expert" groups, which has been the case historically. They also communicate a need for high quality research in this area, if it is to influence practice, and they feel that there is a place for quantitative and qualitative approaches to research within this.

Joan Freeman is another significant academic and practitioner in this area, with over thirty-five years of experience working with IG children. She was a primary researcher for an international research report exploring worldwide provision to develop gifts and talents (Freeman et al, 2010). The work included collecting data from across the word using a range of methods including online questionnaires and

interviews designed to explore issues such as methods of identification, the values underlying provision, criteria for their programmes and types of provision. An overview of her research findings in practice in a range of areas is presented in the table 1 overleaf.

The research findings outlined in the table 1 highlight once again that there is no one-size-fits all view of provision. This international research also demonstrates the diversity between and within gifted programmes across the world. Enrichment was highlighted as the most universal method of provision (89%), 40% of the gifted were accelerated and many accessed supplementary learning opportunities including working with experts (58%) and attending summer schools; online learning also featured highly (46%).

This report (Freeman et al, 2010) also highlighted a range of current international trends noted in the responses of a range of international practitioners, as described in the table 2:

Other key findings relating to international practice from this research included that education providers were becoming more sophisticated in choosing and applying models of provision to suit them, there are increasing levels of collaboration between providers and there appears to be the growth of a more democratic approach that is empowering to teachers, parents and students (Freeman et al, 2010).

Table 1: Key findings from the systematic review (Freeman et al, 2010):

Type of intervention	Research findings
Interventions based on school and classroom organisation	• Differentiated provision is an effective approach for (G&T) gifted and talented pupils • Selective programmes in which pupils move to a new school appear to be least effective • Some evidence that streaming, mixed ability provision and individual programmes lead to improved learning for G&T learners • Mixed ability provision requires a favourable classroom climate • Participation in G&T classes or schools can sometimes lead to a decline in academic self-concept. • Streaming offers an alternative to selective programmes • G&T pupils in homogenous groups outperformed those in heterogeneous groups • Types of social interactions within the groups, rather than the alternative provision, predicted pupil performance more strongly than either student ability of the overall ability composition of the groups
Interventions based on social interactions	• Social interactions are an important factor In effective provision • Collaborative learning opportunities among G &T pupils can result in superior performance • Small groups of G&T pupils generated better planning and solutions than those working alone and this learning transferred to later individual performance • Some G&T pupils in mixed groups performed as well as those in homogenous groups. • Some pupils reacted positively to working with less able peers, but others do not, and this may well reflect and affect the character of their relationships within the group • Group functioning tends to be mediated by the classroom climate, so the role of the teacher as a mediator of social interactions is vital. • Sometimes allowing underachieving G&T pupils the opportunity to demonstrate and use their talents is effective. • Structured interventions can encourage otherwise reticent G&T pupils to participate more fully.
Interventions based on the development of new skills and strategies	• In order to fulfil their potential G&T pupils may require different or advanced content and opportunities for developing high-order thinking skills • If a G&T pupils has superior memory then they may fail to develop a repertoire of conscious strategies.

Table 2: Major trends identified from the survey of international practitioners (Freeman et al, 2010) :

There is a steady movement away from gifted education designed for:	There is a steady movement toward seeing giftedness as:
• giftedness as predominantly inherited or fixed • a small percentage of measurable high achievers • the domination of acceleration and/or withdrawal for special provision.	• mainly developed through opportunity allied with application and effort • potential among many, acknowledging peaks of gifts at different stages of students' school careers. • focussing on a wide range of abilities extending beyond the academic – including help for the disadvantaged gifted • possibly requiring support for special social and emotional needs. • encouraged by enrichment and differentiation within the normal classroom. • a feature of normal children, who are in other ways like their classmates.

4.3 Homeschooling:

Some parents (including those described within the case study) decide on homeschooling for their intellectually gifted child and Winstanley (2009) suggests that this was often a pragmatic response to their situation when they felt schools were unable to cope with their intellectually gifted child. Parents appear to be making these decisions within a context in which the evidence base in this area is limited and the studies that have been conducted have been criticised for using self-selected samples, self reports and for lacking controls (Medlin, 2000). A parent, taken from this study (Winstanley, 2009) reported that:

> *"It's not that we wanted to un-school him or anything. We both really liked school. We were tired of constantly trying to prove that he needed*

harder books and do harder work. It's just easier to get on with it ourselves".

(Winstanley, 2009, P.360)

The few empirical studies that have been conducted such as Chatham-Carpenter (1994) Rudner,(1999) and Collom (2005) have concluded that the outcomes for home education are reasonable in terms of peer socialisation, academic achievement and for the development of personal and family relationships (Collom, 2005), although it is clear that a more robust body of research is required despite the research challenges that this would face.

In summary the research evidence from a range of national and international sources suggests that it is difficult to form firm conclusions in relation to general approaches that should be used to meet the needs of IG pupils, due to the range of variables that impact on pupils, teachers and learning environments. However, research can clearly be useful in guiding decision making about appropriate pedagogic approaches and informing intervention planning, supporting how needs are understood in individual cases.

It is clear that further, high quality research is required if practice in this field is to improve further, but this will need to be well planned to overcome the barriers presented by the small and heterogeneous nature of the sample population and the complexities involved.

5. Meeting the needs of the double exceptional pupil:

Meeting the needs of intellectually gifted children becomes even more complex when such giftedness presents alongside additional needs. It has been argued that there is no reason why a child with special educational needs may not also be intellectually gifted (Montgomery, 2003), and when this is the case it is referred to in the research literature as "double exceptionality" (Montgomery, 2003) or as being "twice exceptional" (King, 2005). Such children, (including James due to his identified difficulties with social skills/communication), challenge the myth that all high ability students do not face problems and challenges in school including those in the social and emotional realm (Moon, 2009). Research suggests that twice exceptional students are the most at risk sub-population of gifted students, facing problems and challenges throughout school that may hinder optimal development (Moon, 2009); however research has gone some way in guiding our work with such children.

It has been found that all intellectually gifted pupils' educational experiences are heavily influenced by the educational environment that they experience, which, if not differentiated to accommodate their academic ability (regardless of their other needs) may lead to experiences of boredom, frustration and decreased motivation (Robinson et al, 2002). For twice exceptional pupils this finding takes on more importance when we consider that they have been found to present with higher levels of frustration and lower levels of self-efficacy than average–ability students with disabilities and high-ability students without disabilities. This is important as these are also factors that are recognised as being associated with underachievement in school (DCSF, 2008; Moon, 2009). This suggests that it is important to try and promote high self-efficacy

within this population and support them in dealing appropriately with and managing their experiences of frustration which inevitably occur in school life regardless of ability and need.

Moon (2009) investigated whether high ability pupils with additional needs experience problems and challenges in regard to reaching their potential. He reported that this "double exceptional" group's achievement in school may be hindered by difficulties with managing their behaviours, so compromising opportunities for them to participate fully in accelerated options for high-ability students. This again is a helpful guide for intervention and re-emphasises the need to take a holistic view when attempting to meet the educational needs of twice exceptional children. Moon (2009) suggests that such difficulties may act as a barrier to optimal participation in otherwise appropriate targeted provision, and so compromise their educational achievement if they do not receive support that address all of their areas of need. Moon (2009) concluded his paper by making several recommendations that address how we can best meet the needs of gifted children facing a range of challenges, including those who are twice exceptional. His recommendations emphasise the following key points:

- the importance of an appropriately challenging and supportive learning environment where instruction is within the pupil's zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978);
- the importance of an educational climate that is supportive of high achievement and which actively eliminates stereotypes that limit aspirations, and includes peers who applaud academic achievements; and

- access to advocates to ensure that supportive policies are in place to meet their needs at a range of levels (e.g. individual, school and community).

Moon (2009) p. 276

A significant difficulty with Moon's (2009) paper is it is not explicit about the research and evidence upon which its theoretical assertions are based, which means it is impossible to make an informed judgement about the quality of the evidence informing his recommendations. Nonetheless the paper highlights twice exceptional pupils as particularly vulnerable and in need of holistic and individually tailored support if they are to achieve optimal success both academically and socially. For children with double exceptionality, their support is likely to need to address not only their academic achievement but their other areas of need, which again will vary from child to child and require detailed assessment, intervention planning and close monitoring to ensure optimal progress as with all children and young people with additional needs.

6. The importance of the role of the educational context and cultural issues:

The areas of research explored thus far all indicate the important role that the educational context plays in the learning experiences of the intellectually gifted, and its relevance to the developing child's identity and well being. As a trainee educational psychologist I attempt to apply a bio-ecological perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) in my work, as this approach acknowledges both a child's own bio-genetic predispositions and identity as one of the key systems within a broader systemic landscape. This landscape also includes micro, exo and macro-

level systems affecting the developmental process and outcomes, including the family, classroom, peer group, school system and wider culture which the child experiences and impacts upon (as the interaction between systems is bi-directional).

Mandleman et al (2010) explored the influence of a school systems approaches on intellectually gifted children, through an exploration of the various typologies of educational systems, in regard to modern philosophical considerations. Table 3 below briefly describes the three major typologies of education system and their potential impact on meeting the needs of the IG pupil.

Table 3: Overview of educational typologies and their potential impact on G&T pupils. Adapted from Mandleman et al (2010)

Education System typology	Description	Potential impact on gifted and talented pupils
Plutocracy/ nepotism/ oligarchy	Educational systems in which opportunities and privileges are distributed by wealth, family connections or social class	Historically, not so much in the present day (although some legacy remains). Indirectly pertinent as social and economic factors and family circumstances interact with Intellectual giftedness.
Meritocracy	Assumes that access to educational opportunity is and should be provided based on ability and accomplishments	Many theories of giftedness are based on this typology and the very idea of identifying gifted pupils is rooted in this doctrine.
Egalitarianism	Holds that all individuals should be treated as equals and have the same opportunities and privileges to help them to develop and realise their abilities whatever they are.	Assumes all children have abilities, which will vary from child to child. Heavily influential in the US, especially in regard to the development of G and T programmes for ethnic minority students.

Although a purist typology is not evident in our British school system, it important to be mindful of our place on the continuum in the United Kingdom, and the influences of the various typologies on the education system we have today. The current system appears have adopted various elements of meritocracy and egalitarianism, and was described by Mandelman et al (2010) as *"a brew of policies that reflect the cultural, political and economic profiles of the country in which they exist*" p.g 289.

The underpinnings of the position of the British education system are specifically alluded to in "Gifted Education: The English Model" (DfES, 2004) which suggests that our gifted and talented policies are an attempt to achieve an integrated approach which builds on general education and thus achieves a balance between equality and meritocracy, partly through paying attention to children from under-represented groups, such as those with additional educational needs. However my involvement in this case has raised questions as to whether or not this is achieved in practice or whether it is rhetoric, which goes undelivered in some cases. The model described in this document (DfES, 2004) emphasises the importance of high quality basic education system that recognises and responds to individual difference, through applying flexible and personalised approaches applying the recognition that under-represented groups are likely to struggle and therefore offering them additional support. In the case described in this report the young person was from an affluent socio-economic background, but had some additional needs, which the school attempted to address through the delivery of a personalised programme. However, this proved challenging in regard to the levels of differentiation required by staff and the availability of and access to additional appropriate resources and opportunities. It

was also challenging to meet the expectations and priorities of the parents. This case highlights that there may be difficulties in meeting individual needs even when there is a national policy directive underpinned by a theoretical framework which guides practice, a range of agencies are involved as advised within this and when attention is paid to vulnerability factors.

It is also important to consider the influencing role of a child's wider culture beyond the school system, as no conception of giftedness exists within a cultural vacuum (Freeman, 2005). This consideration raises questions in relation to equality of opportunity and highlights a level of differential resource entitlement that is evident in Western cultures. Public policy and practice in the UK reflect a school funding approach whereby resources are disproportionately provided to children who experience social disadvantage and/or have learning difficulties. However, in other cultures this is not the case and this relationship inversely focuses resources on children who appear to display an aptitude to learn and highly achieve (examples of this are found in Japan and Malaysia). However, in some eastern cultures such as China they choose to operate a model of open access where everyone has an equivalent entitlement (Freeman, 2005). Each of these three positions summarised by Mandleman et al (2010) reflect giftedness as a social construction of development and potential, each reflecting underlying culturally based assumptions relating to gifts and talents and whether/how they should be fostered. Baltes et al (1999) also recognise the influence of culture, suggesting that each individual life and its opportunities are unique, and so the most pertinent approach must always be holistic and long view, seeing gifts and talents in terms of individual patterns within a culture.

It would therefore appear that the cultural context in which a child finds her/himself will influence the way in which their giftedness is viewed and addressed, and such responses will in turn influence the child's experience of their education. The experience a gifted young person has in school may also be mediated by a range of psychological factors associated with giftedness, which are explored in the next section.

7. Psychological factors:

Despite the efforts of researchers, a gap still exists in our understanding of the psychological, social and emotional adjustment of gifted students as the emphasis of research has traditionally tended to be on cognitive rather than social and emotional needs (Mueller, 2010). The term "psychological factors" in this context is intended to encompass both the positive and negative impacts on social and emotional functioning in relation to the experience of intellectual giftedness. The research explored in this report thus far has indicated that intellectually gifted young people may be vulnerable for a range of reasons and there has been some research attention paid to the long and short term psychological factors associated with this group.

In a review of the research in this area Peterson (2009) highlighted the unique concerns of gifted individuals, reporting that clinicians specialising in this area had shared reports of trauma, anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, bullying, underachievement, career development impasse and poor coping. As well as this, intense responses to negative experiences were also reported including

perfectionism, extreme self-criticism, disruptive and destructive behaviours. Peterson (2009) also points out that due to the lack of research in relation to such issues we do not have a clear understanding of how young people experience these phenomena, and as a result we do not know how counsellors and other professionals should best differentiate their services for intellectually gifted pupils across cultures and socio-economic levels. It is also important to acknowledge that the experiences reported are not the exclusive provenance of the intellectually gifted and may be explained to a greater or lesser extent by a wide range of other variables; these are both areas that would benefit from further research.

Contrary to these findings there is also research that does not conclude that intellectually gifted individuals will necessarily have higher levels of mental distress, and there has been criticism suggesting that the research indicating this is often based on case studies or anecdotal evidence (Gust, 1997) and this again suggests that further, more systematic longitudinal approaches to research in this area will be required if we are to a make clearer links between giftedness and psychological factors associated with it.

Richards et al (2003) explored his findings further and argued that any elevated incidence of a predisposition towards psychosocial maladjustment may be due to these young people being members of other vulnerable sub-populations, and that there appears to be little evidence to suggest that it is the giftedness per se that is associated with such poor adjustment. They concluded that psychological distress has too often been attributed to the individual's giftedness, when it may be more

appropriately understood in terms of other causes such as family difficulties or other contextual factors (Richards et al, 2003).

Richards et al (2003) did however recognise that that there may be specific stresses associated with giftedness which present particular challenges to this group compared to their average ability peers. These overlap with some of those identified by Peterson (2009) such as the management of their uneven and unique rate of development, heightened psychological intensity, sensitivity, perfectionism, high expectations of self, fear of failure and the management of the unique family dynamics and stereotypes associated with being intellectually gifted. It will be important for schools to be aware of these in order that they can pick up on them, take action to contain risks and provide support should they begin to present themselves.

Richards et al (2003) conducted a study which compared the emotional and behavioural adjustment of thirty-three intellectually gifted adolescents to a matched group of twenty-five average ability adolescents. They used the Behaviour Assessment System for Children (BASC), produced by Reynolds and Kamphaus (1992). This is a multi-informant instrument collecting the views of parents, pupils and their teachers. Their findings were positive, with the results showing that gifted adolescents displayed lower levels of problem behaviour, and significantly fewer depressive symptoms, a better attitude towards teachers, greater self-reliance and a greater sense of adequacy than their peers. This finding highlights the importance of challenging negative stereotypes and of not holding pessimistic assumptions about what the experiences of an intellectually gifted child may be as they grow older.

Social support was highlighted by Mueller (2009) as important for all adolescents experiencing developmental challenges within this stage of their lifespan development, as it can help them to deal with stressors and so reduce vulnerability to psychosocial and environmental risk factors. They highlight that this sort of support is especially important for intellectually gifted pupils experiencing transition to high school and that males are likely to seek support from peers, as opposed to females who will seek it from multiple sources. This research has important implications for practice in schools when planning for transitions and identifying the type of support that their intellectually gifted pupils are likely to need.

In summary this range of research findings suggests that it is not possible to establish clear universal links between intellectual giftedness and emotional maladjustment, as there is research indicating both positive and negative emotional adjustment in intellectually gifted pupils. Overall it appears that collectively research findings have not concluded that gifted individuals are more likely or less likely to have mental health concerns and that it is possible that "gifts" can be both positive and negative (Peterson, 2009).

However, intellectually gifted pupils, like their average ability peers are bound to experiences stressors as they grow up and it is useful to know that some of these stressors may be more difficult for this specific population to cope with in order that such potential risks and their consequences they may be recognised and considered in educational settings, informing thinking and practice. Through the application of frameworks such as that the Woolfsen integrated Framework applied in this case

(Woolfsen, 2003) professionals may be better equipped to work together to identify the pertinent factors and features in individual cases through a process that incorporates joint problem analysis and joint problem solving.

8. The Role of the Educational Psychologist

It is clear that meeting the needs of intellectually gifted pupils is likely to be a challenge for teachers and parents, given the heterogeneity of this population, the range of potential interacting and mediating factors involved and the complexity of the research findings in this area. The rare nature of the young people at the furthest end of this continuum may also mean that when they do present themselves they have the potential to leave staff feeling overwhelmed and under-skilled. Such complexities indicate that schools may need support in identifying how best to meet the needs of their IG pupils, especially as the research indicates that a "one size fits all" approach would be ill-conceived. Educational psychologists and other agencies may all be able to work together to provide holistic assessment of a young person, which highlights the relevant factors in each case. Specifically, educational psychologists may be in a unique position to support schools using a consultative approach to highlight key features of the situation, navigating the research field with the aim of communicating findings with schools and ensuring that any interventions are well planned and evidence-based. Additionally, the educational psychologist can play a key role in monitoring the impact of any interventions and tailoring them accordingly. This potential role of the EP is supported by the findings of the review into the functions and contributions of the educational psychologists, (Farrell, 2006) which explored the role that EPs could be playing in light of the Every Child Matters

agenda (DfES, 2004) which led to an increased emphasis on multi-agency working. The review highlighted the roles that EPs can play in assessment, consultation and intervention planning alongside a range of professionals, thus contributing to the five outcomes highlighted in Every Child Matters (DfES, 2004). It also emphasised the role EPs can play in sharing psychological knowledge, informing each piece of work. The piece of work explored in this report is an example of this type of practice in relation to this specific population of I.G pupils as it involved a high degree of multi-agency cooperation and the sharing of relevant psychological frameworks and research findings.

Working on this case has also highlighted how interventions found in the research to be most effective, may be challenging for schools to deliver in practice, due to pragmatic difficulties which in this case included access to appropriate resource opportunities and local authority policy in regard to options such as school acceleration. This experience was frustrating given the research context explored in this paper which highlighted the success of approaches such as providing tailored individual programmes when full integration with same aged peers is not successful (Eyre, 2007) incorporating for instance subject acceleration, concurrent enrolment and pull-out enrichment (Gross, 2004). We are potentially asking schools to be innovative and creative in an area in which they are unfamiliar, liaising with unfamiliar professionals and considering approaches they may not have tried before. These pressures on schools need to be recognised as they may need a high level of support to manage these potentially complex processes, and an educational psychologist may be well placed to provide this for instance through the application of

consultative skills, which have been identified as a unique feature of the professional role (Farrell, 2006).

9. Case Discussion - Links Between Research and Practice:

My involvement in this piece of work gave me the opportunity to work in a multi-professional context, apply a psychological problem-solving framework (Woolfsen, 2003) and disseminate research findings to inform intervention planning. The research findings explored within this piece of work informed my contribution to this case, but also raised considerable challenges explored below. There were also other challenges experienced during my involvement in this case that are important to acknowledge due to their influence on the work as a whole.

The recommendations made in regard to the approaches that could be applied to meet James' needs as a gifted and talented learner were challenging and ultimately led to many of them not being implemented and the parents choosing to educate him at home. In line with the findings of key research studies (e.g. Bailey (2008), Eyre (2007), Freedman (2010) and Gross (2004)) the school were advised to develop a personalised learning programme, which would include in class and pull-out enrichment opportunities as well as acceleration in a range of subject areas including French and mathematics, two area in which James particularly excelled. There were several key difficulties in the delivery of such a programme. Firstly it was found to be difficult to identify appropriate opportunities for James to access appropriate acceleration opportunities and to find appropriately skilled staff to plan and deliver individualised enrichment opportunities. For instance the opportunity to attend Key

Stage 4 maths input at a neighbouring high school was not possible due to the high school being unable to provide a member of staff to support this. Acceleration in French was made possible through James' attendance in year 6 maths lessons, but he found it difficult to engage socially with the young people in this group. These difficulties began to be addressed though multi agency action planning, and recommendations were made in light of this (see phase 4 action plan, included in Appendix 2) including the use of I.T packages and the employment of a specialist TA to help with regular provision planning, however by this point parents had already made the decision that home tuition was preferential and so this plan was not actioned. This highlights and important issue in regard to maintaining links with parents and ensuring their views are accounted for during decision making and that research findings are explicitly shared with them, and these are learning points i will aim to build on through my practice in the future. I feel that staff changes may also have contributed to some degree to the nature of my relationship with James parents. They had previously built up a trusting relationship with and EP who carried out some the initial information gathering and assessment work and then this was then fractured when the role was passed onto me due to staff changes I feel that if this transition had been handled more delicately then the relationship between myself and the parents may have been strengthened, especially in light of the fact that I was a trainee Educational Psychologist taking on the work from a more experienced colleague.

I do however feel that my professional practice has been strengthened by the experience of applying a psychological framework to a piece of casework and

developing my understanding and experience of the challenges that can develop during this type of work.

10. Conclusion

This report has considered a case from professional practice that highlighted the complexities of meeting the educational and other additional needs of an intellectually gifted child within a mainstream setting. This work drew my attention to a range of issues impacting on the field, and to the research that has taken place to try and identify how we can best meet the holistic needs of such young people. Critical consideration of the research has served to provide answers to some key questions in the field.

I began by considering the evidence about the pedagogic approaches best suited to meeting these young people's needs. The research appears to indicate that we need to be flexible in our approach as there is no single answer to this question. However the research is a useful starting point highlighting a range of approaches found to be effective, including acceleration through school and having the opportunity to work with other gifted pupils. The recent review by Freeman et al (2010) provides a useful synthesis on this body of international research which will be very useful in informing practice. I also explored the research into "double exceptional pupils" concluding that any additional needs should not be overlooked as they may act as barriers to optimal achievement for these young people. The role of the educational context and climate was identified as being of considerable importance to these young people and it is

therefore important that schools receive clear, well-reasoned, evidence-based policies to inform this.

Further to this, in considering the role of context and culture it became clear that being "intellectually gifted" in not purely a "within-person" variable but rather an experience that is to a greater or lesser degree socially and culturally constructed. This is again important as we consider approaches to intervention within the education system, which in the UK is based on elements or meritocracy and egalitarianism. These structures influence access to services and resources due to the effect of underpinning philosophies and typologies on educational policy, which in turn impact on approaches to practice in classrooms in the UK and across the world.

Finally, I considered the unique role that educational psychologists may be able to play in supporting schools in addressing the needs of these young people, highlighting the potential for school to feel overwhelmed and de-skilled due to the rare and complex nature of these situations. I feel that EPs could play a key role in supporting schools in navigating this journey, especially with the process of identifying and assessing needs and developing, monitoring and evaluating tailored evidence-based intervention options.

In conclusion this work has highlighted the diverse nature of this population and the potential individual challenges that may be faced by these young people, and it is important to remember that neither high achievers nor gifted underachievers are exempt from troubling circumstances (Peterson, 2009). However, the research has also highlighted that these young people also display strengths in a range of domains

and can be particularly resilient, and so educationalists should beware of falling in to a trap of displaying lowered expectations and in the construction of self-fulfilling prophesies. Research tells us that in many cases intellectual giftedness is a strength, which can be associated with psychological robustness and may lend itself to psychological wellness. Educational psychologists are well served to support schools and to identify and communicate young people's strengths to the professionals and family members who are navigating a complex path aimed at promoting the best outcomes for these children and young people.

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APPENDICIES

Appendix 1:

- A detailed case presentation utilizing the Woolfson Integrated Framework (Woolfson et al, 2003).
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Appendix 2:

- Summary of standardized assessments used in this case.

APPENDIX 1: A detailed case presentation utilizing the Woolfson Integrated Framework (Woolfson et al, 2003).

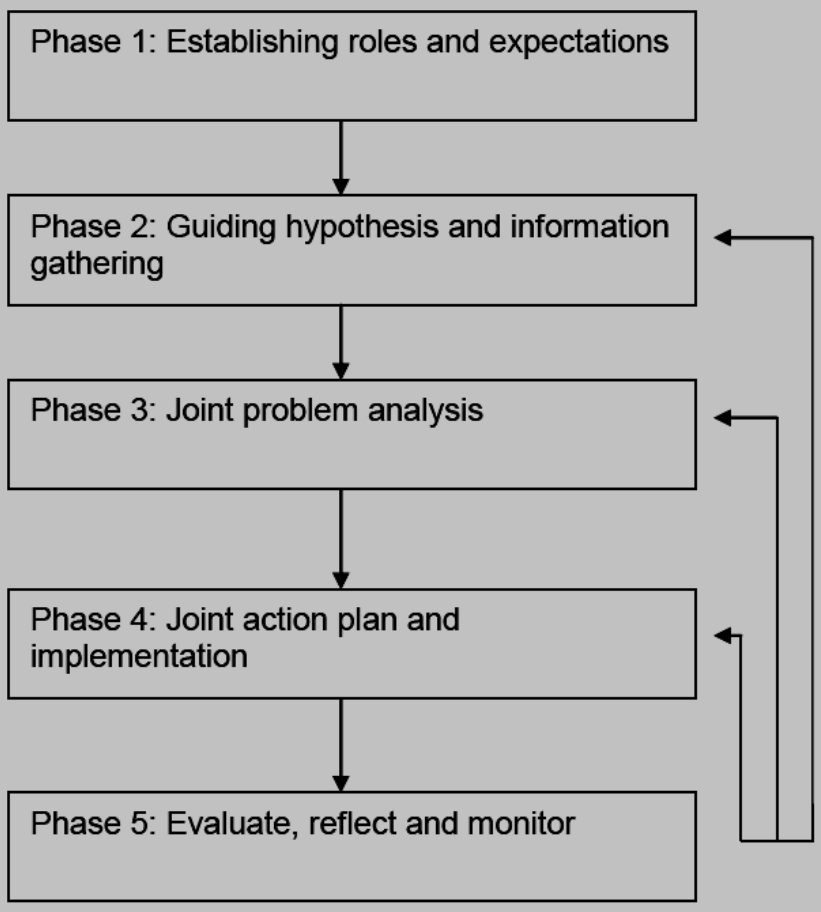
Account and reflections on of the use of the Woolfson et al (2003) model of integrated professional practice.

As described within the main report this framework provides a systematic structure to thinking about and addressing complex problems and encourages practitioners to be explicit about and reflect upon the assessment tools that they decide to use (Kelly et al, 2008).

Due to the fact that my involvement in this case was predated by involvement for another Educational Psychologist the first phase of the framework has been used retrospectively as a way of identifying the different professionals involved and the remit of their involvement that I have been establish from the file and through consultation with key professionals and attendance at meetings. This late involvement also means that some of the rationale on which decisions that were made in regards to components of the assessment process are not necessarily entirely clear or supported.

However the framework acted as a very useful tool in identifying and mapping the distinct stages of work that took place prior to and following my involvement, from initial problem presentation through to hypothesis generation, information gathering, formulation and through to action planning. The components of the action plan are evidence-based interventions which are grounded in psychological theory, and which are explored more fully in the critical review of literature included in the PPR.

Figure 1: The 5 phases of the Woolfson et al Integrated Framework (Woolfson et al, 2003)



Taken from Woolfson, L., Whaling, R., Stewart, A. & Monsen, J. (2003). *Educational Psychology in Practice* 19, (4), 283 – 302.

Problem presentation/context addressed by the framework:

James was a 6 year old boy presenting with what appeared to be significant precocious development in several areas. Prior to entering school his consultant paediatrician had reported in a letter to a G.P and to school that he had very advanced skills in numeracy and reading, but that he had more age-appropriate social and emotional skills. She described how at age 4 years 3 months he was reading the Daily Telegraph and on a simple standardised reading test he had

demonstrated a reading age of 12 years and nine months, was able to reverse 3 digit numbers and count back from 20. His parents reported that James was spelling at 17 months and reading with comprehension at 27months using this skill to find out about topics of interest such as the solar system and how to play chess. On an initial assessment of his mathematical ability at 4 yrs 11 months an advanced maths skills teacher described his number as beyond most high school students at Key Stage 4 or even Key Stage 5. James was an only child at the time of referral and was also described as affectionate and tactile and with limited pre-school experience. His parents at this point expressed concerns about his social interaction skills.

Key Features on request for educational psychology involvement from school:

- Evidence of intellectual giftedness
- Precocious cognitive development
- Some work avoidance behaviours and lack of engagement in class
- Some difficulties with interactions with peers

Phase 1: Establishing roles and expectations (Multi-professional meeting, 29.09.2010)

Role	Expectation:
School (head teacher, class teacher)	• To compile information already provided from a range of sources including community paediatrician, maths specialist tutor, GP. • To continue to differentiate the curriculum and support James' access to subject acceleration and in-class and pull-out enrichment opportunities.
Educational Psychologist	• To identify and map out current provision in place to support James following previous EP involvement. • To add to the assessment process through observation, standardised assessment to illuminate his learning profile. • To explore the evidence base in this area. • To consult with parents and gain their views • Identify LA policy on gifted and talented. • Identify and contact potential G & T providers and other possible resources.
Speech and Language Therapist	• To contribute to the assessment process through classroom observation and consultation – with specific focus on his language and social communication skills with peers and adults.
Complex Communication difficulties (CCD) Team	• To contribute to the assessment process through classroom observation and consultation with parents (including exploring developmental history), with specific focus on his social communication skills with peers and adults.
Paediatric Occupational Therapist	• To contribute to the assessment process though assessment of his fine and gross motor skills and sensory processing.

Phase 2/3 Summary Proforma				
Phase 2			**Phase 3**	
Level	**Source**	**Guiding Hypothesis**	**Information Gathering**	**Confirmed**
Individual	**Paediatrician Parents School staff**	• James is intellectually gifted	EP assessment including British Ability Scales (BAS) and Weschler Individual Attainment Test (WIAT) Curriculum based assessment Specialist maths teacher assessment Developmental history from paediatrician	Yes
	Paediatrician Parents School staff	• James has precocious cognitive and language development	EP assessment School assessment Developmental history	Yes
	School	• James has ADHD and as such is unable to maintain concentration in class	EP observation	No
	Educational Psychologist SALT School staff	• James has a motor processing difficulty impacting on functional activities. Which leads to frustration and avoidance behaviours	OT assessment in clinic	Yes
	Educational Psychologist Parents	• James has sensory processing difficulties	OT assessment including the Winnie Dunn Sensory Profile competed by parents	Yes
	Educational Psychologist SALT	• James has significant difficulties with social interaction and communication which impacts on his ability to establish relationships with his peers	Educational Psychology observation CCD Assessment incorporating classroom and playground observation, and consultation with parents and school staff.	Yes (no formal medical diagnosis).
Class/ School	**Educational Psychologist Parents**	• James does not have enough access to appropriately differentiated materials which can lead to lack of engagement/boredom	EP observation and consultation with class teacher.	Yes
	Educational Psychologist SALT	• There few opportunities for organised and supported peer interactions in class.	CCD teacher observation. EP observation.	Yes
	Educational Psychologist SALT Parents	• There are few opportunities for developing problem solving skills in class.	EP observation and teacher consultation	Yes
Home/ Community	**School**	• Parent's key priority is to support James' learning, his social skills are not their priority at this time.	EP Consultation with parents	Yes

Phase 4 Action Plan Proforma			
Target Area	**Action**	**Who, when, where**	**Planned Evaluation (not undertaken due to James being withdrawn from school)**
Supporting social communication/social skills development	Increasing James' time in school to increase opportunities to establish friendships and work on his social communication.	SALT to advice the school on packages to support James	SALT and school to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.
Personalised learning programme, incorporating a range of evidence-based approaches e.g. acceleration, enrichment and continued inclusion within his mainstream class setting.	A personalised timetable were James is able to continue to access whole class lessons were appropriate (e.g. art, PE, literacy etc), but that allows flexibility for him to punctuate his day with other activities during lessons which are not deemed appropriate (e.g. numeracy).	School to devise timetable as appropriate with support from EPS	School staff to monitor progress with support from tutor and EPS
Supporting social communication/social skills development and generalisation with peers	A high level of support with developing his social skills with a specific focus on the generalisation of these skills in the classroom environment with a high level of support.	CCD team to advise TA on appropriate strategies	TA and CCD team to monitor and review closely
Delivery of a personalised learning programme targeted towards meeting his specific areas of strength e.g. numeracy	Accessing a specialist tutor to consider and address his learning needs. We hope that this tutor will help to devise appropriate learning challenges and extension activities for James.	School, tutor	School staff and tutor to meet and liaise regularly with parents to monitor and review programme and adapt as appropriate.
Supporting James to develop his problem solving skills and life skills.	Focus on generalisation and application of learning concepts, as well as problem solving and life skills which James finds difficult	TA, class teacher, parents	School staff and tutor to meet and liaise regularly with parents to monitor and review programme and adapt as appropriate.
Delivery of a personalised learning programme using modes of delivery that James responds well to as part of an holistic package.	Using IT packages, (e.g. virtual classrooms) were James can continue to develop his learning in his specific areas of interest (e.g. maths and science). At times it may be appropriate to use these as a reward.	Tutor, class teacher and parents	School staff and tutor to meet and liaise regularly with parents to monitor and review programme and adapt as appropriate. Regular feedback to be gained from James to ensure his views are taken into account when identifying approaches.

Note: Phase five of the Woolfson framework (Woolfson et al, 2003) framework was not completed due to parent's decision to withdraw James from school and educate him at home.

Appendix B:

Summary of Standardised Assessment:

A range of standardised cognitive tests were used by an educational psychologist to assess areas of James' cognitive ability and achievement in a range of areas. This assessment process highlighted that James' abilities were evidently well in advance of age-related expectations. The BAS II (British Ability Scales) and WIAT-II (Weschler Individual Attainment Test) was used to assess aspects of James' general abilities and attainment levels.

Scores from the BAS II (British Ability Scales):
Age when tested: 4 years and 11 months

Non-verbal Ability	**Percentile***	**Age equivalent (chronological age)**
Quantitative Reasoning *inductive reasoning: detection and application of rules concerning sequential patterns in dominoes and relationships between pairs of numbers*	99	14.3 (4.11)
Pattern Construction *non-verbal reasoning and spatial visualisation in reproducing designs with coloured blocks*	95	9.9 (5.9)

Literacy: James' reading skills were assessed using the WIAT-II (Weschsler Individual Achievement Test). His score is given below:

Test	**Standard Score**	**Percentile**	**Age equivalent (at chronological age 5.9)**
Word Reading	160	>99.9	14.00 (5.9)

** **Percentile:** shows the percentage of the same age population who have an equal or lower score than the one stated. A percentile rank of 59 means that 58% of the population would have a lower score.

These tests were useful in triangulating information in regard to some of James' strengths such as qualitative reasoning (non-verbal reasoning) where his score fell at the 99th percentile and pattern construction where his score fell at the 95th percentile. His word reading fell at the 99.9th percentile. These scores support the view that James would fall into the category of "Exceptionally Gifted" as described by Gross (2004).