CYBERBULLYING ISSUES IN SCHOOLS: AN EXPLORATORY, QUALITATIVE STUDY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF TEACHING PROFESSIONALS

by

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ABSTRACT

Cyberbullying is a relatively recent phenomenon originally coming to the forefront of the public agenda following a number of anecdotal accounts. It has been defined as "any behaviour performed through electronic or digital media by individuals or groups that repeatedly communicates hostile or aggressive messages intended to inflict harm or discomfort on others" (Tokunaga, 2010: 278). This study is designed to explore cyberbullying issues in school settings from the perspective of teaching professionals. This area is of consequence given that research focussing on face-to-face bullying has suggested that teaching professionals and school staff can have differing definitions and understandings of bullying behaviour and the high prevalence of unreported cyberbullying in schools. The participants in this research were Anti-Bullying Co-ordinators in eight schools in one Local Authority. The staff who participated were employed in a range of settings (Primary, Secondary, Middle and High schools). The views of teaching professionals were obtained using semi-structured interviews and the data were analysed using Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The results indicate that teaching professionals are beginning to develop an understanding of issues relating to cyberbullying and acknowledge the unique features of this type of behaviour. The findings also highlight that consideration has been given to the level of involvement schools should have when dealing with cyberbullying issues. Furthermore schools are aware of the impact of this type of behaviour and have employed a range of methods to prevent and intervene in cyberbullying. However schools still require additional support to understand how to respond to this phenomenon more comprehensively.

To Stewart

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Doctoral Training in Educational Psychology

This thesis has been produced in accordance with the requirements of the three year full-time postgraduate professional training programme in Applied Educational and Child Psychology at the University of Birmingham. This programme entails trainees attending university on a full-time basis during the first year of their course whilst also completing fieldwork placements in Local Authorities (LAs). In years two and three trainees are required to secure a full-time professional practice placement within a LA whilst also continuing to attend and participate in teaching and support at the university. During my second and third years of study I was employed as a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP) by Westshire Council (pseudonym) during which time I completed the supervised practice requirement of the course.

Trainees are required to complete a two volume thesis during the second and third years of the course. This work is submitted as the first of these two volumes and comprises a qualitative research study exploring cyberbullying issues in schools from the perspective of teaching professionals. This research was completed alongside my supervised practice work within Westshire Council and as such its focus and aspects of design were influenced by LA policy and priorities.

1.2 Reasons for Choosing Research Area: A Personal and Professional Perspective

The reasons I selected cyberbullying as an area of research are two-fold. Firstly, in the early stages of my training to qualify as an Educational Psychologist (EP) I became interested in the number of anecdotal accounts of cyberbullying which came to my attention. These accounts arose from a wide variety of people including pupils, school staff, parents and EP colleagues and appeared to suggest that even though the vast majority of cyberbullying took place outside the school day and premises, it was having a significant impact within settings.

Through reading around the topic I became aware that whilst there had been considerable research focusing on bullying in schools, the issue of cyberbullying had received less attention. This was partly due to cyberbullying being a relatively new phenomenon and exacerbated by the fast moving growth of information technology (Ang and Goh, 2010; Juvonen and Gross, 2008). Furthermore, it became apparent that technology was becoming an increasingly integral part of children and young people's lives. It was no longer applicable to distinguish between the 'real world' and the 'virtual world' for many in this generation as everything was considered real regardless of whether it took place on or offline (CEOP, 2009). There was also limited discussion surrounding the role school personnel should, or indeed could, play in combating cyberbullying (Mason, 2008; Willard, 2007).

A second reason for my choice of topic was the stance of my employing LA, where there has been a strong focus on understanding issues of bullying within schools. This work has been supported by an Anti-Bullying Strategy Group consisting of senior members of Children's Services staff, which has recently taken an active interest in the issue of cyberbullying in local schools and wished to explore this area further.

1.3   Research Focus and Rationale

Cyberbullying is a recent phenomenon originally coming to the forefront of the public agenda following a number of anecdotal accounts (Tomazin and Smith, 2008). It has been defined as:

> "…any behaviour performed through electronic or digital media
>
> by individuals or groups that repeatedly communicates hostile or
>
> aggressive messages intended to inflict harm or discomfort on
>
> others" (Tokunaga, 2010: 278).

Whilst definitions may vary they usually focus on intentional, deliberate and repeated behaviour which is experienced over time (Kowalski et al., 2008). Definitions also highlight the real, non-trivial pain (psychological, emotional and relational) experienced by the victim (Patchin and Hinduja, 2010).

At the present time whilst there is growing interest in this topic there would appear to be limited research focussing on cyberbullying despite the general concern regarding its prevalence and potential increase (Tokunaga, 2010). Li (2006) argues that cyberbullying requires further research and understanding as a large number of young people are currently reporting being cyberbullied or are aware of friends who are exposed to this type of behaviour.

The research which has been conducted to date has predominantly focused on early formative stages of study including investigations into prevalence, frequency amongst specific groups and negative outcomes. This type of early exploratory research has been heavily influenced by the use of quantitative techniques to gather data and whilst it has begun to build a picture about cyberbullying it would now appear timely to begin to develop a deeper understanding. Mishna (2009) argues that qualitative research is required to explore this field further, in order to discover important discourses about cyberbullying and give a voice to people experiencing this sensitive issue.

This study is designed to explore cyberbullying issues in schools from the perspective of teaching professionals in a variety of educational settings. The rationale for wishing to explore this area is based upon a number of factors. Firstly, research focussing on face-to-face bullying has suggested that teachers and pupils can have differing definitions and understandings of this type of behaviour. This is of consequence in terms of implications for reporting incidences of bullying

in schools, understanding developmental trends in children's and young people's perceptions of bullying and evaluating the effectiveness of interventions (Naylor et al., 2006). It would therefore appear important to pursue research focussing on whether there are similar issues and understandings in terms of cyberbullying.

A second reason for studying cyberbullying from the perspective of teaching professionals concerns the high prevalence of unreported cyberbullying, with estimates suggesting that ninety percent of cases are not reported to adults (Juvonen and Gross, 2008). Li (2006) investigated this area from the pupil perspective and suggested that pupils did not report cyberbullying in schools as they believed that staff would not understand this issue and would therefore not be able to help them. This in turn left affected pupils feeling scared and powerless. In order to understand whether this pupil perception is correct it would appear necessary to investigate this from a teaching professional perspective. Further to this, it is hoped that the current research will highlight any areas in which staff may feel they require extra support.

An additional element of the present research is that it is designed to investigate the impact of cyberbullying from the perspective of teaching professionals working with a range of age groups. This is deemed important as previous research focussing on other forms of bullying has suggested that early adolescence is a particularly vulnerable time for bullying to take place due disruptions in social networks (such as moving to high school and making new friends) (Li, 2007). It

would therefore appear important to investigate cyberbullying from a variety of perspectives to ascertain whether staff in varying educational settings require different types of support to address this issue.

1.4 Research Aims

The focus of this study is to explore cyberbullying issues in schools from the perspective of teaching professionals in Westshire LA. The research is designed to investigate the perceptions and experiences of teaching staff in their own schools.

The aims of the study are to:

1	Provide an insight into the views, experiences and current practice of teaching professionals concerning cyberbullying issues in their school settings.
2	Explore the perspective of teaching professionals regarding the impact of cyberbullying on pupils and the wider school community.
3	Ascertain from teaching professionals whether cyberbullying issues are different dependent on the age of pupils and type of school.

Table 1.1: Research Aims

1.5 My Identity as a Researcher

My identity as a researcher has been influenced by a number of factors including my previous roles within the education sector. Prior to embarking on my EP

training I worked for a number of years as a primary school teacher. I was also employed as a researcher within both university and EP Service settings conducting studies focussing on the experiences and perspectives of teachers on issues including the implementation of the new Scottish curriculum, evaluating new teaching programmes within the classroom and gender within nursery education.

These experiences of being part of the teaching profession and also working alongside it have been highly influential in my practice as a TEP. I have a deep interest in using a range of sources to develop an in-depth, holistic picture to inform my work. I strongly believe that when working with children and young people all factors which influence their lives and experience of school have to be taken into account including the school setting they attend and the people who work with them. I believe that all teachers have their own perspectives and epistemological beliefs which require to be acknowledged. This position is further supported by Abdelraheem (2004) who argues that a teacher's beliefs require consideration as they can impact on their practice.

1.6   Methodological Orientation

My experiences, both in my previous roles and also my current position, have influenced me as a practitioner and also as a researcher. I consider myself to be aligned with the interpretivist paradigm. This position is characterised by concern

for the individual (Cohen et al., 2007) and attempts to understand the participant's experiences from within rather than reflect the viewpoint of the researcher (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998). Therefore this study is developed to explore the perspectives of teaching professionals in terms of their own experiences of dealing with issues of cyberbullying in their school settings.

1.7 Structure of Volume 1

This first chapter provides the broad context in which the research is based and considers the rationale for the study. The chapter also introduces the aims of the study and the methodological orientation of the work.

Chapter Two provides a critical literature review exploring the most relevant and recent research and policy pertaining to cyberbullying, including exploration of its place within other forms of bullying, definitions and prevalence. This chapter will consider current research focussing on the experiences of pupils and their parents in terms of issues surrounding cyberbullying. It will also explore the role schools are expected to play in tackling cyberbullying and highlight the lack of current research focussing on teachers' perceptions of this issue. The research questions for this study will also be introduced.

The third chapter of this work outlines the methodology and method utilised to conduct this research and considers issues of reliability and validity. This chapter

also highlights a range of ethical issues which were addressed throughout the course of this study.

Chapter Four provides a report of the data gathered presented in line with the Thematic Analysis procedure designed by Braun and Clarke (2006). In this chapter the themes that were abstracted inductively are presented. I will also look at the data deductively to explore issues surrounding experiences of cyberbullying in differing school settings. In Chapter Five these themes are discussed and interpreted with reference to the literature presented in the earlier critical literature review (Chapter Two). There is also consideration given to the limitations of this study.

The final chapter (Chapter Six) will highlight how the findings of this study address the research questions posed. Furthermore, it will explore the implications of these findings in terms of practice at both school and LA level within Westshire. This chapter will also highlight the scope for further involvement in this area by Educational Psychologists.

CHAPTER TWO: CRITICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The broad aim of this research is to explore cyberbullying issues in schools from the perspective of teaching professionals. This review of literature is designed to explore critically the most recent and relevant policy and research relating to cyberbullying. I will begin by considering research focussing on face-to-face bullying. This will be followed by an exploration of how cyberbullying is currently defined and the reported prevalence of this type of bullying. I will also describe how cyberbullying is viewed in a legal and policy context and consider the research which has focused on the impact of cyberbullying from the perspective of children, young people and parents. The final area of this literature review will highlight the limited research which has taken place to date in school contexts and develop the rationale for the current study.

2.1.1 Literature Review Strategy

This review of literature is the result of a search initially conducted in October 2010, using key words pertinent to the study, from a range of educational and psychological databases (including ASSIA: Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts; British Education Index; Educational Research Abstracts Online; ERIC: Educational Resources Information Centre; PsycArticles, PsycInfo and SwetsWise). A total of 176 articles were produced with the vast majority being

published from 2006 onwards from a variety of countries including the UK, the USA and Europe. Due to the fast moving nature of this area of research, the search was conducted again in July 2011 to provide an update (for a full account of the search including key words, combinations and databases see Appendix 1).

2.2   Background to Bullying Research

In order to explore the field of cyberbullying it is important to understand how this relatively new phenomenon fits into the wider picture of face-to-face bullying in school contexts. Historically, bullying had been viewed as an inevitable part of normal childhood and was not considered a problem which required attention (Campbell, 2005). However, Olweus (1978) began to challenge this position and shifted the notion of bullying to incorporate negative characteristics and connotations. This, alongside a number of high profile school shooting incidents in the USA (in which bullying was alleged to be a factor), led to this type of behaviour being increasingly identified as problematic in school settings across the world (Shariff, 2009).

2.2.1 Definitions and Types of Bullying

Nansel et al., (2001) argue that bullying is a specific type of behaviour which is intended to harm, perpetrated by one or more individuals and carried out repeatedly over time. Furthermore this type of behaviour involves a power

differential (which may be physical or psychological) with the victim having limited ability to defend him- or herself.

Olweus (1993) identified that bullying differs from aggression in that unlike aggressive actions which can be single events, bullying comprises repeated acts. Furthermore, bully-victim relationships contain an imbalance of power whereas an act of aggression can be between two people of similar power. Consideration has also been given to the difference between bullying and teasing. Shariff (2009) argues that identical phrases which are used between friends may shift towards bullying behaviour when directed towards someone who is not a friend or when the power balance between two parties becomes uneven.

Research focussing on bullying distinguishes between several main types namely:

- physical (including hitting, kicking, taking or damaging property);
- verbal (including teasing, taunting or threatening);
- indirect (done via a third party);
- relational (done to damage someone's peer relationships); and
- social (done to damage self-esteem and/or social status) (Rigby, 1997).

Whilst these categories are useful when exploring the issue of bullying, Naylor et al., (2006) suggest that different groups can hold differing definitions of what

constitutes bullying. Their research used a questionnaire to explore the definitions given to bullying by teachers (n = 225) and pupils (n = 1820). The results indicated that pupils were three times more likely to limit their definitions of bullying to direct forms (physical and/or verbal abuse).

The researchers suggest that these findings highlight that pupils may have less sophisticated definitions of bullying than expected by adults and therefore may not be aware that they are being bullied or bullying if the behaviour takes an indirect form. Furthermore it is argued that teachers should explore with pupils their understandings of bullying and where necessary help them to reframe their definitions of this act.

2.2.2 Prevalence

Smith et al., (1999) argue that bullying is still a common problem amongst school-aged pupils. Estimates of bullying prevalence worldwide range from five to thirty-eight percent for girls and six to forty-one percent for boys (Due et al., (2005). In the UK, figures suggest that in 2009 eight percent of pupils stated that they had been bullied in school during the previous four weeks and eleven percent reported being bullied outside school in the same time period (DCSF, 2010a).

In terms of the gender split between boys and girls it is argued that boys are more likely to engage in overt physical forms of bullying whereas girls predominantly take part in covert psychological bullying (Crick et al., 2002). This difference is of

consequence when considering the prevalence of bullying, as psychological bullying may be more difficult for both adults and children or young people to detect and may explain the difference in reported levels of bullying between genders. It is however argued that there is now an increasing trend towards physical bullying involving females (Shariff, 2009) and therefore these levels may begin to change.

2.2.3 Characteristics of those Involved in Bullying

Researchers have been interested in understanding the characteristics of children and young people who are involved in bullying in order to be able to understand this behaviour more fully. Individuals involved in bullying include those who are bullied, those who bully and the majority who are bystanders (Kowalski et al., 2008). Olweus (1993; 1999) described eight roles which pupils may play in bullying (see Table 2.1 below). It is argued that these roles are not static and may change from one situation to another.

Role	Description
1) The Bully	The child who initiates bullying
2) Followers	Those who take part but do not initiate
3) Supporters	Those who openly support but do not take part
4) Passive Supporters	Those who enjoy the bullying but do not openly support it
5) Disengaged Onlookers	Those who do not get involved but do not feel responsible to stop it
6) Possible Defenders	Those who feel they should do something but do not
7) Defenders	Those who try to help those being bullied
8) The Victim	The child who is being bullied

Table 2.1: Eight Roles in Bullying (Olweus, 1993)

In terms of those individuals who are bullied, whilst there is no single profile, it has been suggested that pupils with low self-esteem, anxiety or depression may be targeted (Fekkes et al., 2006). There has also been acknowledgement of identity-based bullying which targets specific groups dependent on characteristics such as race, religion, sexual orientation, gender or disability (Tippett et al., 2010). In addition to this, research has also begun to focus on bullying of pupils with special educational needs.

In terms of children and young people who are involved as bullies it has been acknowledged that, whilst often stereotyped as outsiders with limited social skills, this is not the case (Nansel et al., 2001). Juvonen et al., (2003) suggest that pupils who bully are often popular and have a group of students who support their

bullying. Furthermore, research has suggested that these pupils are good at interpreting the mental states and emotions of other children (Sutton et al., 1999).

The final group involved in bullying are the bystanders who witness the event taking place. As suggested by Olweus (1993; 1999) this role may take a number of different forms ranging from those who take part but do not initiate the act to others who try to help the victim. Therefore, it is argued that rather than being viewed as a problem between two children or young people, bullying should in fact be understood as a group phenomenon.

It is suggested that whilst pupils may have reasonably negative reactions to bullying this may not translate into action (Baldry, 2004). Kowalski et al., (2008) argue that bystanders may feel powerless to intervene in bullying. Furthermore, if they continue to observe adults and other children not intervening, they may begin to feel less empathy for the child who is experiencing the bullying, thus highlighting the need for schools to be proactive in prevention and intervention in order to stop a social climate where bullying is acceptable.

2.2.4 Purposes of Bullying

Research focussing on the purposes of bullying amongst children and young people has examined a number of personal motivations for this type of behaviour. Kowalski et al., (2008) suggest that prominent factors which may be attributed

include the need for power and dominance and the satisfaction found in causing suffering and injury to others.

Whilst these reasons would appear to have common sense appeal it has been argued that they can lead to a picture of bullies who are socially inadequate and have to resort to bullying as they are unable to interact appropriately with their peers. Indeed, bullies have been described as having 'social blindness' which results in them being unable to understand the feelings of others and being unaware of what other pupils may think of them (Randall, 1997).

Sutton (2001) argues that to rely on explanations which put the root cause of bullying within an individual who is considered to be socially inadequate is too simplistic. In order to explore this area he investigated levels of Theory of Mind (the ability of individuals to attribute mental states to themselves and others in order to predict and explain behaviour) amongst pupils. The pupils were classed into six groups focussing on bullying behaviour namely 'bullies', 'assistants', 'reinforcers', 'defenders', 'outsiders' and 'victims'. The results indicated that pupils who were classed as bullies scored higher levels of Theory of Mind than any of the other groups therefore suggesting that these pupils did not fit the picture of pupils with limited social skills and competence.

Findings such as these have therefore led to researchers beginning to consider additional factors which may explain the purposes of bullying. One motivation which has been explored is the rewards which can be gained through this type of behaviour. Whilst these can be material (such as money or possessions) they can also be social (including raised status and prestige) (Kowalski et al., 2008). This suggestion was supported by Sutton (2001) who found a positive correlation between pupils who were classed as bullies and the number of 'best friend' nominations they received from their peers.

In addition to this, Sutton (2001) argues that some pupils may participate in bullying behaviours because they enjoy the effect it has on others. Rigby (2008) explored this area and found that bullies are not ashamed of what they are doing and want attention from their peers. Furthermore, it has been suggested that pupils who bully report that they choose to do so in order to cultivate a non-conforming reputation (which they view as important) through the acquisition of power and respect (Houghton et al., 2012).

Overall it would appear that to attribute bullying simply to lack of social skills and competence is too simplistic and there is an array of reasons why pupils may engage in this behaviour. It is worthy to note that many of the purposes for bullying reported by pupils are due to wishing to impress peers and create a position of power. It is therefore important to consider the role that others can play when combating bullying as mobilising peer pressure against such behaviour so it

becomes less rewarding and more difficult may help to reduce bullying incidences (Sutton, 2001).

2.2.5 Consequences of Bullying

Rightly or wrongly many children and young people are able to cope with instances of bullying using mechanisms including peer or familial support or due to self-efficacy (Patchin and Hinduja, 2006). However bullying has also been associated with significant mental health risks (Rivers and Noret, 2010).

Fekkes (2006) used questionnaires to investigate bullying victimisation and a variety of psychosocial and psychosomatic symptoms such as depression, anxiety, headaches and sleeping problems. The results indicated that victims of bullying had a significantly greater likelihood of developing new psychosomatic or psychosocial problems compared to those who were not bullied.

This particular study benefits from being conducted on a longitudinal basis however there are a number of limitations. Firstly, the participants in this study were only aged between nine to eleven years. In addition to this being a very narrow age bracket, this is of consequence given that research suggests that early adolescence is a particularly vulnerable time for bullying to take place due to disruptions in social networks (such as moving to high school and making new friends) (Li, 2007) and therefore this study does not cover this period. A further limitation of this research is that it was conducted between 1999 and 2000. Given

the growth in anti-bullying interventions in schools (Shariff, 2009) it would be beneficial to replicate this study in a more up-to-date context.

Research has also been interested in exploring the mental health risks of pupils who are bullies. It has been suggested that among pupils who bully there are higher levels of delinquent behaviour, drug abuse and limited feelings of belonging to a school (Espelage and Holt, 2001; Haynie et al., 2001; Nansel et al., 2001). In addition, it is also reported that those pupils involved in bullying have a higher prevalence of suicidal ideation and attempts regardless of age (Klomek, 2010).

More recently there has also been increasing acknowledgement of the need to study the mental health implications for bystanders of bullying who make up the majority of pupils involved in such events (Smith and Shu, 2000). D'Augelli et al., (2002) suggest that those pupils who witness bullying could experience a degree of co-victimisation that in turn may have an impact on their own mental health and suicide ideation.

Rivers and Noret (2010) investigated the bullying experiences of over 2000 pupils in an English LA using a range of self-reporting methods including the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (Olweus, 1994) and the Brief Symptom Inventory (Derogatis, 1993). The results indicated a more complex picture of bullying behaviour than has been presented previously. Pupils who have multiple roles in bullying are more likely to report having had thoughts of suicide than those who are only victims, bullies or bystanders. This research did have one major limitation

in that it did not address the issue of cyberbullying and the authors acknowledge that this requires additional study given the increasing anecdotal evidence of links between this form of bullying and mental health risks including suicide.

2.2.6 Prevention and Intervention

A growing number of strategies have been adopted in order to address bullying in schools including raising awareness, employing methods to report and track incidents, therapeutic interventions for victims and bullies and curricula focussing on bullying issues (Kowalski, 2008). Whilst these have met with success there have also been a number of strategies which have not.

Zero tolerance policies which permit the suspension or expulsion of pupils who bully have been criticised on a number of levels. Firstly, the number of pupils potentially affected by this type of policy is high with one in five pupils admitting having bullied at some point in their school career. Secondly, the threat of severe punishment may discourage pupils from reporting bullying incidents thus negating work of anti-bullying strategies. Finally, it has been argued that pupils who bully require positive, prosocial models and therefore removing them from the school setting significantly reduces their access to these peers and adults (Kowalski et al., 2008).

A further strategy which has been criticised is the use of conflict resolution and peer mediation groups. Kowalski et al., (2008) suggest that such groups are not

suitable as bullying is not a type of conflict but is actually a form of victimisation. Furthermore, the format of these groups requires the victim and the bully to meet which can be particularly difficult and painful for the victim. Finally, mediating a bullying incident potentially gives the message that both parties are partly to blame whereas the message to the victim should in fact be that no one deserves to be bullied.

Whilst these types of interventions have been criticised there has also been increasing interest regarding comprehensive anti-bullying programmes. One of the most well-known is the Olweus Bullying Prevention Programme (2007) which is designed to provide a social-ecological perspective on the prevention and intervention of bullying in schools. This addresses school-wide components of bullying at individual, classroom, school and community levels. Research has been carried out internationally to evaluate this programme and has suggested that there is a significant reduction in pupils' reports of bullying, an improvement in pupils' perceptions of the social climate in classrooms and a reduction of anti-social behaviour in schools (Bauer et al., 2007; Olweus, 2005).

Overall, it would appear the since the 1980s research into bullying and its impact has made a considerable difference in pupil lives. Whilst bullying has not disappeared, there has been a move away from viewing bullying as an inevitable part of childhood. Furthermore, there has been a significant increase in understanding regarding the most effective strategies to employ in terms of

prevention and intervention when dealing with issues of face-to-face bullying (Kowalski, 2008).

There is however a new form of bullying which is becoming ever more prevalent, namely cyberbullying. As suggested by Rivers and Noret (2010) research focussing on face-to-face forms of bullying may not be able to fully understand this new phenomenon and given the revolutionary increase in internet and technology use amongst young people in the past decade (Juvonen and Gross, 2008) it would now appear that there is increasing importance for investigation within this area.

2.3   Definitions of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying has been described as a contemporary twist on the long standing abuse known as bullying (Diamandurous et al., 2008). Since cyberbullying came to the forefront of public attention there have been numerous attempts to define what this phenomenon actually is (Dooley et al., 2009) (see Table 2.2 below for a selection of different definitions of cyberbullying offered in the literature).

Study	Conceptual Definition of Cyberbullying
Finkelhor et al., (2000)	*Online harassment:* Threats or other offensive behaviour (not sexual solicitation) sent online to the youth or posed online about the youth for others to see (p. x)
Juvonen and Gross (2008)	The use of the Internet or other digital communication devices to insult or threaten someone (p. 497)
Li (2008)	Bullying via electronic communication tools such as e-mail, cell phone, personal digital assistant (PDA), instant messaging or the World Wide Web (p.224)
Patchin and Hinduja (2006)	Wilful and repeated harm inflicted through the medium of electronic texts (p. 152)
Slonje and Smith (2007)	Aggression that occurs through modern technological devices and specifically mobile phones or the Internet (p. 147)
Willard (2007)	Sending or posting harmful or cruel text or images using the Internet or other digital communication devices (p. 1)
Ybarra and Mitchell (2004)	*Internet harassment:* An overt, intentional act of aggression towards another person online

Table 2.2: Differing Conceptual Definitions of Cyberbullying (Tokunaga, 2010)

Tokunaga (2010) argues that the lack of a set definition is problematic as studies focussing on cyberbullying may be investigating vastly different experiences. Furthermore valid and reliable measures of cyberbullying are unable to be developed if there is limited agreement of the conceptualisation of this issue amongst researchers. Therefore there has been increasing interest within this field to develop a shared understanding of this phenomenon.

An initial issue when attempting to define cyberbullying is that, unlike face-to-face bullying, this form employs very specific methods. Patchin and Hinduja (2006) suggest that cyberbullies use two major electronic devices, namely mobile phones and computers. Mobile phones can be used to send harassing text messages and pictures (Diamandurous et al., 2008). In terms of computers these can be used to send threatening or distressing messages through email or instant messaging, develop websites which disseminate slandering comments or post offensive or abusive messages in chat rooms or online bulletin boards. Furthermore, the increasing use in social networking sites such as Facebook and Bebo can combine these aspects into one space (Mason, 2008).

The methods used ultimately result in cyberbullying being particularly insidious and, unlike face-to-face bullying, not limited in time and space. It has been suggested that in order to encourage children, young people and adults to recognise cyberbullying it is important to understand the various methods which can be used (Cross et al., 2009). This would appear to be of increasing importance given the technological advances which have now made internet access increasingly available using portable methods such as Smartphones.

Further to understanding the specific methods used in cyberbullying, researchers are also increasingly investigating the definitions given to cyberbullying by the people involved as this has been demonstrated to be an important area of understanding when conceptualising face-to-face forms of bullying (Naylor et al.,

2006). Vandebosch and van Cleemput (2008) studied how young people aged between ten to nineteen years defined cyberbullying. Their results indicated that cyberbullying must be intentional, repetitive and characterised by a power imbalance. These factors may initially appear very similar to those contained within definitions for face-to-face bullying however, upon further investigation, it would appear, when placed within the context of cyberbullying, they can become more complex.

In terms of the need for repetitive behaviour, Dooley et al., (2009) suggest that in face-to-face bullying a repetitive nature is generally accepted. For cyberbullying, the repetitive nature is even more complex and difficult to operationalise. Whilst this issue is apparent when a bully sends repeated text messages it is not so clear when a website containing bullying materials is visited by numerous people (Leishman, 2005).

The other area of disagreement focuses on power imbalance. Wolak et al.,(2007) investigated this area and highlighted that whilst there have been suggestions that victims of cyberbullying can terminate negative online activity, thus placing themselves in a position of power which they would not have in other bullying circumstances, this is not always straightforward. For example, it has been argued that some forms of cyberbullying are difficult, if not impossible, to terminate such as problems associated with removing content posted on websites.

Overall, given the evidence provided in terms of the present research study I believe that a definition which includes the range of methods which can be employed to carry out cyberbullying and also focuses on the repetitive nature and consequences of this behaviour is important. Therefore for the present research the following definition is used:

> "Cyberbullying is any behaviour performed through electronic or digital media by individuals or groups that repeatedly communicates hostile or aggressive messages intended to inflict harm or discomfort on others." (Tokunaga, 2010: 278)

2.4   Unique Features of Cyberbullying

Kowalski et al., (2008) argue that in order to understand cyberbullying fully it is crucial to appreciate the unique features of this type of behaviour which are not apparent in face-to-face bullying.

2.4.1 Behaviours

Firstly, the specific behaviours involved are significantly different to those used in face-to-face bullying. Table 2.3 defines the most prominent types of behaviours:

Cyberbullying Behaviour	Definition
Flaming	Flaming typically occurs in public settings and involves a brief, heated exchange between two or more individuals. At first flaming can appear to occur between two equals, however an unsuspected aggressive act by one may create a power imbalance (particularly if one individual is worried about who else may be brought into the 'flame war'). Therefore what might appear to observers to be a level playing field may not be perceived as such by those involved.
Harassment	Cyber harassment generally involves repetitive offensive messages sent to a target usually by personal communication methods but sometimes communicated in public forums. Harassment differs from flaming in that it is usually longer term and is more one-sided.
Denigration	Denigration is when information that is derogatory or untrue is disseminated on web pages, email or instant messenger. It can also include posting digitally altered photographs which portray a person in a sexualised or harmful manner. Online 'slam books' which are created to make fun of others are also a form of denigration.
Impersonation	With impersonation the bully poses as the victim and communicates negative, cruel or inappropriate information. This is often the result of the bully using the victim's password to access accounts. The bully may also send harassing emails or messages on social networking sites posing as the victim.
Outing and Trickery	Outing involves sharing personal information with others for example forwarding an email with personal or potentially embarrassing information. Trickery involves tricking someone into revealing personal information and then sharing this with others.
Exclusion/ Ostracism	Online exclusion can occur in any password protected environment or by people being dropped or not accepted on 'friends lists'.
Cyberstalking	Cyberstalking involves using electronic communications to stalk another person through threatening communication and repetitive harassment.

Table 2.3: Cyberbullying Behaviour Definitions (adapted from Kowalski et al., 2008)

This is by no means an exhaustive list but does give an indication of the wide variety of cyberbullying behaviours which are used. It is important to acknowledge that cyberbullying behaviours are associated with the different types of technology available (for example issues of exclusion/ostracism from 'friends lists' only became an issue with the introduction of social networking sites). Therefore, due to the fast moving nature of this field, constant up-dating of different types of cyberbullying behaviour will be required as new technologies are introduced (Heirman and Walrave, 2008).

2.4.2 Location of Cyberbullying

In addition to the unique behaviours which are employed during cyberbullying there is also the issue of the locations in which cyberbullying can occur. Smith et al., (2008) highlight that unlike face-to-face bullying, cyberbullying occurs more outside school premises and hours. This does not however mean that the issue of cyberbullying has no impact during the school day, as fifty-seven percent of cyberbullying victims report that the perpetrators are from their school and therefore problems regularly extend back into the school setting.

A further issue with cyberbullying occurring outside the school day is highlighted by Tokunga (2010) who suggests that this has implications in terms of who should intervene. Unlike issues of face-to-face bullying which have viewed school staff as being of prime importance when dealing with incidents, it is less clear who should

deal with cyberbullying if it does not directly occur on school property (Holt and Keyes, 2004).

2.4.3 Anonymity

Finally, the issue of anonymity is another factor which is distinct in cyberbullying as opposed to face-to-face bullying. Englander and Muldowney (2007) argue that pupils who would not participate in other forms of bullying do so online due to the anonymity available. Furthermore, it has been suggested that cyberbullying can be an opportunistic offense as the anonymity reduces the chances of being caught. The issue of anonymity may not however be as important, as a large proportion of victims of cyberbullying report knowing who the perpetrator is (Smith et al., 2008).

This is not to say that the issue of anonymity should be minimised. Patchin and Hinduja (2006) argue that whilst anonymity can result in matters of race and gender being less relevant in an environment which is potentially free from cultural and gender-based assumptions, this can also lead to potential dangers of people interacting in the guise of someone older or younger than him- or herself or as a member of the opposite sex.

2.5 Prevalence of Cyberbullying

Research has begun to suggest that cyberbullying is a widespread problem in schools, however there would appear to be little understanding of the exact prevalence of this type of bullying (William and Guerra, 2007). Studies focussing on the prevalence of cyberbullying can conclude with vastly different estimates ranging from ten to thirty-five percent of children and young people having experienced this form of bullying (Cross et al., 2009; Patchin and Hinduja, 2006; Li, 2007, William and Guerra, 2007). The picture is further complicated as over fifty percent of pupils report knowing someone who has been cyberbullied (Li, 2007) thus suggesting that this form of bullying may appear more prevalent when not relying on self-report methods of data collection.

Palfrey et al., (2008) suggest that the variation in prevalence findings may be as a result of different definitions used by researchers, for example studies which have not included elements such as nuisance calls tend to find a lower prevalence of cyberbullying. Furthermore, children and young people's rapid increase in internet use (Juvonen and Gross, 2008) and access to a wider range of electronic devices (Raskauskas and Stoltz, 2007) may also account, in part, for differing levels of reported prevalence rates over time. Indeed Rivers and Noret (2009) argue that it is crucial to take into account the timing of studies as their research conducted over a five year period showed a significant increase in prevalence year-on-year.

2.5.1 *Persistent versus Isolated Cyberbullying*

Cross et al., (2009) argue that when attempting to investigate the prevalence of cyberbullying there is also an issue to be addressed in terms of persistent cyberbullying as opposed to mild or isolated cases. In their study, nearly eight percent of young people reported being persistently cyberbullied. This figure does however increase significantly to seventy-two percent if single incidents are also included (Juvonen and Gross, 2008).

Finally, whilst a great deal of the research conducted to date has focussed on the prevalence of victims of cyberbullying, there would appear to be paucity of information regarding others involved. Vandebosch and van Cleemput (2009) conducted a survey of 2052 primary and secondary aged pupils in Belgium and reported that although one in ten had been a victim of cyberbullying in the preceding three months, this figure rose to almost two in ten who reported being perpetrators and three in ten who had been bystanders.

The researchers argue that not all victims considered all acts committed as cyberbullying thus supporting findings from face-to-face bullying research which highlight that pupils may have less sophisticated definitions of bullying behaviour than adults (Naylor et al., 2006). Furthermore, it is suggested that perpetrators of cyberbullying may have been more open about their actions as they often viewed them as not hurtful or even rather funny.

2.5.2 Prevalence of Different Types of Cyberbullying

Juvonen and Gross (2008) used an online survey to investigate the different types of cyberbullying encountered by children and young people. Their results suggest that name-calling and insults was the most prevalent form (66%), followed by password theft (33%) and the use of threats (27%). The participants also reported experiencing the passing on of private information (25%) and the spreading of pictures (18%). Cross et al., (2009) also investigated the prevalence of cyberbullying using different formats and reported that instant messaging and social networking sites were the most commonly used platforms for experiencing cyberbullying.

The results also suggest that whilst there are relatively low self-report rates using formats such as MSN messenger and Facebook to carry out cyberbullying, there are much higher rates when children or young people are asked if they have seen cyberbullying using these methods. These findings would therefore appear to support the findings of Vandebosch and van Cleemput (2009) who suggested higher rates of bystanders in cyberbullying. It is however important to note that whilst these findings were only reported in 2009 the cyberworld is fast moving (Juvonen and Gross, 2008) and therefore the prevalence of cyberbullying using different formats will require constant up-dating.

2.6 Legal and Policy Context of Cyberbullying

At the present time cyberbullying is not a specific criminal offence in the UK however it can be dealt with under four statute laws namely the:

- Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994

- Protection from Harassment Act 1997

- Malicious Communications Act 1988

- Communications Act 2003 (for further details see Appendix 2).

Further to this if the cyberbullying is based on sexual, racial or religious grounds prosecution can also be brought under anti-discriminatory law namely The Equality Act 2010.

In terms of policy within education settings the Department for Education (DfE) released new guidance entitled Preventing and Tackling Bullying in December 2011. This advice highlights that under The Education and Inspections Act 2006 schools have statutory obligations and clear responsibilities to prevent and where necessary respond to acts of bullying as part of the school's behaviour policy.

In addition to school-based policies and practice, The Education and Inspections Act 2006 highlights that headteachers have specific statutory powers to discipline pupils for poor behaviour carried out outside the school premises, even when pupils are not under the lawful charge of school staff. Therefore if bullying outside school is reported to staff it should be investigated and if necessary the

headteacher should inform the police if criminal acts have been committed or if the incident poses a serious threat.

From 2012 schools' accountability for preventing and dealing with incidents of bullying will be further addressed in the new Ofsted framework which includes 'behaviour and safety' as one of its key criteria for inspections. The most prominent aspects focus on how well settings ensure the systematic and consistent management of behaviour and monitoring of pupils' behaviour including freedom from bullying.

In terms of school policy in relation to cyberbullying, one of the most prominent documents to address this area is The Byron Report (DCSF, 2008). This report was commissioned by the previous Labour Government to review the risks that children face from the internet. The conclusions of the report highlight that, rather than continuing to discuss how the internet is 'causing' harm to children and young people, it is more important to focus on developing an understanding of how to empower them to manage risks in the digital world.

The report also argues that cyberbullying can be qualitatively different to 'offline' face-to-face bullying and has the potential to be more damaging due to the anonymity, ubiquity and communication potential. The report suggests that children and young people are particularly vulnerable as they are still trying to establish the social rules in their offline worlds and therefore can lack the skills to make appropriate judgements online.

The Byron Report (DCSF, 2008) did make a number of recommendations for schools when dealing with issues relating to cyber safety, including the development of Acceptable Use Policies and highlighting the need for continuing staff professional development focussing on e-safety issues. One limitation of this report is that whilst it did take into account the views of parents and pupils, it did not gather data from teaching professionals who work in schools on a day-to-day basis. This is of consequence given the number of whole-school recommendations made.

A final area which has been influential in terms of school policy regarding e-safety issues and cyberbullying is the development of the multi-stakeholder UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS). This body was set up as a result of The Byron Report (DCSF, 2008) and aims to work to keep children and young people safe online (UKCCIS, 2011). In the review of the Byron Report published in 2010 it was suggested that UKCCIS had been able to make an impact on the wellbeing of children, young people and their parents through developing and delivering a range of strategies (DCSF, 2010b).

2.7 Characteristics of Cyberbullies and Victims of Cyberbullying

2.7.1 Age

Research focussing on face-to-face bullying suggests that the period of adolescence can provide a particularly acute phase of this type of behaviour. Pellegrini and Bartini (2000) argue that this increase is due to a number of factors including abrupt biological changes associated with the onset of puberty. Furthermore, it is also suggested that significant social changes related to pupils moving from primary to secondary schooling can also be a factor. This transition of schooling can result in changes in pupils' peer group availability, individuals' standing within groups and lack of peer support as pupils move to larger and typically more impersonal school settings. This phase of disruption in social networks can ultimately lead young people to use aggression and other antagonistic strategies to achieve peer status.

Williams and Guerra (2007) conducted research focussing on the prevalence of cyberbullying amongst 1519 pupils in 5th (age 10 to 11 years), 8th (age 13 to 14 years) and 11th (age 16 to 17 years) grades - representing transition years in the US school system. The results indicated that cyberbullying peaked in the 8th grade and reduced by the 11th grade. These findings would appear to partially support the argument of Pellegrini and Bartini (2000) as the transition phase into 8th grade did coincide with an increase of bullying activities. It is however interesting to note that the transition into 11th grade did not have similar findings. It may be that biological influences are a greater impact than social influences or alternatively

this could be explained by pupils having more social strategies to cope with transition at this time in their lives.

It is however important to highlight that research conducted to date concentrating on the age of pupils involved in cyberbullying appears to have produced an inconsistent picture. Slonje and Smith (2008) report that their study focussing on 360 pupils did not find any significant differences within the age range of twelve to fifteen years for any types of cyberbullying. Furthermore, for pupils aged over fifteen years there was a significant decrease in levels of cyberbullying with only five out of one hundred and fifty pupils reporting any cyberbullying. These results are however in contrast with Ybarra and Mitchell (2004) who reported greater levels of cyberbullying amongst fifteen to seventeen year olds as opposed to ten to fourteen year olds.

In order to explore this discrepancy in findings relating to the age of cyberbullying victims it is important to consider the different settings in which the research was conducted. Slonje and Smith (2008) highlight that their study, which was conducted in Sweden, may have been affected by pupils over the age of fifteen moving into sixth-form colleges. The researchers suggest that pupils in sixth-form colleges are more likely to have increased interest in educational achievement and therefore may not be a representative sample of young people. It is posited by the researchers that cyberbullying may be more of an issue during compulsory schooling. In terms of the research conducted by Ybarra and Mitchell (2004) the

data was collected in between 1999 and 2000, which it could be argued was a time when older teenagers were more likely to have access to technology than younger pupils.

Overall, it would appear that age does have some impact on the level of cyberbullying activities encountered, although whether this can be directly linked to biological changes or disruptions to social networks is still debatable. These findings would support the argument of Baker and Tanrikulu (2010) who suggest that more qualitative research is required in order to explore the impact of factors including age in greater detail. Furthermore, as the majority of the research has to date concentrated on pupils aged eleven years and older it would appear increasingly important to begin to investigate the experiences of younger pupils given the suggestion that pupils of all ages are experiencing a rapid increase in access to technology (Raskauskas and Stoltz, 2007) and therefore potentially cyberbullying.

2.7.2 Gender

Another area which has been explored in terms of influence on cyberbullying activities is gender. Research focussing on face-to-face bullying suggests that males are more likely to be involved in direct incidents (such as physical fights) whereas females engage in more indirect forms (including gossiping and name calling) (Bjorkqvist et al., 1992). These findings have led researchers to

hypothesise that females are more likely to engage in cyberbullying as this constitutes a more indirect form of bullying (Kowalski et al., 2008); however research in this area has produced inconclusive results.

Smith et al., (2006; 2008) used a questionnaire to investigate pupils' experiences of cyberbullying in London schools. The results indicated that when victims knew who their bully was, females were more often the perpetrators. These findings are supported by other research such as Rivers and Noret (2010) who report an increase in females, rather than males, being involved in cyberbullying over a number of years.

Whilst these findings hold common sense appeal, there have been contradictions. Li (2006) reported that whilst no gender differences were found in relation to cyberbullying victimisation, males were more likely than females to be cyberbullies. Whilst this would appear to support previous research suggesting that more males are involved in bullying than females (Nansel et al., 2001) it does contradict the theory than females are more likely to be involved in cyberbullying due to its indirect nature.

Smith et al., (2006) argue that findings such as these may be due to males finding the technological side of cyberbullying more appealing, however this has not been completely supported. Kowalski et al., (2008) suggest that males are more likely to

react to cyberbullying by directly confronting the bully, whereas girls were often perceived as harder to stand up to which can result in no confrontation by the victim. This is a particularly interesting finding as it would appear that for males cyberbullying incidents are more likely to return to school the next day, whereas for females they may remain in the virtual world. This in turn could suggest that different approaches to tackling and intervening in cyberbullying may be required for males and females.

2.8   Theoretical and Psychological Explanations for Cyberbullying

2.8.1   Theoretical Explanations for Cyberbullying

Tokunaga (2010) argues that research in the field of cyberbullying has to date suffered due to the lack of focus on theoretical inquiry. It is suggested that researchers exploring cyberbullying have paid little attention to both established theoretical models and also theories focussing on new technology. Such theoretical inquiry may be able to predict behaviours and also suggest why the effects of cyberbullying appear, at present, amplified compared to other forms of bullying behaviour.

One theoretical framework which has been used to explore cyberbullying behaviour has a socio-cultural discourse approach. This views learning as a social process conveyed through mediated interactions (Vygotsky, 1978). Tokunga (2010) suggests that cyberbullying is a result of the limited social cues, or

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anonymity, available when using technology. It is argued that unlike traditional interpersonal interactions, the technologies involved in cyberbullying such as instant messaging and chat rooms offer fewer social cues which result in fewer opportunities for mediated interactions. Furthermore, it is suggested that this lack of social cues could lead to difficulty in empathising and being remorseful for cyberbullying acts (Suler 2004; Willard 2005).

Whilst this approach is interesting it may be too simplistic to understand cyberbullying behaviour. Firstly, whilst victims and perpetrators of cyberbullying may not be engaging in face-to-face interactions, to argue that they are anonymous would not appear correct given research findings suggesting that victims of cyberbullying often know who the perpetrators are (Smith et al., 2008). Furthermore, the research conducted to date is beginning to demonstrate a pattern of cyberbullying behaviour not only experienced by individuals in their homes, but also occurring in school settings (Maher, 2008). In these instances there would appear to be an opportunity for the more traditional forms of interpersonal reactions to take place involving social cues and opportunities for mediated learning.

In addition to applying established theoretical theories to explore cyberbullying behaviours, there have also been attempts to use such theories to predict situations which may encourage this type of bullying. Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986; 1989) has been proposed as a framework which may aid

understanding into why victims of cyberbullying may themselves become perpetrators. It is suggested that through a process of direct learning from bullying experiences, children and young people may take on the role of cyberbully. This theory also provides an explanation as to why bystanders of cyberbullying may also begin to participate in the bullying behaviour themselves.

Furthermore, it has been suggested that the buffering hypothesis (Cohen and Wills, 1985) may provide an insight into why victims of cyberbullying choose to confide in their friends rather than adults. This theory argues that when experiencing stressful events (such as cyberbullying) individuals can use mechanisms such as social support to act as a buffer to the stress. It is argued that the support may intervene at two points between the causal event and stress-related illness (see Figure 2.1 below).

SOCIAL SUPPORT
May prevent stress appraisal

SOCIAL SUPPORT
May result in reappraisal, inhibition of maladjusted responses, or facilitation of number of adjustive counter responses

| Potential Stressful Event(s) | Appraisal Process | Event(s) Appraised as Stressful | Emotionally Linked Physiological Response or Behavioural Adaption | Illness and/or Illness |
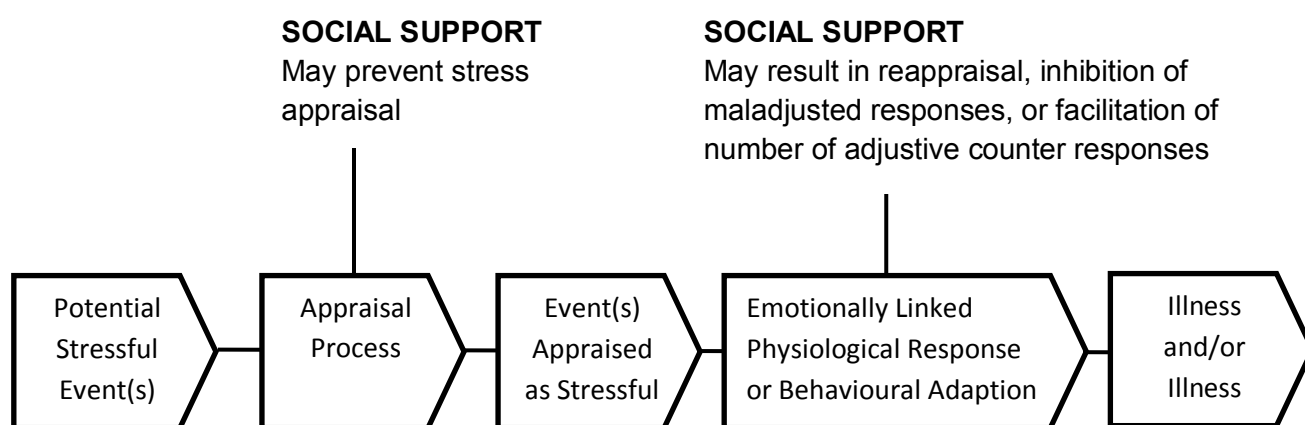
Figure 2.1: Two points at which social support may interfere (adapted from Cohen and Wills, 1985)

Cohen and Wills (1985) in their research focussing on the buffering hypothesis suggest that social support may reduce stress by altering individuals' appraisal of stress, by changing coping patterns and by affecting self-perceptions. Furthermore, they found that this buffering could be effective when based on single relationships.

In relation to cyberbullying these findings are interesting as they may suggest that pupils choose to confide in each other, not only due to fears of the consequences of reporting incidents to adults, but because they can receive some beneficial and effective support from their peers. It is however important to note that research focussing on face-to-face bullying has highlighted if incidents are not responded to by staff, this can lead to pupils having less empathy for the pupil who is being bullied (Kowalski et al., 2008). Furthermore, in terms of cyberbullying with increasingly young children being involved, it may be that they have not yet developed the social skills to be able to support their peers when required.

There have also been attempts to understand cyberbullying in terms of computer-mediated interaction theories. Early theories in this area suggested that behaviours that were represented in text online did not feel 'real' to those involved as they did not occur in the material world, a situation which could potentially lead to a decreased sense of boundaries and containment (Turkle, 1995; Young 1996a). This could result in people feeling no impediment when expressing

themselves using technology and consequently interactions potentially taking on a more abusive or confrontational tone (Young, 1996b).

Whilst these early theories were useful in understanding behaviour portrayed when using basic technological formats such as email, they struggle with today's technology formats. Rivers and Noret (2010) argue that evolution of social networking sites has highlighted that for children and young people who have been brought up with this technology, there is no separation between virtual and material worlds. Therefore, it would appear that there is still considerable work to be completed in developing theories to explain and understand cyberbullying.

2.8.2 Psychological Explanations for Cyberbullying

In addition to established theoretical models which are being employed to understand cyberbullying, there are also increasing attempts to understand this behaviour from a psychological perspective. A number of psychological explanations have been proposed to explain factors which may contribute to cyberbullying behaviour in children and young people, explanations which are primarily based upon the impact that the internet can have on the quality of human interactions (Mason, 2008).

2.8.2.1 Identity Transition

Mason (2008) suggests that modern technology undermines the quality of human interactions which, given specific circumstances, can result in destructive emotional impulses. One example of this is described as identity transition from private to social self. This model proposes that interactions using modern technology deprive people of their individual identity awareness which is replaced by a social or group identity.

This is of consequence as group identity has been found to provide people with a degree of anonymity, which allows them to avoid full responsibility for their actions (Zimbardo, 1969). In terms of cyberbullying this can be the result of people internalising group norms as their own when using modern technology and believing that everyone behaves in a similar manner. This in turn can lead to cyberbullies becoming more impulsive, irrational and aggressive in their interactions (Suler, 2004).

2.8.2.2 Ostracism

A further explanation which has been suggested in order to understand reactions to cyberbullying is the effect of ostracism. Williams et al., (2000) suggest that a significant proportion of social behaviour is influenced by individuals' attempts to be included by others and prevent exclusion. Online exclusion may occur in a

number of forms including the use of password protected environments or being knocked off a 'friends list' on a social networking site (Kowalski et al., 2008).

Williams et al., (2000) suggest that in cyber environments participants are likely to report their self-esteem dropping the more they are ostracised. Furthermore, the more they are excluded the greater the likelihood of them conforming with a different group to the one that had ostracised them. These findings have implications in terms of cyberbullying as they suggest that individuals who are ostracised through cyber means may be more inclined to join other groups online which could be designed to seek revenge from the original source. Through joining other groups individuals are able to raise their self-esteem in the cyber world again, however this process may also lead to the victims becoming cyberbullies particularly if larger groups are formed.

2.8.2.3   *Explicit and Implicit Attitudes*

A further area within the field of psychology in which research has been conducted to understand cyberbullying involves explicit and implicit attitudes. Dovidio et al., (2001) argue that there is a very weak convergence between explicit attitudes held by people and those they hold implicitly. While prejudices can be explicitly rejected in the face of social opinion, they can be retained when individuals find like-minded people to share them with and in situations which offer anonymity. Furthermore, Rivers and Noret (2010) suggest that if the virtual world is an environment where

explicit sensibilities are less applicable, this could result in greater opportunities and freedom to express implicit beliefs and attitudes and engage in greater excesses of behaviour.

Overall, it would appear that whilst some attempts have been made to propose theoretical and psychological models to explain cyberbullying behaviour these are still very limited. Furthermore, even in the past few years it has become apparent that models which have been promulgated can become out-dated given the fast moving nature of this phenomenon.

2.9   Children and Young People's Perspectives of Cyberbullying

2.9.1 Perceived Impact of Cyberbullying

Tokunga (2010) suggests that the impact of cyberbullying can be associated with various levels of suffering ranging from frustration to serious psychosocial problems which can have a significant impact on quality of life. In terms of the impact in school, victims of cyberbullying consistently report school-based problems including sudden drops in grades (Beran and Li, 2007) and increased levels of absence and truancy (Katzer et al., 2009). Other factors include missing classes, and receiving increasing numbers of detentions and/or exclusions and carrying weapons in school (Ybarra et al., 2007). It is suggested that many of these problems may be brought about due to a preoccupation with cyberbullying experiences (Tokunga, 2010). In addition to this, Varjas et al., (2009) argues that

school may no longer feel like a safe place regardless of whether the cyberbullying is happening in or out of the school setting.

In addition to mainly school-based concerns, there has also been considerable research focussing on psychological issues related to cyberbullying. Psychological problems associated with cyberbullying include social anxiety (Juvonen and Gross, 2008), depression and lowered levels of self-esteem (Didden, 2009). Furthermore, it has been suggested that victims of cyberbullying may also suffer from affective disorders including emotional distress, anger and sadness (Patchin and Hitchin, 2006; Topcu, 2008).

Baker and Tanrikulu (2010) investigated the psychological consequences of cyberbullying amongst 165 secondary school pupils. As part of the study the pupils were asked to complete The Children's Depression Inventory (Kovacs, 1981). This measure is a modification of the Beck Depression Inventory (Beck et al. 1961) and would appear to be appropriate given that it has a test-retest reliability of 0.80.

The results indicated that victims of cyberbullying reported a higher level of depressive symptoms. This finding was the same regardless of the pupils' age or gender. Baker and Tanrikulu (2010) suggest that this result demonstrates the need to develop counselling programmes to lessen the psychological consequences of cyberbullying. This conclusion is worthy of note as it would appear that the

researchers are acknowledging that in addition to preventative measures to combat cyberbullying there is also a requirement for interventions to support those who have been affected. It is however important to note a limitation of this research in that the researchers do not report whether the pupils had experienced single or prolonged periods of cyberbullying, which is of consequence given previous findings suggesting that the frequency, length and severity of cyberbullying acts is associated with negative outcomes (Tokunaga, 2010).

Patchin and Hinduja (2010) also conducted research focussing on experiences of cyberbullying but considered the outcomes from both the victim's and bully's perspectives. This study was interested in investigating the relationship between pupils' experiences of cyberbullying and their level of self-esteem. Self-esteem was chosen as a focus as previous research on face-to-face bullying has suggested that victims tend to have lower self-esteem whereas the picture for bullies is less clear (Salmivalli, 1999; Jankauskiene et al., 2008).

The results indicated that amongst a random sample of 1963 pupils (mean age 12.6 years) there was a moderate and statistically significant relationship between low self-esteem and experiences of cyberbullying regardless of whether participants were victims or bullies. The researchers acknowledge some limitations in their design such as the data being cross-sectional and therefore not able to establish whether experiences with cyberbullying cause decreases in self-esteem or whether pupils with low self-esteem are more often victims of, or involved, in

this type of behaviour. This study does however highlight the importance of working with pupils to develop high self-esteem in order to offset any negative impact cyberbullying may have.

2.9.2 *Perceived Differences between Cyberbullying and Face-to-Face Bullying*

Researchers have also been interested in establishing whether cyberbullying has a different impact than face-to-face bullying. Smith et al., (2008) highlight the complexity of the situation through suggesting that, whilst the possible breadth of audience for cyberbullying might be heightened, the possibility of being able to take control and stop incidents is greater compared to face-to-face bullying. This is further complicated by the fact that cyberspace and the real world can become heavily intertwined with children and young people spending their days with friends and their nights with them online. It is suggested that there is no clear separation between the two realms as what happens during the day is discussed online at night and what happens online at night is discussed the next day (Patchin and Hinduja, 2006).

Juvonen and Gross (2008) explored this unique aspect of cyberbullying and suggested that it could be particularly distressing as children and young people are likely to encounter this type of bullying at home and alone. Furthermore, unlike face-to-face bullying, it would appear that there is an added incentive to avoid reporting incidents as there is a fear of being prevented from using the technology

which in turn can lead to cyberbullying being overlooked for prolonged periods of time. This avoidance was further highlighted by Slonje and Smith (2008) who reported that with cyberbullying victims:

- 50% reported not telling anyone;

- 35.7% reported confiding in a friend;

- 8.9% told a parent/guardian; and

- no victims reported telling a teacher.

The researchers suggested that children and young people view adults as being less aware of cyberbullying than face-to-face bullying. This is of consequence as children and young people may turn to their friends for support. Given that previous research focussing on face-to-face bullying has suggested that pupils may not have such a sophisticated understanding of what behaviours constitute bullying (Naylor et al., 2006) this may result in peers not taking the situation seriously and being able to offer appropriate advice.

2.9.3 Benefits of the Cyberworld

Whilst it is tempting to focus only the negative aspects associated with children and young people accessing the cyberworld, it is important also to consider other more positive factors. Trolley and Hanel (2010) argue that new technology has brought huge benefits in terms of opportunities and the ability to connect to world.

It has been suggested that having access to such technologies is becoming central to our daily lives and influences our vision of what pertains to be a good school, active community and comfortable home (Livingstone and Bober, 2004).

It is argued that pupils are now raised in a world that accepts and requires digital communication technologies and that they should therefore be provided with an education which prepares them to operate in a technology driven society (National Council for the Social Studies, 2006). Furthermore, Berson et al., (2008) suggest that being digitally connected globally can increase opportunities for global understanding, multicultural respect and knowledge of diversity.

Valkenburg and Peter (2007) investigated how online communication was related to closeness with friends using a sample of participants aged between ten to sixteen years (n = 794). The results indicated that eighty-eight percent of participants used the internet to maintain existing networks of friends and held across males and females.

The research also investigated which types of young people felt attracted to online communication. The results indicated that socially anxious young people were less likely to use the internet for communication than non-socially anxious young people. However it would appear that socially anxious young people believe more strongly that online communication was effective in developing breadth and depth

of communication (this result was however only thirty-six percent of socially anxious versus twenty-three percent of non-socially anxious). Valkenburg and Peter (2007) suggest that this result may be due to socially anxious young people perceiving online communication with its reduced auditory and visual cues as more effective than offline communication to discuss intimate topics.

The results of this study are interesting in terms of highlighting the more positive elements of online communication which can sometimes be missed when viewing only negative outcomes. The findings would also appear the support the suggestion of The Byron Report (DCSF, 2008) which argued that it is important to equip young people to develop an understanding of how to manage risks in the digital world rather than viewing the internet as causing harm.

There are however limitations to this research which require to be addressed. This study focussed primarily on young people and their use of instant messenger (IM) sites. Whilst this is an important area to investigate it may also be beneficial to explore whether similar result are found using other platforms such as social networking sites. Furthermore, the research used data gathered in 2004. Recent figures suggest that the number of young people accessing online communication is growing year-on-year. For example in 2010 forty-one percent of young people aged twelve to fifteen years had access to the internet in their bedroom, up from thirty-one percent in 2009 (Ofcom, 2011). It would therefore it would be beneficial to explore this further using more up-to-date data.

2.9.4   Technology as an Integral Part of Children's Culture

In addition to focussing on the benefits of the cyberworld there has also been increasing interest in understanding how technology has become an integral part in the lives of children and young people. Fox et al., (2011) suggest that technology and digital devices have an enormous impact on children and young people in the 21st century as they have spent their entire lives surrounded by them. This has led to the suggestion that it is no longer applicable to distinguish between the 'real world' and the 'virtual world' for this generation as everything is considered real regardless of whether it takes place on or offline (CEOP, 2009).

The term 'digital natives' is often used to describe these children and young people. This is designed to highlight that this generation live their lives completely immersed in technology and are 'fluent in the digital language of computers, video games and the Internet' (Prensky, 2005, p. 81). Furthermore, it is suggested that these children and young people do not consider digital devices such as computers to be 'technology' anymore as they are everyday items in their lives (McNeely, 2005).

In order to understand how technology has become so integral to children and young people's lives it is important to consider the access this generation have to various devices. Kvavik et al., (2005) conducted a study focussing on over 4000 pupils in the USA and found that the majority owned personal computers (93.4%)

and mobile phones (82%). It would therefore appear that for almost a decade children and young people have been able to access technology with relative ease. More recent research has also highlighted that pupils aged between nine to sixteen years spend on average eighty-eight minutes a day accessing online material and that one in three have access to a mobile phone or hand held device which enables them to do this anywhere they choose (Livingstone, 2011).

A further area which has received attention when considering the place of technology in children and young people's lives is the use of social networking and the importance it holds for this generation. O'Keeffe and Clarke-Pearson (2011) suggest that more than half of children and young people log on to a social networking site at least once a day and that twenty-two percent visit more than ten times a day. It is argued that social networking is important for a number of reasons which are similar to offline lives such as staying in contact with friends and family, making new friends and sharing pictures and ideas. Furthermore, it has been suggested that the use of such networks can have deeper benefits including extending children and young people's views of themselves, their community and the world. Finally, Boyd (2007) argues that whilst not all pupils use social networking sites the vast majority have an opinion on them. It is therefore suggested that whether that opinion is positive or negative it does highlight that social networking is an integral part of children and young people's culture.

It has however been argued that to discuss this generation as 'digital natives' is too simplistic. Boyd (2007) highlights that there is a still a group of pupils who do not access a vast array of technology for a number of reasons such as parents banning them or only having access in school where content is limited. Furthermore, a large-scale European survey of over 25,000 children and young people in 25 European countries found that whilst one hundred percent did use computers for school work or playing games on their own this fell to fifty-six percent who were involved in sharing content with peers. Furthermore, only twenty-three percent used technology for visiting virtual world and blogging (Livingstone et al., 2011).

Overall it would appear that a picture is beginning to emerge that the notion that technology is integral to children and young people's lives is more complex than initially thought. Whilst technology in undoubtedly embedded in the lives of this generation their access to it, and interest and skills in using it, is not uniform. It would however appear increasingly apparent that suggesting to pupils that they should not engage in interactive activities is both unrealistic and ineffective. Furthermore, such a response can ultimately reinforce the perception held by children and young people that adults do not understand how they live their lives (Englander and Muldowney, 2007).

2.10 Parents' Perspectives of Cyberbullying

The UKCCIS (2011) suggest that parents are ultimately best placed for teaching children and young people how to engage with technology in a safe and appropriate manner. However the Byron Report (DCSF, 2008) argues that whilst there must be a shared responsibility in reducing incidences of cyberbullying which must include families, this can be difficult when parents do not feel equipped to support their children.

Dehue et al., (2008) highlight that a major difference between face-to-face bullying and cyberbullying is that parents are often unfamiliar with modern technology and therefore less likely to be aware that their child is being cyberbullied or involved in cyberbullying. Furthermore, it has been suggested that parents' lack of knowledge may lead them to be resistant to engage their children in discussions focussing on technological issues which decreases opportunities for discussion regarding cyberbullying (Mason, 2008).

Suggestions such as these have led researchers to explore the perceptions and experiences of parents who have had a child who has been a victim of cyberbullying. Dehue et al., (2008) gave questionnaires to 1211 pupils and their parents. The parent questionnaire focused on gathering information regarding their skills when using computers, use and knowledge of internet and text messaging rules. The results indicated that more than sixty percent of parents set rules about the frequency with which their child was allowed to use the internet and that over

eighty percent stipulated what their child could access. The researchers did not however ask the children and young people whether they adhered to these requests therefore the efficacy of the rules were not established.

Dehue et al., (2008) also report that the percentage of parents indicating that their child was involved in cyberbullying was lower (4.8%) than the percentage of children reporting being involved (17.3%). The percentage of parents reporting their child being bullied was also much lower (11.8%) than those of pupils who reported being bullied (22.9%). The researchers did highlight that there may have been issues with parents giving socially desirable answers and therefore it may be beneficial to study this using interview methods as this would allow more in-depth investigation.

Mesch (2009) investigated the impact of parental mediation in relation to whether their children were victims of cyberbullying. Using a telephone survey of 935 parents and young people aged between twelve to seventeen years, the researchers gathered information regarding the levels of restrictive mediation (such as installing web filters and programmes to monitor websites visited) and evaluative mediation (such as setting internet rules and location of computers in the home).

When comparing the data gathered from the young people the results indicated that parents of non-victims of cyberbullying were more likely to have rules in place on internet usage. It would also appear that non-victims reported higher usage of

computers in shared space, restriction on websites visited and monitored the amount of computer time.

Whilst this study benefited from a large sample size and did provide some interesting results it does however have some limitations. Firstly the parents who agreed to take part in the telephone survey were likely to have been highly motivated and interested in internet safety and therefore may not be representative of all parents - although it has been suggested that telephone interviews are beneficial in lowering socially desirable responses (Ellen et al., 2002). Furthermore the researchers do not report how they defined cyberbullying to the participants, and as has been highlighted previously, this can have a significant impact on the results (Tokunaga, 2010).

Overall it would appear that the results indicate that if parents are able to work with their children this can reduce the instances of cyberbullying and in turn keep them safer online. This type of intervention is however dependent on the knowledge parents have regarding computers and how confident they feel when addressing these issues. It may be therefore be that other groups such as schools have to take a more active role when focussing on issues of cyberbullying, whether that be working with children and/or their parents.

2.11 Schools' Perspectives of Cyberbullying

Within schools the issue of cyberbullying has become of greater prevalence over the past few years. Initially there was a slow response with many settings choosing to focus on e-safety rather than cyberbullying. Kowalski et al., (2008) argue that this may have been due to two factors. Firstly, teaching professionals may not have had the requisite knowledge and understanding to be able to address this issue. In addition, it may have been viewed as an issue relevant to the home environment rather than the school settings.

In order to understand the role that schools could play in combating cyberbullying Cassidy et al., (2009) investigated whether cyberbullying was likely to start in the home or school and the interplay between these two settings. The researchers used a survey to study the cyberbullying experiences of pupils aged between eleven to fifteen years (n = 365). Sixty-four percent of the participants reported that cyberbullying started at school and then carried on at home involving the same pupils.

The researchers argue that the pupils were not suggesting that bullying was taking place using electronic means in school, but rather that face-to-face bullying carried over into online exchanges at home. These results would appear to support the findings of Brown et al., (2006) who argued that cyberbullying primarily originates in the school setting and is followed by digital retaliation at home.

The focus on the view that cyberbullying occurs outside school premises and times is however still debated. The research of Kowalski et al., (2008) highlighted that whilst most forms of cyberbullying do not take place in school, text messaging was used for bullying during the school day. It is interesting that this research was conducted in 2006 prior to the widespread availability of phones with greater technological capabilities (Juvonen and Gross, 2008) and it would be beneficial to determine whether this has had an impact in schools in terms of the levels of cyberbullying.

Many schools have responded to the threat of cyberbullying within their premises by banning mobile phones during the school day. It has been argued that this has partly come about due to concerns regarding the content and tone of messages used by pupils being considered inappropriate by school staff. This stance however has been criticised and it has been suggested that a more useful intervention would be to discuss with pupils how messages can be perceived as harassing due to the language used (Ybarra et al., 2006).

Whilst banning mobile phones on school premises may have common sense appeal for reducing incidents of cyberbullying, it has resulted in some difficulties in terms of reporting. Kowalski et al., (2008) suggest that whilst pupils may confirm sending and receiving bullying messages via mobile phones during the school day (even if the school has a policy banning them), they are reluctant to report incidents for fear of having their mobile phones confiscated and getting into trouble

by breaking school rules. Furthermore, Smith et al., (2006) suggest that when questioned, pupils thought that banning mobile phones on school premises would not impact on cyberbullying as pupils continue to use them in secret and away from adult supervision.

There have however been contradictions to these findings, for example Cassidy et al., (2008) reported that the primary reason for not reporting cyberbullying to school staff was fear of retribution from the cyberbully. Pupils also suggested that they would not inform staff of cyberbullying incidents as they did not consider it to be within the school's mandate.

These findings have implications for school staff not only in terms of policy but also prevention and intervention. However at the present time, due to the relatively new phenomenon of cyberbullying, there is limited data available concerning what interventions schools are using and their effectiveness. Kowalski et al., (2008) highlight that if schools are to take a more prominent role in developing programmes to address issues of cyberbullying in schools, the following areas are important (see Table 2.4 below).

Suggestion	Implementation
Assess Cyberbullying	Provide pupils with anonymous questionnaires to thoroughly assess the issue. Ensure questionnaires define cyberbullying and include questions about cyberbullying through different mediums
Provide Staff Training	Ensure staff receive training focussing on cyberbullying and children's use of cyber technologies.
Define Cyberbullying	Schools need to define cyberbullying highlighting what it is and is not.
Develop Clear Rules and Policies about Cyberbullying	Schools need to develop their own policies which should use clear language, discuss expectations of staff and pupils and the consequences of violations.
Encourage Reporting of Cyberbullying	Pupils need to know how to report cyberbullying. The most effective methods use school-wide reporting systems.
Share Resources with Parents	Schools can assist parents by sending home information regarding cyberbullying and providing training to develop understanding.
Discuss Cyberbullying in Class	Schools should implement sessions to focus on cyberbullying issues such as how cyberbullying is defined, its potential impact and how to respond. More in-depth issues can also be covered such as the positive role bystanders can play in combating cyberbullying.
Use Pupils as Experts	Use pupils to support staff in developing knowledge of current cyberbullying issues and pass on these findings to peers and younger pupils.
Community/School Partnerships	Use organisations outside the school to support teaching staff and parents to reinforce the message of appropriate use of technology.

Table 2.4: Implementation of Cyberbullying Strategies in Schools (adapted from Kowalski et al., 2008)

These interventions highlight the need for a holistic approach involving pupils, teaching professionals and the wider community. Indeed Bryce and Klang (2009) argue that, due to the blurring of boundaries, a multi-stakeholder response is necessary. It is however suggested that each of these stakeholders will have a different opinion about their relative responsibilities and capabilities for action. To

date it would appear that whilst there has been input regarding the pupils and parents, there would appear to be little research focussing on teaching professionals and their perceptions and experiences.

At the present time there would appear to be only a single study which has specifically explored the experiences of teaching professionals when dealing with issues of cyberbullying in schools. Cross et al., (2012) in a follow-up to their 2009 study, surveyed 339 teaching professionals working in a range of secondary school settings across the UK. The survey was designed to investigate prevalence and impact of cyberbullying within settings and effective strategies implemented to support pupils and teachers.

The results indicated that, on average, each respondent had dealt with thirteen incidents of cyberbullying with the vast majority being related to malicious content posted on social networking sites or abusive text messages. The teachers (who were all senior managers in schools) reported spending an average six hours a week dealing with issues connected to cyberbullying. The findings also suggested that the majority of cyberbullying was child-on-child incidents and if adults were involved (as either a bully or victim) this often resulted in the bullying taking on a different nature and coming more in line with harassment or stalking.

Cross et al., (2012) highlight that cyberbullying was reported to be a problem for teaching professionals as well as pupils with one in ten of the respondents reporting being harassed through social networking sites, text messages or having hate groups set up against them on websites. Furthermore, staff also reported that parents were using the internet and social media sites to voice frustrations or pursue vendettas against education professionals.

In terms of the impact of cyberbullying, the survey indicated that teachers who experienced this type of behaviour reported that they felt afraid for their own safety or that of their families, felt emotionally or mentally violated and felt that their teaching had suffered as a consequence. Further to this, it was suggested that cyberbullying could impact on the school climate with staff feeling demoralised and contemplating leaving the profession.

This survey did not however gather the opinions of teaching professionals in terms of their perceptions of the impact cyberbullying had on pupils. This is of consequence given research findings focussing on pupils' experiences have suggested that such behaviour can have significant school-based and psychological consequences (Patchin and Hitchin, 2006; Baker and Tanrikulu, 2010). It may now be beneficial to explore whether teaching professionals perceive the impact of cyberbullying on pupils in the same manner, as this may effect on how they respond to incidents.

Finally, the survey focussed on strategies which were used in schools to prevent cyberbullying. The results indicated that the most common advice given by teachers involved encouraging pupils to change their privacy settings and contacting parents of the pupil involved. Nearly half of the participants reported that they imposed school-based sanctions such as detention on perpetrators. In addition to school-based approaches, staff also highlighted that they reported incidents to the police or to the website providers. It is interesting that these measures all appear to be reactive after incidents have occurred.

Schools also employed a range of methods for dealing with incidents including restorative justice approaches, referring pupils to the school counsellor and arranging meetings between the victim and the bully. This final approach is particularly interesting as over forty percent of schools reported using this method, which research focussing on face-to-face bullying has highlighted requires to be dealt with carefully as it can be very distressing for the victim and can result in the victim feeling they are in some way to blame (Kowalski et al., 2008).

Overall this survey of teaching professionals does begin to give an insight into a range of issues facing staff when dealing with cyberbullying. It is however, at the present time, the only study which has specifically focussed on this area and like the vast majority of research within this field used quantitative techniques to gather data. Whilst this has enabled information about teaching professionals' experiences to be gathered, it would now be beneficial for qualitative techniques to

be employed in order to be able to explore these issues in greater depth and detail.

In addition to this, the survey conducted by Cross et al., (2012) only focussed on teaching professionals working with pupils of secondary school age. Given that research has suggested there has been a revolutionary increase in internet and technology use amongst young people in the past decade (Juvonen and Gross, 2008) and that this is involving increasingly younger children (Raskauskas and Stoltz, 2007), I would argue that it is important to explore experiences of teaching professionals from a variety of school settings educating pupils of differing ages.

Therefore given this rationale, and the findings from the critical literature review, the following study will focus on exploring the experiences and perceptions of teaching professionals when dealing with cyberbullying issues in a variety of school settings and will focus on the following research questions:

1	What is the extent of understanding of cyberbullying among teaching professionals in school settings?
2	What do teaching professionals view as the role and appropriate response of schools when encountering cyberbullying issues?
3	What is the perceived impact of cyberbullying on members of the school community?
4	How have teaching professionals in schools responded to and are dealing with cyberbullying issues in their settings?
5	Does the type of school and age of pupil have a bearing on cyberbullying and the response required?

Table 2.5: Research Questions

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The requirement to state, explain and justify research design is becoming an increasingly important topic within the field of research. De Vaus (2001) argues that this is due to the fact that evidence can be found to support any theory therefore requiring researchers to implement sound research design in order to reduce ambiguity. Further to this, Robson (2002) suggests that it is necessary for researchers to actively consider suitable research design as there is a possibility of relying on favoured approaches regardless of the issues to be considered.

The aims of the current research are to:

1	Provide an insight into the views, experiences and current practice of teaching professionals concerning cyberbullying issues in their school settings;
2	Explore the perspective of teaching professionals regarding the impact of cyberbullying on pupils and the wider school community; and
3	Ascertain from teaching professionals whether cyberbullying issues are different dependent on the age of pupils and type of school.

Table 3.1: Research Aims

Once these aims had been established it was then necessary to move from this primarily abstract level onto more concrete areas through the generation of research questions (Cohen et al., 2007). Punch (1998) suggests that research questions have a definite role to play in research design including organising and

giving studies direction, highlighting the boundaries of the project and keeping the researcher focussed.

The research questions for the current study were established following an extensive literature review and are as follows:

1	What is the extent of understanding of cyberbullying among teaching professionals in school settings?
2	What do teaching professionals view as the role and appropriate response of schools when encountering cyberbullying issues?
3	What is the perceived impact of cyberbullying on members of the school community?
4	How have teaching professionals in schools responded to and are dealing with cyberbullying issues in their settings?
5	Does the type of school and age of pupil have a bearing on cyberbullying and the response required?

Table 3.2: Research Questions

Robson (2002) highlights that the types of research questions posed have an impact on whether a study will take a fixed or flexible design. In terms of this research the focus on questions to explore the experiences and opinions of teaching professionals in terms of cyberbullying led to a form of flexible design. Flexible designs require repeated revisiting of all aspects of the research as it takes place and therefore, unlike fixed designs which are tightly pre-specified, the framework for this type of study emerges throughout the research process.

3.2 Methodology

Methodology concerns the various steps adopted by the researcher alongside the logic behind them (Kumar, 2008). According to Draper (2004) this involves consideration of the philosophical principles which will guide both how the research is framed and also the type of approach that will be used to collect and analyse the data. Methodological commitments are strongly interrelated with a researcher's epistemological stance and have a constraining effect on the types of methods used to collect and analyse data (Willig, 2001).

3.2.1 Ontological and Epistemological Assumptions

Cohen et al., (2007) argue that researchers should be encouraged to consider the philosophical underpinnings of their research particularly in terms of the ontological and epistemological assumptions upon which it is based. It has been suggested that these assumptions are interconnected and are fundamental in aiding researchers to understand and explain their research inquiry process (Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

3.2.1.1   *Ontology*

Ontology considers the nature of the social phenomena at the heart of the area of research and focuses on what is the reality of the phenomena being studied (Usher, 1996). Ontology therefore questions whether this reality "is external to individuals – imposing itself on the consciousness from without – or the product of individual consciousness" (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 7).

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This study takes a relativist ontological position which argues that reality can only be represented through the eyes of the participants (Robson, 2002). Furthermore, this position suggests that there are multiple mental constructions which are dependent on individuals and based within social circumstances and experiences (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Sullivan (2010) argues that the research process within this ontological stance emphasises the generation of working hypotheses and the role of language, not only as an object of study but also as a means of gathering data concerning how the world is represented and constructed.

3.2.1.2   *Epistemology*

Cohen et al., (2007) argue that once ontological issues have been considered this leads on to the need to address the epistemological assumptions upon which research is based. Epistemology is concerned with the nature of knowledge (Miller and Brewer, 2003). This area focuses on how we know what we know and considers assumptions about what form knowledge can take, who can know this knowledge and how knowledge can be attained and communicated (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995).

With regard to this study, the epistemological stance is situated within the interpretivist paradigm as it focuses on concern for the individual and attempts to understand the participant's experiences from within, rather than reflect the viewpoint of the researcher (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998). Furthermore, within this epistemological stance, theory is viewed as emergent rather than preceding

research and is generated to make sense to those individuals who are its source (Cohen et al., 2007).

In terms of this research the epistemological position was determined due to a number of factors. Firstly, as stated in Chapter One of this thesis, my own position as a researcher is one where I believe that teachers' have their own perspectives and epistemological beliefs which I wish to acknowledge and explore. In order to investigate these further and gain a deeper understanding I believe it is necessary to move away from positivist research with its focus on objective knowledge and separating facts from values (Robson, 2002).

Furthermore, as highlighted in my critical literature review (Chapter Two), the vast majority of research to date has focused on quantitative methods for gathering data such as questionnaires. Whilst this has been necessary in order to highlight the need for further study within this area, I believe it is now timely to move towards a field of research which is able to explore the issues surrounding cyberbullying in greater depth and from the perspectives of those involved.

3.3 Method

3.3.1 Sample

Sampling refers to the process whereby the researcher decides and defines the population upon which the research will focus. This is an important element in any study and therefore sampling decisions regarding participants have to be made

early on in the research process (Cohen et al., 2007). For this study I selected participants using a purposive sampling technique.

Coolican (2004) suggests that this type of sampling is employed to enable researchers to focus on participants who are most representative for the issues involved and who are likely to have the appropriate knowledge and experience. This type of sampling does not represent the wider population but instead is selective in order to satisfy a specific purpose (Robson, 2002). In this study, the participants had to fulfil the criteria that they had responsibility for anti-bullying policy in the school where they were currently employed. This was deemed important as the research called for participants who would have an overview of whole-school issues relating to cyberbullying.

Further to this, participants were required from a range of school settings catering for pupils of different ages. This criterion was necessary as previous research focussing on other forms of bullying has suggested that early adolescence is a particularly vulnerable time for bullying to take place due to disruptions in social networks (such as moving to high school and making new friends) (Li, 2007). Furthermore, the critical literature review highlighted that increasingly greater numbers of pupils are having greater access to communication technology (Juvonen and Gross, 2008). It was therefore considered important to investigate the views of teaching professionals employed to teach various ages of pupils in

order to ascertain whether there were differences in their views and experiences dependent on setting.

3.3.2 Context

The school system within Westshire Council currently consists of a range of schools settings including:

- First Schools (Year Reception to Year 4);

- Middle Schools (Year 5 to Year 7 or 8);

- High Schools (Year 8 or 9 to Year 11);

- Primary Schools (Year Reception to Year 6); and

- Secondary Schools (Year 7 to Year 11).

Due to the range of schools and the research aims and questions posed which required data to be gathered from teaching professionals employed to teach pupils before and after school transitions, it was decided that staff from a range of middle, high, primary and secondary schools would be approached to participate (first schools were discounted from the process due to the age of pupils on roll).

It was initially considered only to approach primary and secondary schools as this system is more representative of the rest of the UK. However, as the research was

ultimately designed to reflect the experiences and opinions of Westshire LA staff it was determined that all four school types would have to be involved in order for this to be appropriate and reflect the needs across the whole council area.

In total eight schools agreed to participate in the study. Further details of the participants and the schools they were employed in are given below:

School Number	Type of School	Age Group of Pupils	School Information	Job Title of Participant	Gender	Additional Information
1	High	Years 8 to 11 plus sixth form (ages 12 to 18 years)	Co-educational setting educating approximately 1200 pupils. The school is recognised as a specialist Technology College. The proportion of pupils who have free school meals is low. The percentage of pupil on the Special Educational Needs register is broadly average.	Headteacher	Male	The Headteacher takes the lead for safe-guarding and anti-bullying within the school and works with the ICT lead to develop e-safety policies.
2	Middle	Years 5 to 7 (ages 9 to 12 years)	Co-educational setting educating approximately 280 pupils. It is an average sized school with a small proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is similar to the national average.	Headteacher	Male	The Headteacher is also the lead for ICT within the school and teaches this subject to all year groups.
3	Middle	Years 5 to 7 (ages 9 to 12 years)	Co-educational school educating approximately 270 pupils. It is an average sized school with a low percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals. An average proportion of pupils are on the Special Educational Needs register.	ICT Coordinator	Male	The ICT Co-ordinator is responsible for e-safety and is a member of the Senior Management Team.
4	Middle	Years 6 to 8 (ages 10 to 13 years)	Co-educational school educating approximately 320 pupils. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average, as is that of pupils with Special Educational Needs.	Assistant Headteacher	Female	The Assistant Headteacher is also the lead for ICT within the school and responsible for e-safety issues.

5	Middle	Years 5 to 7 (ages 9 to 12 years)	Co-educational below average size school. An average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. An average proportion of pupils have Special Educational Needs.	Headteacher / ICT Coordinator	Female	The Headteacher/ICT Coordinator has led in gaining the 360 degree e-safety award for the school in recognition of work with pupils, staff and governors for keeping safe online.
6	Secondary	Years 7 to 11 plus sixth form (ages 11 to 18 years)	Co-educational school educating approximately 900 pupils. The school is of average size for a secondary school and has a sixth form. A lower than average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with Special Educational Needs is higher than the national average.	Headteacher	Female	The Headteacher has overall responsibility for behaviour and anti-bullying policy within the school and is supported by the Senior Management Team within each year group.
7	High	Years 8 to 11 plus sixth form (ages 12 to 18 years)	Co-educational school educating approximately 1000 pupils. The school is recognised as a Science college and has a sixth form. The proportion of pupils on the Special Educational Needs register is below national average.	Deputy Headteacher	Female	The Deputy Headteacher is responsible for pastoral care throughout the school.
8	Primary	Reception to Year 6 (ages 4 to 11 years)	Co-educational average sized primary school. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is higher than the national average as is the number of pupils on the Special Educational Needs register.	Headteacher	Female	The Headteacher has overall responsibility for behaviour and anti-bullying policy in school. She is supported by an ICT coordinator to implement e-safety.

Table 3.3: Information on School and Participant Sample

3.3.3 Procedure

3.3.3.1 Recruitment

The University of Birmingham requires all students and staff conducting research to submit an Ethics Review Form to a committee in order to obtain ethical approval (see Appendix 3 for copy of the ethics form). Once this had been obtained in April 2011 the participant recruitment process could begin. Initially all headteachers in high and secondary schools in Westshire LA were contacted by letter which stipulated the aims of the research and asked if their school would be interested in participating (see Appendix 4 for letter). Headteachers were also sent a copy of the participant information sheet which gave further details of the study including how the study was to be conducted and addressed the issue of confidentiality (see Appendix 5 for participant information sheet).

The headteachers were asked to return a reply slip if they were willing for their school to participate in the study stating a contact name for a member of staff who would be willing to contribute. Once these were received I contacted the designated member of staff to provide further information if necessary (including the participant information sheet if they had not already seen it) and organised a convenient date and location to conduct the interview.

It had initially been anticipated that once high or secondary schools had agreed to contribute I would then contact their feeder middle or primary schools to ask them

if they would be interested in participating in the study. Whilst this was successful in one case it was not in others. As it was not felt appropriate to discount data that had already been collected (acknowledging the time that the high and secondary schools had given) it was decided to contact middle and primary schools even though their feeder schools had not contributed. This type of decision was possible due to the flexible design which had been implemented at the beginning of the research process.

3.3.3.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

In order to obtain rich detailed accounts of the participants' perceptions regarding cyberbullying issues in their settings, I decided to employ interviews as a method of data collection. Interviews have been described as a powerful research tool which is flexible and enables detailed information to be gathered on a number of different multi-sensory levels including verbal, non-verbal and heard (Wilkinson and Birmingham, 2003).

Due to the epistemological stance taken within this research, it was considered that each of the participants would have their own unique beliefs and opinions about the research in question. Therefore, interviews were considered appropriate as it is argued that this method shifts away from viewing data as being objective and external to the individual and moves towards a more subjective position (Clark-Carter, 2004).

Interviews as a method of data collection have generally been categorised into three different groups namely structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Clark-Carter, 2004). Cohen et al., (2007) argue that the decision regarding which type of interview to use is crucial and requires consideration on the part of the researcher. In terms of this study the work of Arksey and Knight (1999) was a primary factor in the decision to employ a semi-structured interview format.

Arksey and Knight (1999) suggest that whilst peoples' perceptions of the world are generally individualistic, different interview techniques are required for documenting perceptions that are widely shared as opposed to those that are more personal in nature. It is argued that when considering which interview technique to employ, researchers should view human knowledge and understanding as a continuum from convergence to divergence (see Figure 3.1 below).

	Level		
Context	Personal	Sub-cultural	Society-wide
Unusual contexts			
New contexts with clear, familiar features			
Routine social contexts			

Figure 3.1: Continuum from light to dark indicating movement from individual to more communal understanding (Arksey and Knight, 1999: p.3)

Arksey and Knight (1999) suggest that if a researcher wishes to gather data in areas where there is likely to be common experiences and society-wide understanding, structured interview techniques are suitable. However if more personal understandings are sought then unstructured interviews will be more appropriate. The design of this study required data to be gathered at both a sub-cultural and personal level and about contexts with familiar features to the participants therefore it was considered that a semi-structured interview format would be most appropriate.

3.3.3.3   Interview Design

Coolican (2004) argues that the use of semi-structured methods ensures that the same topics are covered for each interview. This was particularly relevant in this research as whilst it was felt that it would be beneficial to have the ability to change the order of the questions to enable participants to lead the direction of the interview to allow rich data to be gathered, it was also considered important that all areas were covered to ensure analysis in terms of comparable and differing viewpoints was possible (Cohen et al., 2007).

An important element during the initial planning stages of this research involved consideration of which types of questions to include in the semi-structured interviews. In terms of this study it was considered most appropriate to use open-ended questions throughout (see Appendix 6 for interview schedule).

Robson (2002) highlights that the use of open-ended questions is beneficial as it enables the researcher to understand more deeply the participant's views which is important given the subjective standpoint of the research. Furthermore, open-ended questions are more in line with the epistemological position of this research which highlights the importance of participants being able to talk about a topic in their own world, free from the constraints of fixed response questions (Guest et al., 2012)

It has also been highlighted that open-ended questions are useful in situations where unexpected or unanticipated answers may occur (Cohen et al., 2007). In terms of this research this was an important element to consider as the literature review highlighted that there is currently very limited research specifically focussing on the viewpoints of teaching professionals in terms of cyberbullying. It was therefore crucial to acknowledge that whilst the literature review had given some indication of areas on which to focus questioning, there may be other unexpected topics which required further exploration throughout the interview process.

3.3.3.4   *Pilot of Interview Questions*

I piloted the questions in one primary school before the study commenced to check the type of responses and to ensure that the meaning of each question was clear to the participants. This piloting of the interview questions was beneficial as it enabled me to change the order of the questions to make the interview flow better

and also highlighted where additional questions were required (see Appendix 7 for details regarding the pilot study).

3.3.3.5   Interview Settings

I interviewed all participants in the school where they were employed. Participants were offered a choice of locations and times in order to ensure that the interview process caused as little disruption as possible to their working day. Before each interview commenced I gave the participants an opportunity to re-read the information sheet and ask any questions. Participants were asked to sign a consent form (see Appendix 8 for the consent form).

The interviews lasted approximately forty-five minutes and were recorded using a digital voice recorder. All participants were asked if they were comfortable with this and agreed, although they were given the option of having notes taken instead. Following the interviews participants were asked if they had any additional questions. Participants were given an individual identification number and were told that if they wished their data to be removed they could contact myself stating their number. It was reiterated that data would be removed without question and that their employing school would not be informed of their request. All participants were also told that they would be given a summary of the research findings (see Appendix 9 for summary) once it was completed and that I would be willing to discuss this in greater detail if they desired.

3.3.4 Ethical Considerations

Ethics refers to the rules of conduct and the principles which guide researchers' behaviour to ensure that a study is carried out in a responsible and defendable manner (Robson, 2002; Gray, 2009). Birch et al., (2002) highlight that ethical issues in qualitative research are particularly important for researchers to consider as the research tends to focus on participants' private lives and thoughts and place these accounts in the public arena.

Ethical approval was sought and obtained from the University of Birmingham's Ethics Committee before I approached any school in relation to participation in the research. Robson (2002) also highlights that for many professions there is also a requirement to adopt a code of ethical conduct stipulated by their professional association and as such I referred to the guidelines for conducting research devised by the British Psychological Society (2010).

Through this process I identified a number of ethical issues which required to be addressed before the study could begin. These issues included:

- avoidance of harm to participants;

- ensuring informed consent;

- respect for privacy; and

- avoidance of deception (see Table 3.4 below for further details).

Ethical Issue	How this was Addressed in the Study
Avoidance of Harm to Participants	This issue focuses upon the elimination of any foreseeable threats to the psychological or physical well-being of participants (British Psychological Society, 2010). Within this study there were a number of areas which required consideration. Firstly, this principle stipulates that the research must have a purpose ensuring that the time invested by participants is not wasted. In order to meet this requirement I carried out an extensive literature search to identify gaps within research relating to cyberbullying and identified areas which had been recommended as beneficial for additional study. I also wished to ensure that participating in the study did not add additional stress to already busy professionals. This was addressed through reiterating to participants that participation was completely voluntary and by offering to carry out interviews at times and locations convenient to the interviewees. A final area to consider was that the nature of the content of the interview may cause participants discomfort if bullying, in any form, was an issue in their past experience or current life. I ensured that if this became apparent, with the individuals agreement, I would seek advice from a Senior Educational Psychologist and support could be offered either directly or through 'sign posting' to relevant services. In addition to this, participants were also given my contact details and that of my research supervisor on the participant information sheet. I also reiterated to the participants that they could terminate the interview at any time.

Ensuring Informed Consent	The principle of informed consent involves gaining the agreement of participants to take part in the research with the full context and their rights explained (Coolican, 2004). As stated previously, each participant initially received an information sheet giving full details of the research which was sent to them in advance of the interview. In addition all participants were asked to complete a consent form which included a section explaining informed consent. On the day of the interview I also verbally checked that participants were still happy to continue.
Respect for Privacy	The principle of respecting privacy focuses on issues concerning anonymity and confidentiality (Coolican, 2004). Before each interview I reiterated that the participant would be given an identification code in the research and would only be labelled as either a primary, secondary, middle or high school member of staff. Participants were guaranteed that the names of staff, schools and the LA would not be used in the study. As with informed consent, participants were reminded of their right to withdraw from the interview at any time and to have their data withdrawn from the study. In addition to this, all data for the study was kept and stored in accordance to the Data Protection Act (1988, modified 2003). The data that was collected on the digital recording device did not have any individual details attached to it. In accordance with University of Birmingham's regulations once the transcribed the recorded interviews will be kept on a secure University system for ten years. Participants names and school information were only detailed on consent forms. Whilst the data was active it was stored in a locked filing cabinet. Only myself and my research supervisor had access to the raw data.
Avoidance of Deception	Cohen et al., (2007) argue that deception in research lies in not telling participants the whole truth. This may involve a wide range of issues such as knowingly concealing the purpose of the study, not telling people that they are being studied or misinforming participants. All aspects of this study were transparent to those taking part through the use of information sheets and giving opportunities to ask questions. Throughout the process I was always honest with those taking part about the aims and purposes of the research. I also agreed to provide each participant with a summary report of the findings of this research.

Table 3.4: Ethical Issues

3.5 Reliability and Validity

In quantitative research, issues of *reliability* focus on replicability, dependability and consistency over a range of factors including time, instruments and participants (Cohen et al., 2007). *Validity* refers to the extent to which what is measured in one instant can be trusted as real or not confounded (Coolican, 2004). In terms of qualitative research these issues are addressed differently due to the limited concern placed upon issues of quantification and objectivity (Parker, 2004).

Parker (2004) suggests that qualitative research acknowledges the gap between the object of study and the way researchers represent it. It is argued that the process of interpretation fills the gap between the two areas and acts as a bridge between the objects and our representations of them. Furthermore, it is suggested that interpretation is a process which continues to change as our relationship with the world we study changes.

Parker (1994) proposes three ways in which qualitative research can improve the fidelity of research findings - namely indexicality, inconcludability and reflexivity. Table 3.5 below gives detail of each of these elements and how they were addressed in the present study:

Method for Improving Trustworthiness of Qualitative Research	Description of Method within Qualitative Research
Indexicality "…an explanation is always tied to a particular occasion or use and will change as the occasion changes" (Parker, 1994, p.3)	• Indexicality argues that all meaning will change as the occasion changes and it is used in differing ways. • In quantitative research the search for reliability and validity lies with the assumption that it is possible to replicate good research. • Qualitative researchers do not however argue that their work is perfectly replicable but instead suggest that whilst it is possible to repeat work it will be different due to changes in research, participants and the research tool. • The aim of qualitative research is not so much replicability but rather specificity which involves a thorough exploration of the research setting which is done *with* the participants rather than against them. • This form of research recognises the importance of the rights of the participants to speak. • It is however crucial to acknowledge that whilst this research setting does become more like 'real' life the findings are fragile and mutable as real life is (Parker, 1994).
Inconcludability "…an account can always be supplemented further and will continually mature as more is added to it" (Parker, 1994, p. 4)	• Quantitative research which strives to capture facts that are quantifiable and open to statistical analyses views inconcludability as problematic. • It uses a variety of devices to persuade that certain 'facts' have been discovered such as increasing sample sizes. It is suggested that the greater the sample size the more able the researcher is to generalise findings to the rest of the population. • This is however problematic in that as more data is gathered the greater the amount that is lost, as responses are grouped together into manageable categories. This results in the researcher being less able to respect and respond to the specificities of each participant's responses.

	• Qualitative research on the other hand aims to provide an in-depth examination of the meanings at work rather than skim over as wide a surface as possible. Each study is treated as if it is a single case-study. • It is crucial that in this type of research the reason why a particular selection of participants was chosen is stated clearly. • The results of qualitative research will always be provisional and it is the responsibility of the researcher to allow readers of the work to offer different interpretations (Parker, 1994).
Reflexivity "…the way we characterise a phenomenon will change the way it operates for us, and that will then change our perception of it" (Parker, 1994, p.4)	• The way in which a problem is explored will impact on the explanation that is given. • In quantitative research it is assumed that the removal of subjectivity will increase objectivity. • On the other hand qualitative research does not claim to be objective but instead explores the ways in which the subjectivity of the researcher has structured the way the research is defined. • Subjectivity is viewed as a resource, not a problem, as when researchers are claiming to be objective they are actually keeping a distance between themselves and the object of study. This is of consequence as they are still producing a subjective position but it is all the more powerful as they are refusing to acknowledge it. • Research is always carried out from a particular standpoint and it is therefore important to consider the position of the researcher. This can be achieved through a reflexive analysis which acknowledges what the researcher brings to the study and treats this as a valuable resource rather than factors which require to be removed (Parker, 1994).

Table 3.5: Methods for Improving Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research (adapted from Parker, 1994)

3.3.6 Generalisation

The issue of generalisability has traditionally been a central element of research with fixed designs in establishing the trustworthiness and value of enquiries. Generalisability within such studies fundamentally focuses on the extent to which findings of a particular enquiry are generally applicable to other contexts, times or persons than those directly involved (Robson, 2002).

In studies with a flexible design, such as the present research, generalisability is often a more complex issue. Maxwell (1996) distinguishes between two types of generalisability within such research namely internal and external generalisability. Internal generalisability is a particularly important issue and highlights that if researchers are selective about the people they interview or the settings they conduct research in and, for example if they exclude some due to them being considered threatening, this will bias the research account. External generalisability on the other hand may not be as relevant in this type of research as the study may only be concerned with trying to explain or understand what is occurring in one particular setting. It would therefore not use a sample which is representative and would not lend itself to statistical generalisation which would be found in fixed research designs.

The present study is situated within in the interpretivist paradigm in which there has been a history of debate concerning whether studies within this area can (or

indeed should) generalise their findings (Williams, 2000). In terms of the argument that interpretivist research is not generalisable, Denzin (1983) suggested that individual consciousness attaches different meanings to the same actions or circumstances and that different actions can arise out of similarly expressed meanings. It is therefore proposed that there is too much variability to allow generalisation from one situation to another.

Williams (2000) however suggests that this position would lead to a situation where only research which is conducted in 'closed laboratories' would be considered possible of generalisation. Furthermore, there is an additional issue as it is suggested that for the most part, researchers working within the interpretive paradigm commonly make generalising statements about findings and therefore the extent and limitations of such claims require consideration.

Thomas (2010) explored the position of generalisability within social science research. It is suggested that there is often a failure to offer generalisations (termed special generalisations) which are more reliable or valuable than those made by people outside the research. This has led to many researchers relying on developing 'theory' to act in some way as a substitution for generalisation. This can however be problematic as it can result in findings being synthesised which can ultimately constrain the researcher in understanding and examining individual experience.

Further to this, Thomas (2010) argues that to seek generalisation can miss the point of what is being offered by the research. It is suggested that researchers should focus on exemplary knowledge which is "*viewed and heard* in the context of another's experience (another's horizon) but *used* in the context of one's own (where horizon changes)" (p. 11). It is therefore suggested that the findings of research are given and understood in the context in which the study takes place. In addition to this it is argued that the knowledge that is gained through the research is only in interpretable in one's own experience.

Whilst Thomas (2010) predominantly explored the position of generalisation in case study research the arguments made do have resonance for the present research. Within the present research the interpretivist epistemological stance strongly influenced the perspective taken in terms of generalisation. The focus of this research was on the individual experiences of the participants in their school contexts. Therefore it was not intended that the findings of this study should be able to be applied to general population (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992). It is intended that the findings will be applicable to those participants and schools involved however it is also acknowledged that they may also be interpreted by readers of the research using their own experiences.

3.3.7 Data Analysis

3.3.7.1   Overview

I considered several methods of analysis during the development stage of this research process which all reflected the methodological underpinning position of the study. Initially I had considered that Grounded Theory (GT) may be appropriate as this places the emphasis on participants' own accounts of the phenomenon being studied (Richardson, 1996). However GT requires the data to become saturated which would not be possible due to the time scale and sample size of this study. Furthermore, GT emphasises the building of a theory to explain phenomena (Sigel and Leiper, 2004) which was not the aim of this research.

I also considered the use of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as this approach uses small sample sizes, focussing on capturing detailed accounts. IPA does however require participants to have a level of homogeneity in order for the researcher to be able to examine in detail the similarities and differences in their experiences (Smith et al., 2009). In terms of the sample that I wanted to use I did not feel that, given the differences in the school systems, there would be homogeneity across the participants' experiences and roles. Therefore IPA was discounted as a suitable tool.

I considered Thematic Analysis (TA) to be the most suitable method of data analysis given the sample of participants. Thematic analyses "move beyond counting explicit words and phrases and focuses on identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas within the data" (Guest, 2012, p.10). This method is

arguably the one of the most commonly used approaches to qualitative data analysis (Holstin and Gubrium, 1994) however, it has been argued that it suffers from being poorly conceptualised and rarely acknowledged (Boyatzis, 1998). In response to this Braun and Clarke (2006) have developed frameworks in an attempt to improve rigour whilst at the same time retaining flexibility when using TA.

3.3.7.2   Thematic Analysis using the Braun and Clarke (2006) Model

When employing TA to analyse data, themes can be identified in either an inductive or deductive manner. An inductive or 'bottom up' approach focuses on collecting and analysing data which is read and re-read by the researcher who remains open to what themes might emerge (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The themes identified are closely related to the data set but may bear little relation to the interview questions posed to participants (Gray, 2009).

On the other hand a deductive or 'top down' approach to TA data analysis approaches the data with a specific interest derived from theory. This method of analysis generally provides a less detailed description and analysis of the data and is more bound to the research questions which are related to the theoretical approach taken by the researcher (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The present study utilised both inductive and deductive approaches.

3.3.7.2.1   Inductive Analysis

The inductive approach was used initially to drive the formulation of themes. During this process the data that had been collected was coded without trying to fit it into any specific coding frame. Whilst it was acknowledged that previous engagement with literature may have had the potential to influence the interpretation of the data, it was believed that for the present study TA would provide a flexible tool which would ultimately enable a detailed account of the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

The present study followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six stage procedure for TA. This procedure is not designed to be prescriptive but provides guidelines for researchers wishing to employ TA. Patton (1990) highlights that this is beneficial as it enables researchers to apply procedure flexibly in order to fit research questions and data. It is not a linear process involving moving from one step to the next but is recursive involving moving back and forth as needed through the phases (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Table 3.6 below highlights the steps I took when conducting the TA process for this research.

PHASE	DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCESS
Phase 1 Familiarising with the Data	• I started by transcribing the recordings of the interviews verbatim paying particular attention to punctuation in order to ensure that the transcripts fully represented the accounts the participants had given (see Appendix 10 for an example of the transcribed data). • The decision to complete my own transcription was primarily based upon the argument that through this process the researcher begins to develop a far more thorough understanding of the data and may facilitate the close reading skills required to analyse the data (Lapadat and Lindsay, 1999). • I immersed myself in the data through repeated reading of the interview transcripts. This initially began with reading through each transcript twice. • From the third reading onwards I began to start making notes and marking possible ideas for codes resulting in a list of ideas about what is in the data (see Appendix 11 for an example)
Phase 2 Generating Initial Codes	• The second phase involved starting to produce initial codes from data. These codes focused on the most basic elements of the data (Boyatzis, 1998) and began to organise the data into meaningful groups (Tuckett, 2005). • I worked through the entire data identifying items that may begin to form repeated patterns. Initially I started by writing margin notes and then went through the data again highlighting emerging themes (see Appendix 12 for examples). I ensured that I gave all the data equal attention for every item. • Throughout the process I followed the key advice given by Braun and Clarke (2006) and therefore coded as many themes as possible, coded themes inclusively (keeping a little of the surrounding data) and coded data regardless of whether it had already been fitted into previous themes (this resulted in some data being coded more than once).

	- I also noted where data departed from the dominant focus of cyberbullying in order to be able to explore this later. - During this phase a fellow Trainee Educational Psychologist read the transcripts along with my interpretations in order to ensure that I had remained objective.
Phase 3 Searching for Themes	- Once I had initially coded the data I began to re-focus the analysis at a broader level. This involved collecting together codes into potential themes. - I started by noting potential themes onto separate pieces of paper and then assigning the codes. At this stage I had nine themes and fifty codes (see Appendix 13 for details). - I then started to note "the relationship between codes, between themes and sub-themes" (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.89). - Through this phase I identified themes at both semantic and latent levels (Boyatzis, 1998). There were occasions when it was not necessary to look beyond what a person had said (semantic level) and at other times participants made comments that could be interpreted further (latent level).
Phase 4 Reviewing Themes	- The reviewing of themes occurred at two levels. The first involved checking to goodness of fit of the collated extracts under each theme. In order to do this I created tables containing each theme, code and extract. I was then able to check whether the extract represented the code and in turn the over-arching theme (see Appendix 14 for example of grid). - The second phase involved a similar format however themes were looked at in relation to the entire data set. This process not only enabled a check on whether the themes accurately reflected the meaning evident in the whole data set but also ensured that any data which had been missed during earlier phases could be incorporated.

Phase 5 Defining and Naming Themes	• This phase began once I had completed a thematic map of the data (see Figure 4.1). • This phase involved determining what aspects each theme encapsulated which I achieved through clearly defining the scope and content of each theme. • At this point I also turned the working titles I had been using into titles I would use in the final analysis.
Phase 6 Producing the Report	• Once the themes had been identified and titled, the final analysis and write-up of the report began. • Throughout the report extract from the data were used to provide vivid examples and to support the argument of the data in relation to the research questions posed.

Table 3.6: Thematic Analysis Process

3.3.7.2.2   *Deductive Analysis*

In addition to the inductive approach I also employed deductive TA (also referred to as theoretical TA) to specifically explore the issues pertinent to different aged school settings. Deductive TA approaches the data using a 'top-down' approach (Boyatzis, 1998). This type of analysis is driven more by the analytical position of the researcher and whilst it tends to produce a less rich description of the data it does enable a more detailed analysis of a specific area (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

The use of deductive TA was deemed necessary as previous research has suggested that face-to-face bullying differs between age groups (Li, 2007). I was also interested in whether teaching professionals who taught children younger than secondary school age experienced similar or different issues as this has not been explored previously. In addition to these factors, given the interpretivist perspective of this research I felt that it was necessary to acknowledge the wide variety of schools in Westshire LA and explore the experiences of teaching professionals within these settings.

3.4   Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the methodology and methods that were used to conduct this research study. It has highlighted the method of data analysis that was employed, namely TA, and provided a step-by-step example of the first five stages of Braun and Clarke's (2006) model. The following chapter (Chapter Four)

reports the sixth step of this model using examples of the transcribed text in order to support the identified themes.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

4.1   Introduction

Braun and Clarke (2006) describe the sixth stage of Thematic Analysis (TA) as beginning once the researcher has fully developed a set of themes. This stage involves the final analysis and write up of the research report; a process which I will adopt in the following chapters of this volume of work. I discuss the findings of this study analytically, highlighting the most pertinent findings supported by extracts from the data, relate them to the research questions and make links to the literature presented in chapter two. Braun and Clarke (2006) highlight that this move from the descriptive to the analytic is crucial in order to produce rigorous TA and to make sound arguments in relations to research questions posed.

This chapter which presents the results for this research is divided into two parts, the first part presents the themes which were inductively abstracted using the stages of TA described (see Table 4.1 below).The second part reports the findings which were abstracted deductively in relation to the specific issue of the experiences of teaching professionals working in different types of schools. In both parts of the chapter the results are presented using thematic diagrams, with reference to the thematic map which was produced during the TA (see Figure 4.1). Data extracts are also presented alongside the analysis in order to support each theme and demonstrate its prevalence. It is anticipated that through using this

approach a concise and coherent account of the findings from the data will be provided.

4.2   Part One: Inductive Analysis Results

This first part of this chapter divides the key findings from the inductive analysis into several sections. I begin by providing an overview of the four overarching themes and the eight substantive main themes that emerged from the data corpus. I then explore the main themes and the associated sub-themes in more detail, supporting each of the sub-themes with data extracts.

In all diagrams and headings the themes are colour coded as follows:

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              ┌─────────────────┐
              │   Overarching   │
              │     Themes      │
              └────────┬────────┘
                       │
              ┌────────┴────────┐
              │   Main Themes   │
              │                 │
              └──┬───────────┬──┘
                 │           │
        ┌────────┴──┐     ┌──┴────────┐
        │Sub-Themes │     │Sub-Themes │
        │           │     │           │
        └───────────┘     └───────────┘
```
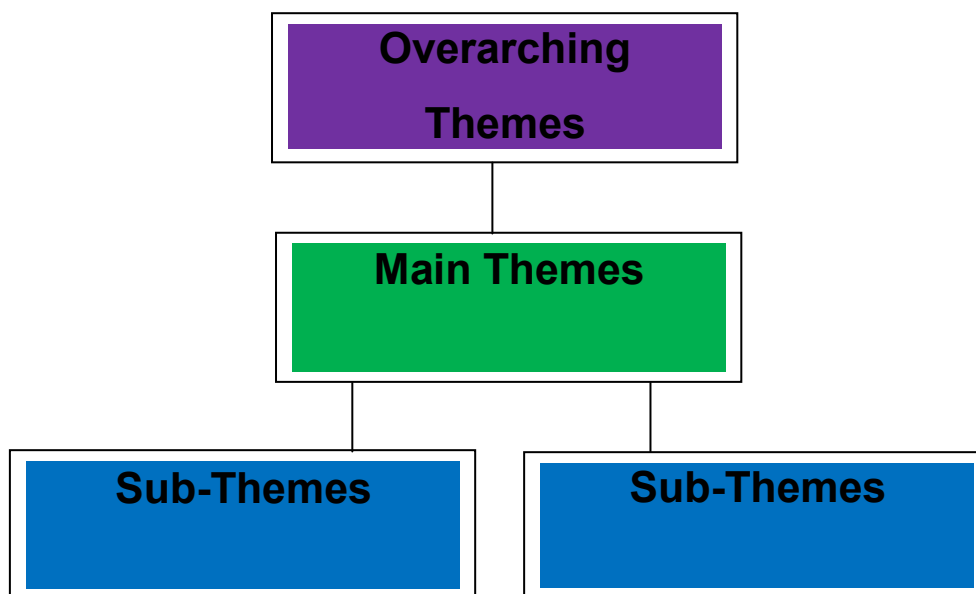
4.2.1 Overview of Overarching Themes

The results of the inductive analysis of data identified eight main themes. These were organised under four overarching areas and are presented below:

Overarching Theme	Main Themes
Overarching Theme 1: Knowledge of Cyberbullying This overarching theme of **knowledge of cyberbullying** referred to the understanding that schools had gained regarding cyberbullying.	Within this overarching theme, three main themes emerged: • Schools Understanding of Cyberbullying • Young People and Cyberspace • Unique Aspects of Cyberbullying
Overarching Theme 2: Level of School Involvement This overarching theme of **level of school involvement** referred to how closely schools had chosen to be involved when dealing with issues of cyberbullying and how they had come to choose their position.	Within this overarching theme two main themes emerged: • The Role of Schools • School Responses
Overarching Theme 3: Reality of Cyberbullying This overarching theme of **reality of cyberbullying** referred to the reaction of the schools to the issue of cyberbullying and the impact it had on their pupils.	Within this overarching theme two main themes emerged: • Seriousness of the Cyberbullying • Safeguarding
Overarching Theme 4: Addressing Cyberbullying in Schools This overarching theme of **addressing cyberbullying in schools** referred to how schools viewed their position in terms of what they had learnt and how they could use this knowledge when continuing work in this area.	Within this overarching theme one main theme emerged: • Whole School Community Approach

Table 4.1: Overarching and Main Themes from Inductive Analysis

It is important to note that although the overarching and main themes are distinct from each other, they do interrelate and are not completely independent. The most significant interrelations are indicated on Figure 4.1 which highlights the connections between the overarching themes, main themes and sub-themes.

Fig 4.1: Diagram showing overarching themes, main themes and sub-theme connections

Knowledge of Cyberbullying

Schools Understanding of Cyberbullying

Defining Cyberbullying
Contrasting to Face-to-Face Bullying
Part of a Wider Issue

Young People and Cyberspace

Cyberspace Culture
Differences of Opinion
Dangers Faced by Lack of Understanding

Unique Aspects of Cyberbullying

Roles in Cyberbullying
New Areas
Knowledge of New Technology

Level of School Involvement

The Role of Schools

Definite Areas
Blurring of Boundaries
Schools as Mediators

School Responses

Proactive Responses
Reactive Responses

Reality of Cyberbullying

Seriousness of Cyberbullying

Impact on Pupils
Impact on Adults

Safeguarding

Acknowledgment of Importance
Frustration

Addressing Cyberbullying Issues in Schools

Whole School Community Approach

Involvement of Pupils
Involvement of Parents
Involvement of the Community

4.3   Main Themes

Each of the four overarching themes is explored below in terms of the main themes they contain.

Overarching Theme 1: Knowledge of Cyberbullying

Main Theme 4.3.1   **Schools Understanding of Cyberbullying**
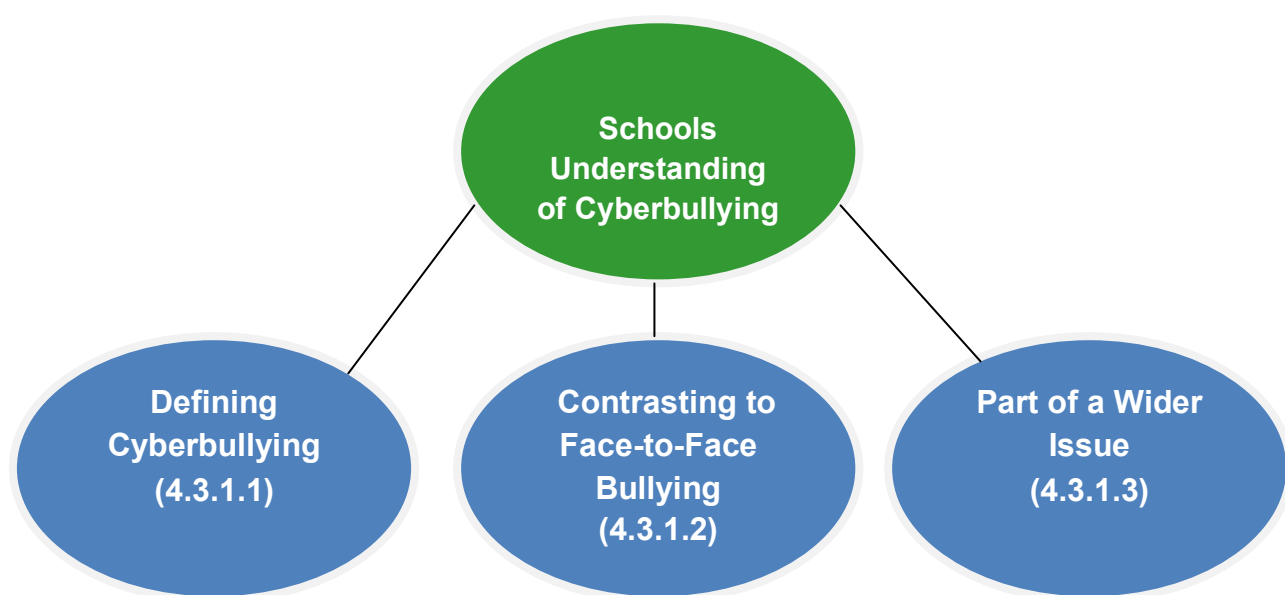
The first main theme under the overarching theme of **knowledge of cyberbullying** focussed on **schools understanding of cyberbullying**. This related to exploring what schools had learned about the phenomenon of cyberbullying and how they were applying this information within their settings. Within this theme, three sub-themes emerged:

4.3.1.1   Defining Cyberbullying

4.3.1.2   Contrasting to Face-to-Face Bullying

4.3.1.3   Part of a Wider Issue

4.3.1.1 Defining Cyberbullying

The first sub-theme, exploring schools understanding of cyberbullying, focussed on how each individual setting had chosen to define this phenomenon. All of the staff questioned were able to give succinct definitions which highlighted each school's position.

The data suggested however that there was not a standard definition used across all settings, with some schools focussing specifically on cyberbullying as a unique form of bullying behaviour. On the other hand, some settings considered cyberbullying to be an extension of face-to-face bullying. There was also a difference noted in how the schools had produced a definition for their setting.

Evidence in the data to support 'defining cyberbullying' sub-theme:

When defining how cyberbullying was understood in their setting three of the schools suggested that it was definitely linked to the technology that was used:

"We would define it as any act which is threatening via text messaging, via instant messaging, anything which is not face-to-face really, anything which is connected in any way to cyberspace…" (Middle School 2)

"…it's intimidating or threatening behaviour directed at others. It's mainly social networking sites…but also text messaging….the setting up of websites that sort of thing" (Middle School 1)

This focus on the technological aspects was not however reported by all schools. Some settings used the same definitions as they would for face-to-face bullying which had a greater emphasis on the impact of the bullying behaviour:

"…we define it in the same way that we define any bullying, if we feel a particular threshold has been crossed which is causing real anxiety and hurt to the individual affected" (High School 1)

Box 4.1: Evidence in the data to support 'defining cyberbullying' sub-theme

Evidence in the data to support 'defining cyberbullying' sub-theme (cont.):

Within the majority of the schools the definitions which were operationalised had been developed by staff, however two of the Middle Schools highlighted that they had involved the pupils in developing their own definitions:

"We got the children to explain it….anything to do with multi-media where there's the use to threaten others or abuse someone else using it" (Middle School 3)

Box 4.1 (cont): Evidence in the data to support 'defining cyberbullying' sub-theme

4.3.1.2 Contrasting to Face-to-Face Bullying

The second sub-theme to emerge when considering schools' understanding of cyberbullying explored whether settings considered there to be a difference between this type of behaviour and face-to-face bullying. An initial finding within this sub-theme focussed on how schools considered the difference in prevalence rates between cyberbullying and face-to-face bullying.

The data analysis also suggested that there was a clear divide between schools in terms of how they dealt with cyberbullying; for example, some settings choose to understand and deal with issues of cyberbullying in the similar way to face-to-face bullying. Other schools however highlighted that cyberbullying had a significant impact in their settings and required additional understanding and input from staff.

Evidence in the data to support 'contrasting to face-to-face bullying' sub-theme:

There was disagreement between the school settings regarding the prevalence of cyberbullying in relation to other forms of bullying behaviour:

"I wouldn't see it as being a massive issue, not for this school, no more than it would be for traditional forms of bullying" (Middle School 2)

"…it (cyberbullying) is our biggest type of bullying. I'm not being flippant here but old fashioned bullying is really something we don't see much of at all, what we see, three times out of four, is connected with cyberbullying" (High School 1)

In terms of the issue of cyberbullying within settings it was suggested by two schools that the impact for the pupils of this form of behaviour, whilst significant, was similar to face-to-face bullying:

"Obviously for the victim it's like any other form of bullying, it's absolutely dreadful" (Secondary School 1)

"…it can be the same as any form of bullying with the fall out…it's just a different facet" (Middle School 4)

These findings regarding the impact of cyberbullying were not however agreed upon by all settings:

"Bullying gets under your skin and even more so with cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is so impersonal" (Primary School 1)

In addition to focussing on the impact of cyberbullying in contrast to other forms of bullying, schools also reported differences in terms of the additional staff input required:

"I spend a lot of time, five years ago I wouldn't have done any of this, now I will… I spent a lot of time in the last year dealing with this" (Middle School 1)

Box 4.2: Evidence in the data to support 'contrasting to face-to-face bullying' sub-theme

4.3.1.3 Part of a Wider Issue

The final sub-theme to emerge when considering schools' understanding of cyberbullying focussed on this type of behaviour being considered as part of a wider issue. Teaching professionals suggested that cyberbullying required to be understood not only as part of a bullying issue, but also in terms of safeguarding and child protection.

Evidence in the data to support 'part of a wider issue' sub-theme:

The data suggests that the schools were concerned regarding their pupils safety in cyberspace even when they were not in their direct care:

"I'm always shocked by the unsupervised access that kids have, in bedrooms with open access internet" (Middle School 1)

The issue of unsupervised access was also highlighted as an issue in terms of the content pupils were able to access:

"…you have to be very careful in terms of anything sexual…concern of the cyber issue is their accessibility to pornography" (Secondary School 1)

Box 4.3: Evidence in the data to support 'part of a wider issue' sub-theme

Main Theme 4.3.2   **Young People and Cyberspace**
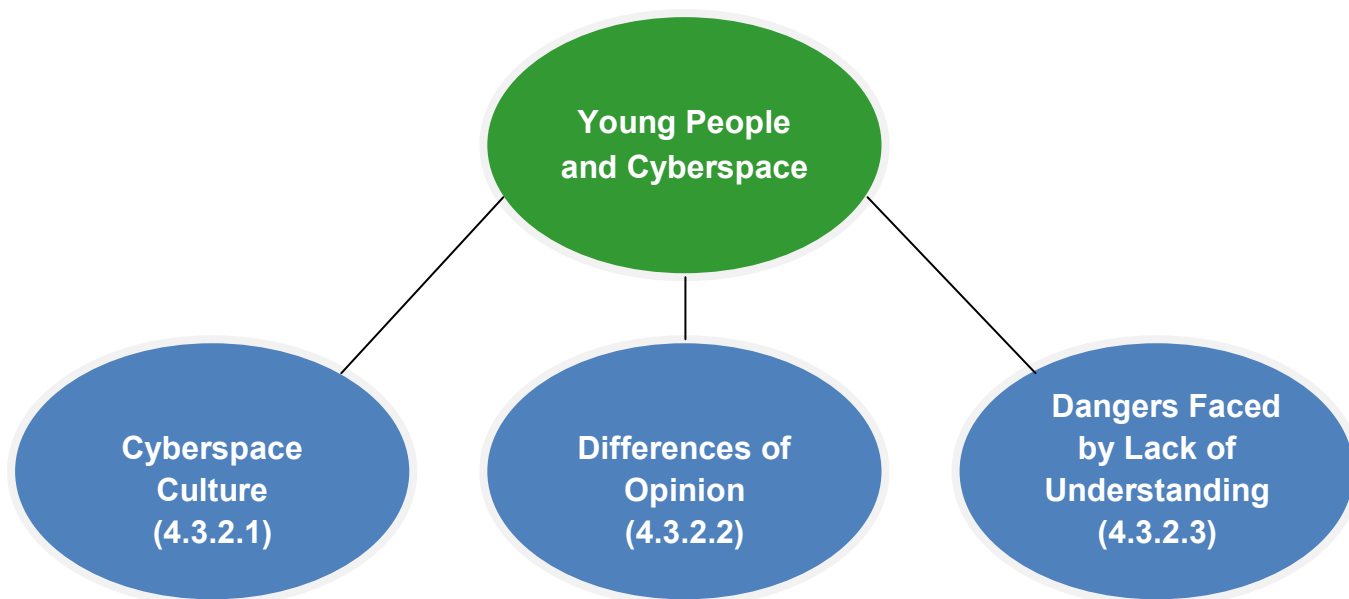
The second main theme under the overarching theme of **knowledge of cyberbullying** focussed on **young people and cyberspace.** This theme primarily explored the level of knowledge and understanding that schools had in this area and the impact this had on their responses to cyberbullying issues. Within this main theme three sub-themes emerged:

4.3.2.1   **Cyberspace Culture**

4.3.2.2   **Differences of Opinion**

4.3.2.3   **Dangers Faced by Lack of Understanding**

4.3.2.1 Cyberspace Culture

The first sub-theme to emerge highlighted that schools acknowledged the impact that cyberspace culture had on their pupils. Teaching professionals reported that regardless of whether they agreed with this culture, it was important to pupils and was a huge part of their lives. It was suggested that schools required to acknowledge that cyberspace culture was changing how pupils worked and interacted (both inside and outside school environments) and staff had to be sensitive and willing to recognise these changes.

Evidence in the data to support 'cyberspace culture' sub-theme:

Teaching professionals acknowledged the importance that technology had for their pupils and the impact it had in their lives even if they did not fully agree with it:

"They're locked into this piece of machinery in a way that I was not in my generation" (Primary School 1)

One school highlighted that it was important for staff to accept this new culture and work with the pupils. Furthermore it was suggested that staff had be realistic in terms of the impact that modern technology had had across the school setting:

"Five years ago when I started as Head, the staff wanted me to ban mobile phones. We have to understand that it's modern technology. I think it would be ludicrous to ban them but then also use modern technology for revision purposes and in lesson times" (Secondary School 1)

The data did however suggest that there was still a level of frustration amongst teaching professionals particularly when cyberspace culture placed their pupils in what staff considered to be potential danger. This sometimes resulted in staff making suggestions to pupils:

"We have said to them (pupils) think about who you give your number to and think about your Facebook security…they're surprised to hear us say don't use it" (High School 2)

Box 4.4: Evidence in the data to support 'cyberspace culture' sub-theme

4.3.2.2   Differences of Opinion

The second sub-theme to emerge focussing on young people and cyberspace culture highlighted the differences that staff had noted regarding what they considered acceptable, and what young people would tolerate, in terms of their cyberspace interactions. This sub-theme also explored the strategies which had been implemented in schools.

Evidence in the data to support 'differences of opinion' sub-theme:

Teaching professionals highlighted that the main difference of opinion between themselves and pupils focussed on what was considered acceptable language to use when using technology:

"…for the majority of pupils, their threshold of what is acceptable is higher than ours. I was shocked by the kind of language that pupils use on Facebook and on the web" (High School 1)

It was suggested that incidents which school staff may consider as cyberbullying were often not regarded in the same light by pupils:

"I don't think they think of it as serious as we do…this very casual use of language and name calling" (High School 2)

The data would however suggest that, regardless of these differences of opinion, teaching professionals still felt they should be intervening:

"….we've had to say this is not acceptable (the use of offensive language), you may think its online and its fine but we don't accept this" (High School 1)

Box 4.5: Evidence in the data to support 'differences of opinion' sub-theme

4.3.2.3 Dangers Faced by Lack of Understanding

The final sub-theme within the section focussing on young people and cyberspace considered the dangers faced by pupils when those involved did not have a full understanding of the impact of this culture. Within this sub-theme teaching professionals highlighted that it was not only pupils who required to be knowledgeable about cyberspace, but also school staff and parents.

Evidence in the data to support 'dangers faced by lack of understanding' sub-theme:

Teaching professionals highlighted the dangers which pupils could face through using technology inappropriately. It was suggested that, as well as having to explain to pupils that the content they were posting may be unsuitable, there was also the additional concern that it may be placing the pupil in a dangerous position:

"we spoke to the pupil and explained that not only had he put something up (on Youtube) that was inappropriate but that he had compromised his own safety" (Secondary School 1)

Teaching professionals also suggested that they had taken on the role of educating others about cyberspace culture and its potential dangers. This included having to discuss issues with parents:

"I had to say to parents that if you take a photo of your child the potential is for them to take the head off and put it on something else…the look on their faces suggested that they hadn't even thought about it" (Primary School 1)

Finally it was highlighted that it had been important to ensure that all members of staff were aware of cyberspace culture and its potential dangers:

"I think sometimes there's just a bit of naivety and not understanding the risks. I've told staff don't have too many friends (on Facebook)…don't have any children in the school as your friends" (Middle School 4)

Box 4.6: Evidence in the data to support 'dangers faced by lack of understanding' sub-theme

Main Theme 4.3.3   Unique Aspects of Cyberbullying
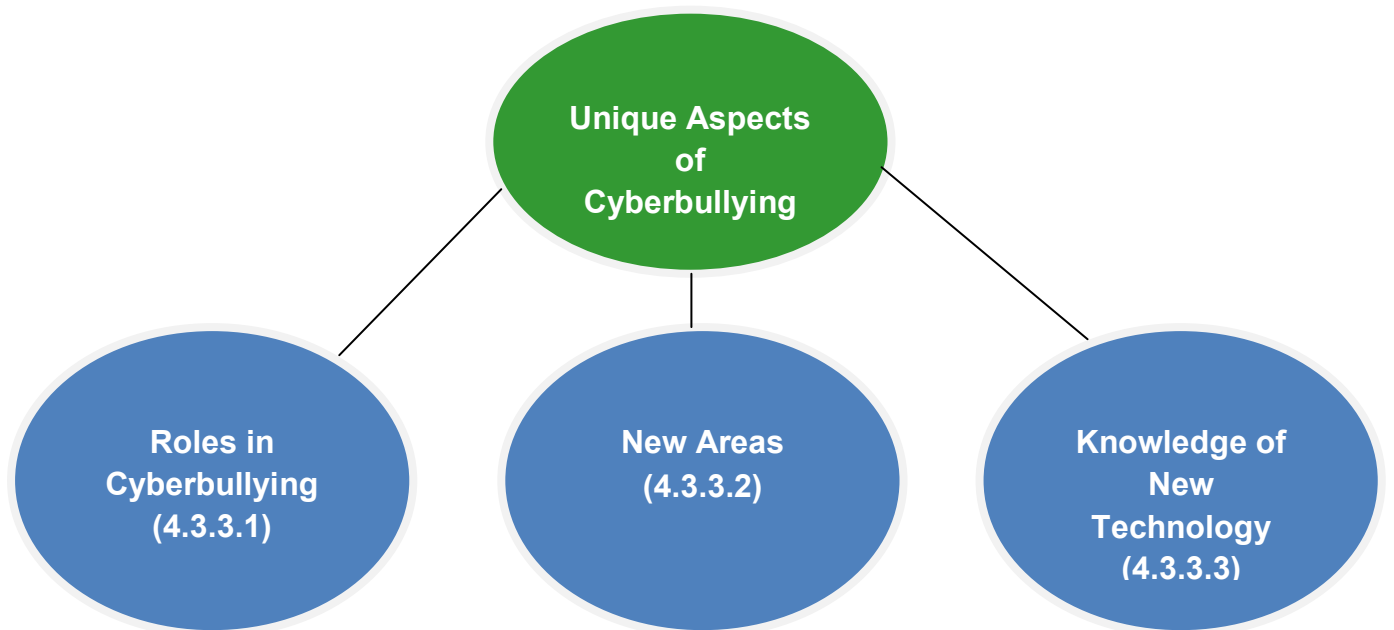
The final theme to be explored when considering schools' **knowledge of cyberbullying** focussed on the **unique aspects of cyberbullying** which resulted in this phenomenon being considered differently to other forms of bullying behaviour. This area highlighted not only the differences in the bullying behaviour which took place, but also explored the how certain aspects could be barriers to schools providing support in their setting. Within this theme three sub-themes emerged:

4.3.3.1   Roles in Cyberbullying

4.3.3.2   New Areas

4.3.3.3   Knowledge of New Technology

4.3.3.1 Roles in Cyberbullying

The first sub-theme to emerge focussed on the different roles in cyberbullying. Teaching professionals highlighted that, as with face-to-face bullying, there were the roles of victim and bully; however these could be altered due to the differing nature of cyberbullying. Furthermore, the role of bystander could change as boundaries were more easily blurred.

Evidence in the data to support 'roles in cyberbullying' sub-theme:

Teaching professionals reported that, due to the nature of cyberbullying, it was easier for pupils to turn from victims to bullies:

"You can't see the hurt you are doing, it's tempting if you are feeling hurt to retaliate" (Primary School 1)

"…a lot of them have retaliated on Facebook…and probably put themselves in just as bad a situation, so it's not quite as clear cut as one person being the victim" (High School 2)

It was also suggested that unlike face-to-face bullying, the bystanders could potentially have more of an impact in both negative and positive terms:

"We had a particular incident, there was the bully and the victim but there were probably about twenty (other) youngsters who went online. A lot of them said they didn't like it but there were four or five who clearly enjoyed it and contributed" (High School 1)

Furthermore it was suggested that rather than having one bully and one victim a group of pupils could carry out bullying behaviours and all have equal responsibility:

"…they're all together around a friends house and…they create a fake account. It always turns out to be four or five of them. It's like everyone gets together and are doing things that they would never do on their own" (Middle School 1)

Box 4.7: Evidence in the data to support 'roles in cyberbullying' sub-theme

The second sub-theme focussed on areas which were not present in face-to-face bullying but which staff considered as important in order to be able to understand cyberbullying behaviours. These factors included issues which made cyberbullying particularly difficult to tackle and those which required schools to take a very careful approach when dealing with cyberbullying:

Evidence in the data to support 'new areas' sub-theme:

Teaching professionals highlighted that cyberbullying contained elements that face-to-face bullying did not, such as the use of anonymity which could have a significant impact on those being bullied:

"It's the insidious nature when someone borrows somebody's phone and they don't know who's sending the message" (Secondary School 1)

It was also considered that cyberbullies not having to face their victims was also a factor which could increase bullying behaviours:

"…you can sit behind your computer and be as horrid as you want. It is bullying but added to it is a veil of 'I'm not really responsible'" (High School 1)

"…the biggest thing about it is when you're online you will say things you would never say to someone's face…they use phrases like "I'll kill you" online" (Middle School 1)

Teaching professionals also suggested that cyberbullying was different in that it could expand through pupils passing on messages and not understanding their responsibility in doing this:

"It isn't the case that somebody has said it in front of two or three people it's everybody. That's why we take it so seriously because the effect on the victim is worse than previous forms of bullying" (High School 1)

"…one child didn't realise that forwarding on a nasty text was a type of cyberbullying. He said "well I didn't create it" (Middle School 3)

Box 4.8: Evidence in the data to support 'new areas' sub-theme

Evidence in the data to support 'new areas' sub-theme (cont.):

Finally, teaching professionals highlighted that a unique feature of cyberbullying is that the pupils may not even know they are the target of this behaviour if they are not active online or do not have access to technology. It was suggested that this type of incident requires very careful and sensitive handling from all involved in order to ensure that other forms of bullying do not occur:

"The most serious ones come from pupils who are not online and they've been told by their pals about it. Less than fifty percent of them are using Facebook so they're not always aware what's going on. It is complicated because you don't want them to find out what's been posted and what's been said" (Middle School 1)

Box 4.8 (cont.): Evidence in the data to support 'new areas' sub-theme

Sub-Theme 4.3.3.3   Knowledge of New Technology

The final sub-theme which emerged when considering the unique aspects of cyberbullying highlighted how knowledge of new technology had made an impact. This was explored in terms of the implications for pupils and also the impact changes had on staff when trying to intervene and respond to this type of behaviour:

Evidence in the data to support 'knowledge of new technology' sub-theme:

Teaching professionals highlighted the issues surrounding the changing platforms pupils were using and the impact this was having on the types of cyberbullying they were encountering:

"…three years ago the majority of kids were on Bebo and now it's totally moved on to Facebook. Now it's "what's Bebo?" So it does move extremely fast" (Middle School 4)

"…when phones became more available to children it was really texting. Then computers and emailing became more and more common so that's not so much in the forefront anymore" (Middle School 3)

In addition to new platforms becoming available to pupils, teaching professionals also suggested that there has been a significant increase in the amount of technology available and how easily this could be accessed by pupils:

"Five years ago not every child had a mobile phone, they certainly didn't have the latest fashionable phones and if they did have it tended to be the older students whereas now they are all coming into secondary education having used mobile phones for a length of time" (Secondary School 1)

Teaching professionals also highlighted that the fast moving nature of technology used for cyberbullying had resulted in school staff having to keep up-to-date in order to support pupils effectively and understand potential issues:

"…even some of the language, if a parent brings in a Facebook report one of us will be reading it and thinking what does that mean? Things are developing so quickly all these abbreviations where they've got four letters in a row when they mean things. You've got to keep up-to-date" (High School 2)

Finally, it was suggested that the fast moving nature of technology had resulted in the recognition that the issue of cyberbullying would always be 'live' and require on-going input:

"I'd never think we've got this cracked, it's always changing" (High School 1)

"I think the potential for technology is so huge that you have to keep learning" (Primary School 1)

Box 4.9: Evidence in the data to support 'knowledge of new technology' sub-theme

Overarching Theme 2: Level of School Involvement

Main Theme 4.3.4   **The Role of Schools**
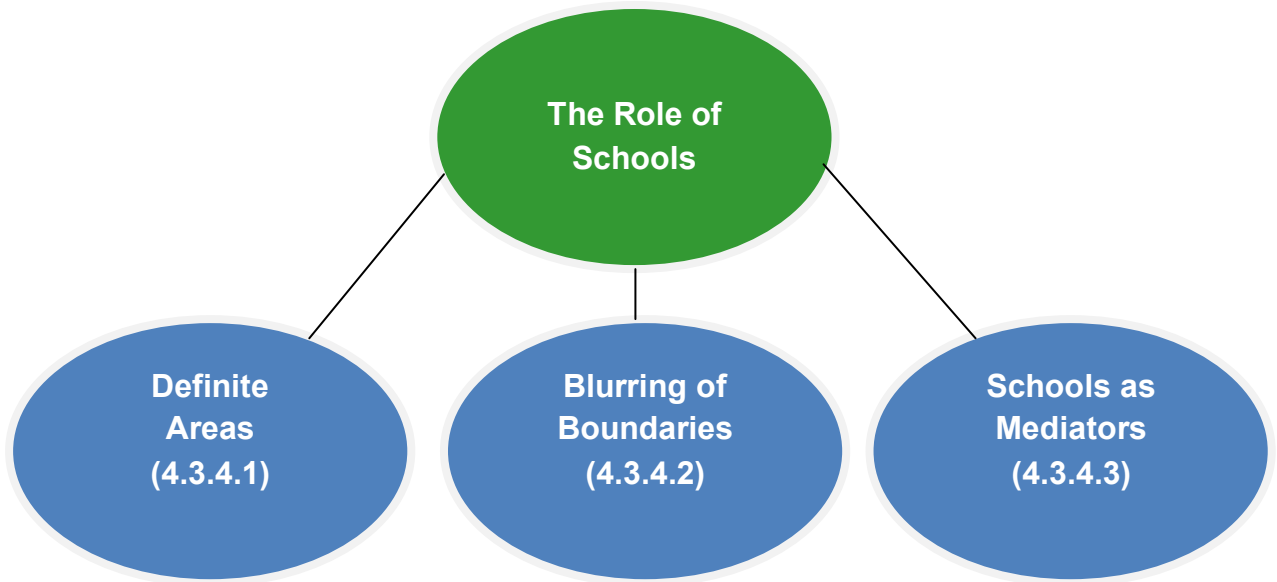
Within the second overarching theme focusing on the **level of school involvement** the **role of schools** was considered. This main theme highlighted the thought schools had given to the amount of involvement they should have when addressing issues of cyberbullying and what position they should adopt. Within this theme three sub-themes emerged:

4.3.4.1   **Definite Areas**

4.3.4.2   **Blurring of Boundaries**

4.3.4.3   **Schools as Mediators**

4.3.4.1   Definite Areas

The first sub-theme suggested that, within school remits and functions, there were a number of areas which teaching professionals reported they had to respond to when dealing with issues of cyberbullying behaviour. These areas were primarily identified through school policies but also the ethos of settings.

Evidence in the data to support 'definite areas' sub-theme:

The data suggested that teaching professionals reported that they had to intervene when pupils had broken rules regarding the appropriate use of technology:

"…we have strong filters on our system but we do get name calling on email and the sanction is very harsh…there is zero tolerance" (Primary School 1)

This strong stance was particularly prominent if pupils' behaviour had been viewed as impacting on the image of the school:

"We had one child who used their email address from school to act on a website as a parent and that we took strong action about because he was using the name of the school" (Middle School 3)

It was also reported that it was not only the rules of the school but also the wider ethos of the setting towards issues of cyberbullying which had resulted in staff intervening:

"My line is if it impacts on our children I don't care where it happens" (Primary School 1)

Box 4.10: Evidence in the data to support 'definite areas' sub-theme

4.3.4.2   Blurring of Boundaries

When focussing on their role when responding to cyberbullying, teaching professionals did concede there were areas in which they did not always feel comfortable to intervene. This was primarily due to the location in which the cyberbullying had taken place but was also considered in terms of the additional workload generated by this type of bullying.

Evidence in the data to support 'blurring of boundaries' sub-theme:

Teaching professionals highlighted that they were sometimes reluctant to get involved in issues which took place outside the school day and premises:

"We don't interfere because I think if it's outside school it's up to parents to do something about it. I sometimes think because technology is involved they think "schools got to deal with that"" (Middle School 4)

It was however acknowledged that action had to be taken in school when incidents which occurred outside the setting were brought into school the following day:

"If it's caused knock-on events inside school then we would spend a lot of time investigating it" (High School 2)

"It always comes into school because whatever is happening the night before it's the fall out that will come into school the next day" (Middle School 1)

Teaching professionals also highlighted that blurring of boundaries between home and school did have an impact in terms of their workload:

"I have to make a judgement about whether I want to get involved or whether I don't" (Secondary School 1)

"It's bringing the weekends and evenings into my role" (Secondary School 1)

However, unlike other forms of bullying, the schools suggested they had devised systems to pass the issue to parents when deemed appropriate:

"We've created a specific letter which we send to parents…if anything has been brought to our attention from outside school" (High School 2)

Box 4.11: Evidence in the data to support 'blurring of boundaries' sub-theme

4.3.4.3 Schools as Mediators

The final sub-theme within this area focusing on the role of schools highlighted the finding that school settings reported having to take on a mediation role with parents when dealing with incidents of cyberbullying.

Evidence in the data to support 'schools as mediators' sub-theme:

Teaching professionals reported that their main mediation role concerned parents. This could involve working with parents who were concerned about their child being cyberbullied, but it also included acting as a link between families to aid them in dealing with issues which occurred outside school:

"We have acted as mediators. It depends what the situation is. If it's one child saying something about another child then quite often we've brought parents in and taken a snapshot of the page and…supported them in dealing with it" (Middle School 3)

"…the person who was receiving messages via Facebook, the father brought the messages in on his phone and showed me and then I contacted the person who had sent them and their parents. There was no reluctance to get involved, our stance was this happened on a network that wasn't anything to do with us however the common factor was these children. We left the families to deal with it" (Middle School 3)

It was suggested that, in the majority of cases where a school had acted in a mediation role, this was welcomed by those involved primarily due to the relationship they already had:

"None of the kids have ever said to me "why are you getting involved, it's nothing to do with school" (Middle School 3)

"…if a parent has concerns they will (come to us) because they know the relationship we've got. They will report it to us and then we'll work together" (High School 1)

Box 4.12: Evidence in the data to support 'schools as mediators' sub-theme

Main Theme 4.3.5   **School Responses**
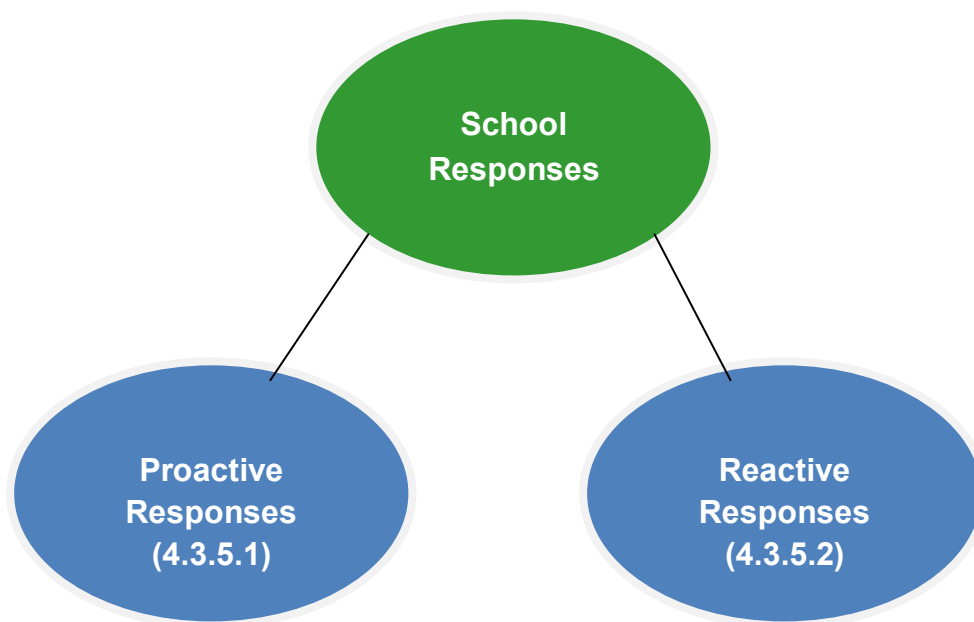
The second main theme under the overarching theme of **level of school involvement** focused on **school responses** to incidents of cyberbullying. This primarily reflected how teaching professionals reported managing cyberbullying in their settings. The data suggested that responses took two differing forms which are expanded in the two sub-themes of:

4.3.5.1   **Proactive Responses**

4.3.5.2   **Reactive Responses**

4.3.5.1   Proactive Responses

Teaching professionals reported that they had employed a number of proactive measures in order to deal with cyberbullying issues. These were primarily designed to keep the pupils as safe as possible and were targeted at the whole school community including pupils, staff and parents.

Evidence in the data to support 'proactive responses' sub-theme:

In terms of whole school proactive responses, these primarily focused on devising and implementing policies and strategies which were aimed at pupils:

"…the message I've put over is that our policy is that we are a 'telling school' so it's all about creating the ethos where youngsters effectively help us to monitor and help us to make it clear that certain behaviours are not acceptable" (High School 1)

Teaching professionals also highlighted that, in addition to policy measures, there was a focus on direct teaching to aid a proactive approach:

"We do…training assemblies to every year group…their awareness is constantly raised and we are always saying who to report it to, so they're definitely aware of what to do" (High School 2)

"…children are shown how to close their settings and everything to do with Facebook even though it's not supposed to be for their age group" (Middle School 3)

The proactive measures which were implemented also involved members of the wider school community and were reflected in schools highlighting that they had similar expectations for staff and parents:

"We have a policy and it's the same for staff that they can't have their mobile phones on during lessons, it's an agreed rule" (Secondary School 1)

"It's policy that when parents come into school they are asked to turn off their mobile phones" (Primary School 1)

Box 4.13: Evidence in the data to support 'proactive responses' sub-theme

4.3.5.2   Reactive Responses

The second sub-theme focussing on school responses highlighted the reactive measures schools had taken once incidents of cyberbullying had been brought to their attention. The measures included whole-school issues in addition to responses focussing on individual pupils.

Evidence in the data to support 'reactive responses' sub-theme:

Teaching professionals reported that when they did have to respond to cyberbullying issues these may not always have been brought to their attention by the pupils but by other members of the wider school community:

"…learners are very good at alerting us of things like blogs on young people" (Secondary School 1)

"…we're reliant on teachers coming to us and saying "did you realise these were comments about this teacher on this particular site" (High School 2)

"I'm alerted by parents when people have inappropriate conversations" (Secondary School 1)

In addition to immediate responses which were required due to incidents of cyberbullying it was also suggested that such events could also trigger wider changes impacting on all pupils:

"it (language used on Facebook) has impacted on other polices in school whereby if we hear any foul language…even if it's between friends then we will apply a sanction" (High School 1)

"Facebook and text messaging are the main types so we've introduced a mobile phone and musical device policy. If we see any during the course of the school day we confiscate them" (High School 1)

Finally it was suggested that whilst reactive responses may be viewed in a negative light, this type of intervention would have to continue due to the ever-changing nature of cyberbullying:

"You have to adapt the policy as you learn about the issues that you're having to face" (Primary School 1)

Box 4.14: Evidence in the data to support 'reactive responses' sub-theme

Main Theme 4.3.6   **Seriousness of Cyberbullying**
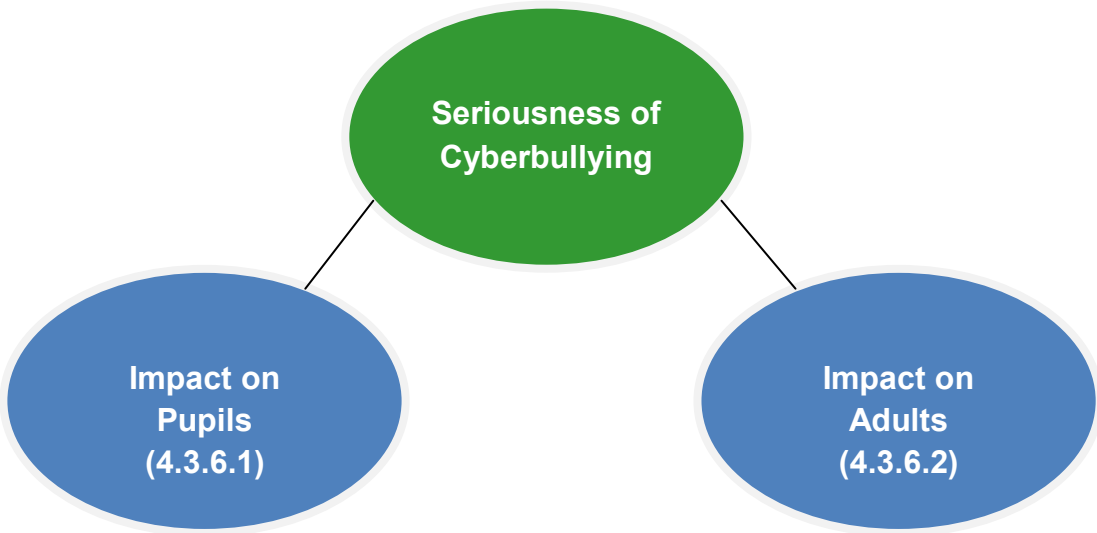
The first main theme to emerge from the third overarching theme of **reality of cyberbullying** focussed on teaching professionals views regarding the **seriousness of cyberbullying.** This theme explored a number of areas relating to both pupils and the adults connected to them. Within in this theme two sub-themes emerged:

    4.3.6.1   **Impact on Pupils**

    4.3.6.2   **Impact on Adults**

4.3.6.1　　　Impact on Pupils

This sub-theme highlighted the experiences of teaching professionals when dealing with incidents of cyberbullying in their settings. Within this theme it was suggested that the impact of cyberbullying was affected by a number of different factors.

Evidence in the data to support 'impact on pupils' sub-theme:

Teaching professionals considered how different forms of technology could be used for cyberbullying:

"Last year we had an incident where a group of lads was hurting another individual and they filmed it on their phones and then made it accessible" (Secondary School 1)

"…when they start using Facebook they facility that it gives them…most of it's falling out with friends…and then using Facebook to get back at people" (Middle School 1)

The data also highlighted that teaching professionals were aware of the potential emotional and psychological toll of cyberbullying:

"I think it creates a greater feeling of isolation because people can get to you at any time" (Secondary School 1)

"Some students, where it's got even more serious, where threats have been made, have been genuinely frightened" (High School 2)

"There was the fear of who else might be involved…who may or may not get involved…" (Middle School 2)

Box 4.15: Evidence in the data to support 'impact on pupils' sub-theme

Evidence in the data to support 'impact on pupils' sub-theme (cont.):

Teaching professionals also suggested that, in addition to the immediate response to cyberbullying, pupils also required support in the longer term:

"Well the effect has been very serious we had to work hard in terms of supporting them…for example there can be a period where we can't get them into school, it's a very painful and long process so the effect is deep because it's so public" (High School 1)

The results also highlighted that support was necessary for the cyberbullies and bystanders:

"They were aware that perhaps they weren't as nice as possible in the circumstances however they did not know the impact of what had happened and hadn't thought through the consequences of their actions, they believed they were just messing about (Middle School 2)

"I want those on the edge of things to know their part even if it's just on the periphery it's unacceptable" (High School 1)

However, in addition to the concerns raised by teaching professionals regarding the impact of cyberbullying there was also the suggestion that this phenomenon may not be as far reaching or serious:

"I've probably had one occurrence where it's been particularly malicious where they were targeting someone who they didn't like they weren't friends but most of it's examples where people are friends falling out. They'll fall in and out of friends and they'll write a message and get together" (Middle School 1)

"On Facebook there will be gossip and it is literally gossip "he said, she said" (Middle School 3)

Box 4.15 (cont.): Evidence in the data to support 'impact on pupils' sub-theme

4.3.6.2 Impact on Adults

The second sub-theme focused on the impact that cyberbullying could have on adults. This reflected the need for not only teaching professionals to be knowledgeable about e-safety and cyberbullying issues, but also highlighted how schools had taken on a role in educating and supporting parents.

Evidence in the data to support 'impact on adults' sub-theme:

Teaching professionals discussed the impact that cyberbullying had on adults and how this had resulted in additional training and policy development:

"We do safeguarding training with all staff every three years and one of sessions we did was e-safety…quite a few of the staff were shocked when they saw how it affected children" (High School 2)

"It is also something that in terms of staff, having to again look at policies on mobile phones, policies on Facebook use and everything" (Primary School 1)

The findings also highlighted the work which schools were having to conduct in order to ensure the safety of school staff:

"I think the biggest message that I've been giving is actually to my staff as well, don't compromise yourself" (Secondary School 1)

"..it depends how technologically aware they (the staff) are. If it was coming from me directly I would say be very careful and don't use Facebook as a teacher because there's so many risks" (Middle School 4)

Finally, teaching professionals reported that their own experiences of dealing with issues of cyberbullying had an impact on their ability to be able to support parents who may experience this issue infrequently:

"I suppose because we're exposed to it quite frequently we have to talk about it" (Primary School 1)

"we helped when one of our Year 6's got herself into a situation where she was intimidating a child at high school…the family was completely distressed and didn't know how to deal with it" (Primary School 1)

Box 4.16: Evidence in the data to support 'impact on adults' sub-theme

Main Theme 4.3.7   **Safeguarding**
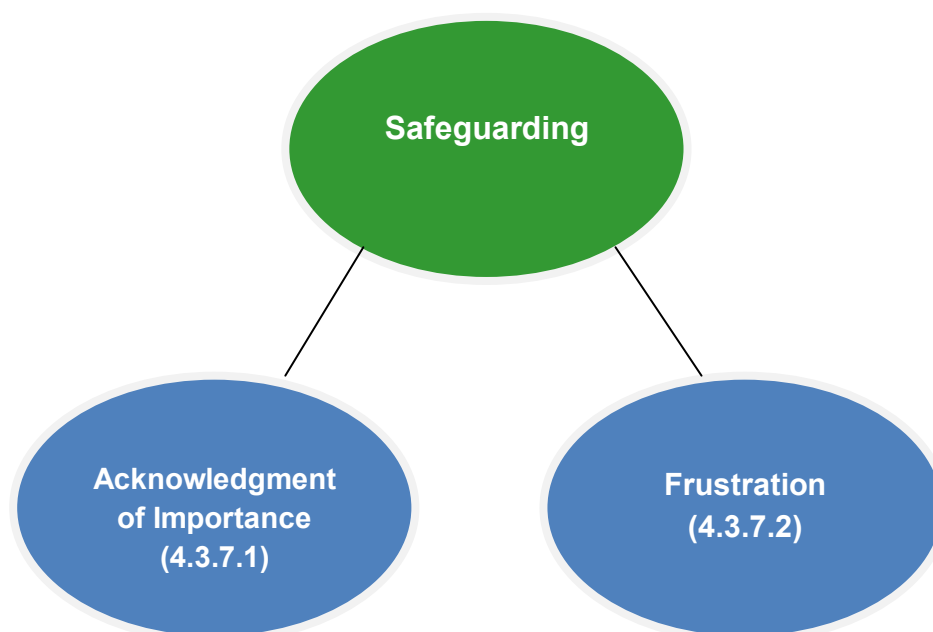
The second main theme under the overarching theme of **reality of cyberbullying** focussed on the importance teaching professionals placed on the role of **safeguarding** when dealing with this type of bullying behaviour. The serious nature of the incidents in which pupils could become involved was highlighted and it was suggested that within schools these were treated seriously. It was however noted that teaching professionals did face barriers when trying to safeguard pupils. Within this theme two sub-themes emerged:

4.3.7.1   Acknowledgement of Importance

4.3.7.2   Frustration

In terms of acknowledging the importance of safeguarding pupils against cyberbullying, this was explored in two areas. Firstly staff highlighted that despite their input in school, there were still incidents in which their pupils were placing themselves in danger. Furthermore, it was suggested that the cyberbullying had a high priority in schools in terms of staff response.

Evidence in the data to support 'acknowledgement of importance' sub-theme:

The importance of schools providing safeguarding for their pupils in terms of cyberbullying was highlighted through the incidents that teaching professionals reported. It was suggested that this was an issue that could affect any of the pupils in their setting:

"They're not internet safe when it comes to cyberbullying…they will still send anyone friend requests whether they're friends with them or not. It's competition to get the most friends…it's the most important thing in their life" (Middle School 1)

It certainly hasn't been one type of child, we've had very intelligent top set children who have taken an inappropriate photo of themselves and that's got sent around" (High School 2)

The findings also suggested that safeguarding pupils from cyberbullying was taken seriously within school contexts as incidents were primarily dealt with by senior members of staff:

"It tends to be the type of thing that comes straight to a high level…they come straight to me" (Middle School 1)

"They (the staff) might deal with minor things...but anything of real concern would come through me" (Secondary School 1)

Box 4.17: Evidence in the data to support 'acknowledgement of importance' sub-theme

4.3.7.2   Frustration

Teaching professional also discussed their frustration when trying to safeguard pupils from cyberbullying issues. This frustration was generally felt in terms of the access pupils were allowed to technology outside the school day. It was also suggested that the limited amount of suitable resources available for tackling cyberbullying issues contributed to the feeling of frustration amongst staff.

Evidence in the data to support 'frustration' sub-theme:

Initially school staff highlighted the difficulties in safeguarding pupils when they were allowed access to unsuitable material at home:

"One boys was telling me grandma had bought him a subscription (to a game)…there was quite a lot of graphic content and they're meeting people and chatting online" (Middle School 2)

"…I've had to have a father in because the son was being very promiscuous in his language and I discovered that he was accessing Google at home. His Dad was very offended when I said "you can't blame your son, you have parental responsibility". A lot of messages we put in place can be undone at home" (Primary School 1)

The findings also suggested that teaching professionals could feel frustrated when pupils did not follow advice they had been given:

"We do show them how to be sensible and what to do but last year many of them hadn't changed their settings despite the lesson…so we do it but it doesn't mean that they follow it" (Middle School 3)

Finally, it was reported that the types of training resources available could impact on the ability of teaching professionals to fulfil their safeguarding role:

"(we need training) about how it's making you feel, more about the emotional impact and understanding that on the internet you would do things that you wouldn't normally do" (Middle School 1)

"I think some of the materials, because we're lower key stage 3, are perhaps a little bit too old for some of our pupils" (Middle School 2)

Box 4.18: Evidence in the data to support 'frustration' sub-theme

Overarching Theme 4: Addressing Cyberbullying Issues in Schools

Main Theme 4.3.8   **Whole School Community Approach**

Whole School Community Approach

Involvement of Pupils (4.3.8.1)

Involvement of Parents (4.3.8.2)

Involvement of the Community (4.3.8.3)
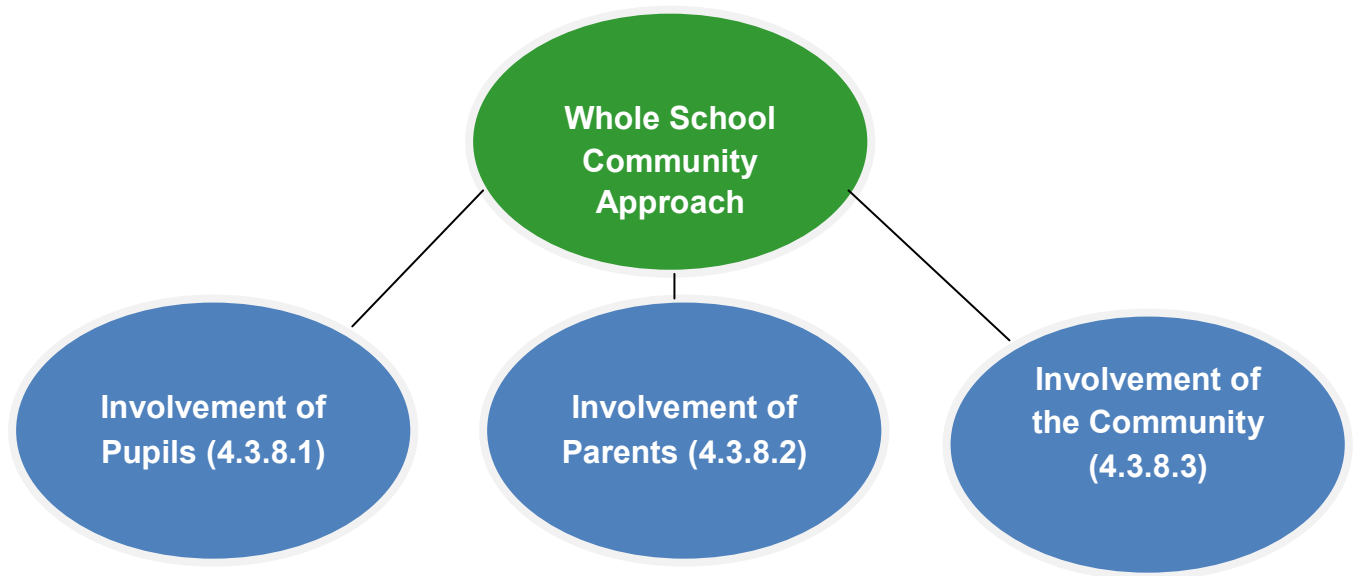
The final overarching theme focussed on **addressing cyberbullying issues in schools**. Within this the main theme of **whole school community approach** was explored. This examined not only the methods the schools were already using to deal with issues of cyberbullying, but also considered their experiences of involving others and their thoughts regarding the importance of this approach in the future. Within this theme, three sub-themes emerged:

4.3.8.1   **Involvement of Pupils**

4.3.8.2   **Involvement of Parents**

4.3.8.3   **Involvement of the Community**

4.3.8.1   Involvement of Pupils

Teaching professionals highlighted that in addition to the training, lessons and policies which they had put in place, an important factor was creating an ethos in which pupils could feel confident that cyberbullying incidents would not be tolerated and, if necessary, would be dealt with appropriately.

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Evidence in the data to support 'involvement of pupils' sub-theme:

Teaching professionals described wanting to create an environment where cyberbullying could be discussed openly:

"I think that as a school we're quite good at finding out about it, pupils will come forward and tell us because of the whole 'tell us' policy" (High School 1)

"We're fortunate here, the kids in the main are fairly open and upfront and honest and understand the danger I think. Yeah we talk it through quite a lot" (Secondary School 1)

It was also considered important that the pupils' views were respected regarding issues of cyberbullying:

"so it went from there really…them (the pupils) saying "I want to be treated fairly. We don't think bullying someone as opposed to looking at something on the internet should have the same kind of consequences"" (Middle School 3)

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Box 4.19: Evidence in the data to support 'involvement of pupils' sub-theme

In addition to wanting to involve pupils in tackling cyberbullying issues teaching professionals also highlighted that it was crucial for schools to work with parents. This type of involvement had evolved over a number of years and focussed on preventative as well as reactive work:

Evidence in the data to support 'involvement of parents' sub-theme:

Teaching professionals discussed involving parents in preventative measures through providing advice. However, it was reported that the take-up of this support was reducing in recent years:

"Yeah we have e-safety meetings. We started about four or five years ago and it's dropped off each year. It probably started with fifty, sixty parents and it dwindled to this year we only had three parents" (Middle School 2)

"We do have evenings about e-safety but they're not well attended. It's an area where kids know more than parents. It's an area that's scary for parents because they can be hoodwinked by their child" (Middle School 1)

In addition to providing advice and support it, was also reported that there were occasions when teaching professionals had to discuss specific issues concerning cyberbullying in more detail with parents:

"What shocked me was that the parents wouldn't take away the mobile phone from the child and I had to say this must be the sanction if your daughter has used this so inappropriately and could have got herself into a massive situation surely you're going to take the phone away from her. Her parents were having to catch up with reality" (Primary School 1)

"I think sometimes children's computers are in their bedrooms and therefore parents don't necessarily know. So…we say pop in every fifteen minutes, see what they're doing" (Secondary School 1)

Further to this, teaching professionals also highlighted the issue of parents becoming involved in cyberbullying themselves and having to address this in the school setting:

"The other dimension is that parents add things to Facebook so we've had rows between pupils and they've gone home and a parent looked over their shoulder and a parent puts something on (Facebook) and it gets bigger" (Secondary School 1)

Box 4.20: Evidence in the data to support 'involvement of parents' sub-theme

4.3.8.3   Involvement of the Community

The final sub-theme focussed on how schools had begun to acknowledge the importance of involving the wider community when dealing with cyberbullying issues. This sub-theme considered the range of community members who had been involved including those in the school setting and beyond:

Evidence in the data to support 'involvement of the community' sub-theme:

In terms of members of the wider school community, the teaching professionals highlighted that this could involve a number of different groups:

"I take the lead and then it will be a group of people with who I will work. I'll work with the leadership team and our house heads and we would involve governors at a particular point" (High School 1)

"A lot of the cyberbullying goes across year groups so it might involve lots of staff" (High School 2)

It was also suggested that this type of involvement could include other schools when necessary:

"We as a school liaised with the high school and dealt with it with them within our normal behaviour policy" (Primary School 1)

*"We've had a middle school phoning up saying "just to let you know we're investigating this incident and some of the students have named students in your school who they think may be involved". So it's across year groups and across schools" (*High School 2)

Finally, it was suggested that in some instances it was necessary to involve people from outside the school setting and the impact this could have:

"I spoke to a local constable the other day and he gave me a couple of case scenarios which I'm going to use with the kids. They're real and they're local so they know what the sanctions are on a policing level" (Middle School 4)

"I usually say to parents if it's very damning or very dangerous then we have to involve the police" (Secondary School 1)

"I've been tempted a couple of times because of what has been written…I would probably involve Community Support Officers" (Middle School 1)

Box 4.21: Evidence in the data to support 'involvement of the community' sub-theme

4.4   Part Two: Deductive Analysis

In addition to the inductive analysis the data was also scrutinised using deductive analysis. This was carried out specifically to analyse the results in terms of similarities and differences that were reported when dealing with issues of cyberbullying across different age groups and schools settings.

The data suggested that even within settings there could be a significant difference in the impact of cyberbullying depending on year group. Furthermore, there were differences noted in instances when cyberbullying became more prevalent depending on settings. There were also specific issues discussed regarding younger pupils.

Evidence in the data focussing on age related themes:

Teaching professionals suggested that cyberbullying was an issue which went across year groups and therefore required a whole-school approach:

"We've got a head of year for each year group…lot of cyberbullying goes across year groups so it might involve a lot of staff" (High School 2)

The Middle Schools highlighted that whilst there was varying amounts of cyberbullying issues amongst different age groups, these issues generally occurred from Year 4 onwards:

"…Facebook is more Year 7 than Year 6 however instant messaging issues that's further down the school Year 4 and Year 5" (Middle School 2)

"I would say probably two thirds of our Year 7's have got Facebook accounts and probably fifty percent of those are very active but I would think probably out of our Year 4's about a third of them have got Facebook accounts" (Middle School 2)

"Year 5 and 6 don't talk about it at all and their understanding of what cyberbullying is would not be very advanced. Year 7 have a pretty good understanding of what it is, they're the ones who are on Facebook, chatting online all the time and they're all aware of the impact it. So they all have an awareness of it but I think Year 5 and 6 don't really fully understand what it's all about" (Middle School 1)

In terms of the age at which cyberbullying predominantly occurs, there was disagreement between settings:

"Any sort of bullying tends to happen in Years 8 and 9 in secondary school before the maturity kicks in, it tends to be one-offs rather than repeated bullying" (Secondary School 1)

"The only reason why sometimes the odd bullying issue might re-emerge is that when they come up in Year 8 there will be youngsters in Years 9 and 10 who will have been with them back in middle school we do find, we've had not cyberbullying but ordinary bullying incidents that reoccur with new Year 8's finding themselves with Year 9 who they had trouble with in their middle school. Typically cyberbullying it's been Years 10 and 11" (High School 1)

Box 4.22: Evidence in the data focussing on age related themes

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

The following chapter discusses in greater detail the findings from the eight interviews and will make links with the most pertinent literature and research reviewed in Chapter Two. This section is divided into two parts. The first part explores the themes developed through inductive TA, the second part discusses the results of the deductive analysis which specifically focused on themes relating to the different school settings. These will be followed by an exploration of the limitations which have been noted in relation to this study.

5.2 Knowledge of Cyberbullying

The first overarching theme which emerged through the data analysis focused on the knowledge that schools had gained regarding the issue of cyberbullying. This section was broken down into three main themes, the first of which suggested that the teaching professionals who participated in this research had been interested and active in beginning to develop an understanding of the phenomenon of cyberbullying.

Further to this, there was an acknowledgement of the impact new technology had on pupils even when this was not fully understood by teaching professionals. This overarching theme also highlighted that the participants were aware that

cyberbullying contained unique features not seen in face-to-face bullying. There was also consideration of the impact these unique aspects could have, not only on the pupils, but also on teaching professionals who were attempting to prevent or intervene in cyberbullying behaviour.

5.2.1 Schools' Understanding of Cyberbullying

The main theme focussing on schools' understanding of cyberbullying explored how schools had taken knowledge about this type of behaviour from a variety of sources and applied it to their own settings. The first sub-theme in this area considered how schools had chosen to define cyberbullying. The findings highlighted that each school was able to give a clear and succinct definition of how they understood cyberbullying within their setting. This would suggest that schools are aware of cyberbullying and are not considering it only an issue for the home environment as suggested by Kowalski et al., (2008).

The results do however support the argument of Dooley et al., (2009) that there are numerous attempts to define what this phenomenon actually is. For example, one school suggested that they considered cyberbullying to be an extension of face-to-face bullying. This finding is of consequence, as it has been suggested that, in order to recognise cyberbullying, pupils and adults need to be able to understand the various methods (such as phones and computers) which can be used (Cross et al., 2009).

On the other hand, three of the schools indicated that they did define cyberbullying differently to face-to-face bullying. Their definitions were directly related to the types of technology used as suggested by Patchin and Hinduja (2006). The schools were also aware of the different platforms which could be used, for example they highlighted social networking sites, setting up of websites and the use of instant messaging. This may appear to suggest that the schools have a wide knowledge of types of cyberbullying behaviour; however it could be that these were the types of cyberbullying which had occurred in their particular setting. This is of consequence as schools may only be looking for certain types of cyberbullying if they are not aware that other forms exist.

In addition to definitions which were devised by teaching professionals, two of the settings reported that they had asked their pupils to create their own definitions. It would appear from the schools' perspectives that this had been successful. Whilst it is important to highlight that researchers focussing on cyberbullying have suggested that pupils should be involved in developing their own definitions (Kowalski et al., 2008) there have, in the past, been notable differences in the definitions pupils and teachers have developed for face-to-face bullying. Naylor et al., (2006) suggested that pupils may have less sophisticated and restricted definitions and that teachers may require to support pupils in reframing their understanding of the act of bullying.

The results would appear to indicate that, due to the fast moving nature of cyberbullying, neither teachers nor pupils have as yet developed a sound understanding of this area. This may also suggest why none of the schools referred to issues of repetitive behaviour or power imbalance in their definitions. Whilst research does debate the relevance of each of these areas in terms of cyberbullying (Leishman, 2005; Faumann, 2008; Wolak et al., 2007) it would appear important that schools are taking a lead in discussing these factors with pupils in order to develop their understanding.

The main theme focussing on schools' understanding of cyberbullying also explored whether settings considered there to be a difference between the behaviours displayed in face-to-face bullying and in cyberbullying. The results indicated that, in terms of the prevalence of cyberbullying there was a mixed a picture between schools with some indicating a higher prevalence and others a lower one. As highlighted previously this finding may in part be due to the differing definitions used for cyberbullying in each school (Palfrey et al., 2008).

The results may also be explained through schools not being aware of all incidents of cyberbullying. Cross et al., (2009) highlighted that seventy-two percent of cyberbullying incidents were single events as opposed to eight percent being reported as persistent. It may therefore be suggested that schools are only becoming aware of the persistent cases. Furthermore, this finding may also reflect that fact that pupils are more likely to report their friends experiencing

cyberbullying than themselves and being bystanders to incidents (Vandebosch and van Cleemput, 2009). It may be that schools reporting lower instances are only focussing on pupils who are directly involved.

A particularly interesting finding when considering the contrast between face-to-face and cyberbullying focussed on the impact the latter had in terms of staff workload. It was suggested that cyberbullying issues had resulted in an increased area of work which had not been present previously. This would appear to support the findings of Cross et al., (2012) who suggested that teaching professionals were having to dedicate a significant amount of time each week to dealing with cyberbullying issues. Furthermore, it may indicate support for the suggestion made by Rivers and Noret (2009) that cyberbullying is demonstrating an increased prevalence over the years.

It would however be beneficial to explore this further, particularly in terms of the new requirements of the Ofsted framework under the key criteria of behaviour and safety. It would be useful to understand in detail whether this additional work involves direct interventions with pupils or whether it is more at policy level, also if it impacts only on senior teaching professionals or the wider school staff.

The main theme focussing on schools' understanding also explored the suggestion made by participants that cyberbullying was actually part of a wider

issue. It was suggested that, in addition to cyberbullying issues, schools were also concerned about pupil safety both in terms of the content they were accessing online and the level of unsupervised access.

This finding is interesting in that it would appear not to support the suggestion of Kowalski et al., (2008) that many schools focus on e-safety instead of cyberbullying, but rather to indicate they see this type of bullying behaviour as part of a wider issue. It is however important to bear in mind that the schools who agreed to participate in the research may represent those with a significant interest in this topic area, therefore further research would be required to ascertain whether these findings were reflected in settings which place differing levels of importance on these issues.

5.2.2 Young People and Cyberspace

The second main theme explored schools' knowledge of cyberbullying and highlighted that settings acknowledged the importance of cyberspace culture to young people. The results indicated that teaching professionals felt that it was important to be aware of issues relating to cyberspace culture even if they did not personally agree with them. This finding is of consequence in terms of cyberbullying given that Slonje and Smith (2008) highlighted that pupils would not inform teaching staff due to the perception that they would not understand and/or would not be aware of this phenomenon. This may be reflected in one participant's

comments that suggested that a method to stop cyberbullying was to stop using social networking sites. Given the importance of such sites to young people for maintaining existing friendships, as highlighted by Valkenberg and Peter (2007), it may be that there is some work to be completed focussing on enabling pupils to explain to staff how important these areas are to them and their lives.

The results also indicated a differing reaction to new cyberspace technology in schools, with some settings choosing to ban mobile phones and others highlighting that this would not be realistic due to the amount of technology which is used within the schools. This latter view would appear to support the suggestion of the Byron Report (DCSF, 2008) which indicated that, rather than viewing technology as causing harm, it is beneficial to equip young people to develop an understanding of how to be safe in the digital world. It could therefore be argued that rather than banning technology in the schools there should be a greater emphasis on using the equipment responsibly with support from staff.

Whilst the results did indicate a general acceptance of cyberspace culture, they also highlighted one area where there was a considerable difference of opinion. This primarily involved the use of language which staff members considered to be inappropriate. The school staff suggested that pupils used language which would not be tolerated if it was heard in face-to-face interactions.

This finding would appear to support the suggestion of Ybarra et al., (2006) that the content and tone of a message is an important influence when considering whether a communication is classed as cyberbullying. The schools reported that in order to manage this difficulty they had introduced policies regarding the use of language, not only with technology, but also in all interactions in school. Whilst this approach may have common sense appeal and would be reinforced by the suggestion of Naylor et al., (2006) that pupils need support to develop their definitions of bullying behaviour, it may also be beneficial to explore this use of language with the pupils further in order to understand it more fully.

A final area within this sub-theme considered the need for staff to develop a better understanding of cyberspace culture and its importance to young people. The teaching professionals highlighted that they needed to understand the dangers faced by pupils. I would however suggest that whilst this is important, it would also be beneficial for staff to be more aware and accepting of the positive aspects of modern technology. Given the findings that children and young people are experiencing a rapid increase in access to the internet and electronic devices (Juvonen and Gross, 2007; Raskauskas and Stoltz, 2007) I would suggest that it is crucial for all those who work with them to understand how this can be viewed and used positively.

5.2.3 Unique Aspects of Cyberbullying

The final area which was explored when considering the overarching theme of schools knowledge of cyberbullying focused on teaching professionals understanding of the unique aspects of this type of behaviour. Initially the participants focussed on the differences in the roles pupils could play in cyberbullying as opposed to face-to-face bullying. The results suggest that there is a perception that these roles are more complex in terms of cyberbullying than face-to-face bullying, for example, it is easier to turn from a victim into a bully.

This was primarily due to the nature of the communications used which meant that pupils were able to retaliate more easily. This finding would therefore appear to partially support the research of Wolak et al., (2007) focussing on power imbalances in cyberbullying. It would appear however that victims, rather than creating a position of power by terminating cyberbullying, are actually becoming bullies themselves to reduce their negative position.

Furthermore, the findings also suggest that compared to face-to-face bullying the role of bystanders is different in cyberbullying as they could be more involved by jointly creating websites or social networking pages. This finding could have implications for previous research which has attempted to focus on the prevalence of cyberbullying. Whilst studies such as Vendebosch and van Cleemput (2009) have suggested that lower numbers of young people report being cyberbullies

rather than bystanders it could be that these bystanders, were actually part of the bullying but did not align themselves to this as it was not their computer or phone that was being used.

The participants also highlighted that a further unique feature of cyberbullying which they considered important was the level of anonymity. The staff discussed how this facet impacted on their pupils and the fear that cyberbullying could instil. It is interesting to note however that the staff did not focus on the fact that many pupils know who is cyberbullying them as suggested by Smith et al., (2007). This may partly be explained by the findings of Kowalski et al., (2008) who suggested that even if pupils know who is bullying them, they do not report this to school staff for fear of retaliation from their bully or other pupils.

Within this area the participants did report a factor which has not, to date, been considered in the research literature. This focused on the impact of cyberbullying on pupils who may not be aware that they are victims. It was suggested that dealing with such issues in a school context required considerable tact and discretion and it would be beneficial to consider how these incidents could be dealt with most effectively in the future.

The final area within this theme focused on knowledge of new technology. The participants reported that the increased access pupils had to technology had an

impact and may in part explain the growing workload staff were encountering which was reported earlier. Further to this, it was also suggested that teaching professionals required pupils' support to keep up-to-date with aspects of the technology such as language used. Whilst this appeared to be conducted on an informal basis, it may be beneficial for schools to consider the more formal use of students as experts as suggested by Kowalski et al., (2008).

5.3   Level of School Involvement

The second overarching theme explored the level of school involvement when focussing on issues of cyberbullying. This was broken down into two main themes, the first of which suggested that schools were still considering the role they should adopt. The second main theme explored how schools had chosen to respond to cyberbullying, both in terms of teaching and policy and also when reacting to incidents which had been brought to their attention.

5.3.1 The Role of Schools

The results indicated that the participants in each setting did acknowledge that there were certain instances of cyberbullying behaviour which warranted intervention from the school (although these did differ between settings). It was suggested that such instances included cyberbullying which had taken place on the school premises and behaviour which impacted on the school image. Further

to this, in two schools it was reported that the school would intervene regardless of whether the cyberbullying had taken place inside or outside school premises.

These findings would appear to support the suggestion of Tokunga (2010) that a major hindering factor when dealing with issues of cyberbullying results from the confusion regarding who has responsibility for dealing with such issues. The findings indicate that, as with face-to-face bullying, schools acknowledge the need to deal with cyberbullying if it occurs on their premises. However this would appear to be more complex when considering issues regarding incidents which have impacted on the school image. This is an area which to date has not been explored in the literature and would be beneficial for further research, particularly to establish if pupils have knowledge of what this type of behaviour may entail and why it would be viewed so seriously by schools.

In addition, it is also important to consider the views of the two schools who suggested that they would get involved in addressing cyberbullying incidents regardless of whether they occurred inside or outside school premises. This stance may appear to have good intentions and would be supported by the Education and Inspections Act 2006 which states that headteachers have powers to discipline pupils for poor behaviour outside school. However, in terms of cyberbullying this may be more complex as research has suggested that pupils are reluctant to report such incidents to teachers for fear of retribution from the bully and other pupils (Slonje and Smith, 2008; Kowalski et al. 2008). Therefore, if

schools are adopting a stance of always becoming involved in intervening in cyberbullying incidents, this would have to be managed very carefully.

The findings also suggested that schools reported that parents should play a greater role in intervening in cyberbullying incidents if they occurred outside school premises. It was argued that whilst the school may act as a mediator, it was ultimately the parents' responsibility to deal with incidents. This response from schools is of consequence given that research has suggested that parents often feel they have a lack of knowledge regarding modern technology (Duhue et al., 2008) which can lead to them avoiding discussing such issues with their children. These findings may, in part, explain why pupils are more likely to resort to telling no one or confiding in friends if they are being cyberbullied as suggested by Slonje and Smith (2008).

It would appear that there is a real possibility of pupils being confused about whom to approach should such incidents occur and, if they do approach an adult, not being given a supportive response. This is in area which requires significant consideration from both parents and schools and the pupils themselves particularly given the fact that schools are already reporting struggling with the increase in workload the issue of cyberbullying is producing (Cross et al., 2012).

5.3.2 School Responses

The findings within this main theme also highlighted that schools had considered their responses to cyberbullying incidents in both proactive and reactive terms. In terms of proactive responses it would appear that these primarily focused on policy development and training for both pupils and staff. The teaching professionals reported working with pupils to develop their understanding of how to stay safe online and what behaviours constituted cyberbullying.

A particularly interesting finding suggests that staff were aware that the input they provided had to be realistic to the needs of the pupils. For example, it was suggested that even pupils under the age of thirteen had to be shown how to be safe on Facebook even though this was below the age at which they should be registered on this site. It is important to note however that a great deal of the input was led by teaching professionals. It may be beneficial to explore this, particularly given the suggestion of Englander and Muldowney (2007) that teaching programmes should involve pupils as active participants and not passive receivers of adult-led teaching.

A further finding within this area suggested that part of the proactive work implemented by schools involved creating an ethos where pupils would feel comfortable to report incidents of cyberbullying. This would appear to have great positive appeal given that research has suggested that school staff are the least

likely to be approached by pupils to report such incidents (Slonje and Smith, 2008). It may however be beneficial to explore with the pupils in these schools whether this is the case and, if the response is positive, consider if this can be created in other settings.

The results also indicated that schools were aware that they still required reactive responses when dealing with issues of cyberbullying. The findings suggested that schools do not view these reactive responses as negative but rather as necessary. This would not appear to support the suggestion of Kowalski et al., (2008) that schools focus primarily on e-safety rather than cyberbullying. Furthermore, it may also partially explain why teaching professionals are reporting that cyberbullying issues are having a significant impact in terms of their workload.

5.4   Reality of Cyberbullying

The third overarching theme focused on participants' experiences in dealing with cyberbullying within their schools settings. This theme explored the serious impact this type of behaviour could have on both pupils and adults. The results also highlighted the implications of cyberbullying in terms of safeguarding pupils in the schools and the barriers encountered by staff in order to be able to carry out this function.

5.4.1 Seriousness of Cyberbullying

The results focussing on this area initially considered the seriousness of cyberbullying in terms of its impact on pupils. The participants highlighted that a range of different behaviours had been noted which they considered had a serious impact, including filming attacks on pupils and posting them online and using Facebook as a means of retaliation. The results indicated that schools were aware of the emotional and psychological impact cyberbullying can have on pupils and as suggested by Tokunga (2010). The results also supported previous research which has suggested that pupils can be fearful about returning to schools after experiencing cyberbullying incidents (Katzer et al., 2009; Ybarra et al., 2007). It may now be beneficial to explore with pupils what factors implemented by schools were successful in overcoming these issues.

In terms of the longer-term consequences of cyberbullying, the participants did not specifically highlight that pupils may be suffering from psychological problems such as social anxiety (Juvonen and Gross, 2008), depression and depreciated levels of self-esteem (Didden, 2009). This may be because teaching professionals were unaware that cyberbullying has been linked to these issues and it would therefore be beneficial for staff to work with other professionals to examine if there is a need for further support.

Finally within this theme focussing on the impact of cyberbullying on pupils, the staff did comment on how this type of behaviour can affect the bullies themselves. It was reported that often the pupils involved in cyberbullying did not have an understanding of the impact of their behaviour and were surprised when this was explained to them. This is an area which has to date received little attention in the literature. It has been suggested that a factor in cyberbullying behaviour may be the impersonal nature and the anonymity offered by the medium, resulting in bullies not understanding the consequences of their actions (Englander and Muldowney, 2007) – a factor which would appear to be supported by this finding. It would however appear that an important role for schools is to work with pupils to enable them to understand the real emotional and psychological impact cyberbullying can have.

The theme focussing on the seriousness of cyberbullying also considered the impact this may have on adults in terms of their own safety. The participants highlighted that the issue of cyberbullying had resulted in the need to develop policies not only to protect the pupils but also the staff. It is interesting to note that none of the staff who participated in this research referred specifically to cyberbullying incidents which had involved staff within their settings, considering the significant impact which was reported by Cross et al., (2012) in their survey. It may be that as specific questions focussing on the topic were not asked in the present research it was not addressed by participants. This could be of consequence if staff do not feel they can report such incidents to senior members of staff and this aspect would benefit from further exploration.

5.4.2 Safeguarding

The focus on safeguarding highlighted the value and importance that was placed upon this work within schools in regard to cyberbullying issues. This high priority work was reflected in the fact that the majority of cyberbullying incidents were addressed by senior members of the school staff. Whilst this finding may highlight the significance of this work it is important to note the research of Englander and Muldowney (2007) who suggested that all staff should be involved in preventing and intervening in issues of cyberbullying. It may therefore be beneficial to consider further research with a wider selection of teaching professionals in order to gauge their understanding of the issues involved.

The results also indicated that staff felt a great deal of frustration regarding their attempts to safeguard their pupils against exposure to cyberbullying. This was due to a number of factors including pupils being allowed unsupervised access to internet content at home and also not following the advice they had been given in school.

In terms of pupils being allowed access to unsupervised content this may partly be due to parents' limited understanding of how to protect their children online as suggested by Dehue et al., (2008). I would however suggest that pupils' not following advice given by schools is more of an issue given the increased access to technology including portable internet devices which make supervising access

more difficult. It would appear that further exploration of the factors which deter pupils from following this advice would be valuable.

5.5 Addressing Cyberbullying Issues in Schools

The final overarching theme abstracted through inductive analysis focused on schools methods for addressing cyberbullying issues in school using the knowledge and understanding they had gained. This considered that a whole school community approach was required and highlighted the need to involve pupils, staff, other schools, parents and the wider community.

5.5.1 Involvement of Pupils

In terms of involving pupils the results suggested that schools were acknowledging the importance of working with pupils to ensure they felt that cyberbullying issues were being treated in a fair manner which took into account their views and opinions. This was reflected not only in involving pupils in defining exactly what cyberbullying was but also in discussing with them what sanctions should be put in place if pupil were involved in cyberbullying behaviours.

It would appear that schools are becoming more confident in discussing cyberbullying issues and not only focussing on e-safety elements as suggested by Kowalski et al., (2008). It is however important to bear in mind that the teaching

professionals who agreed to participate in this research may be particularly interested in this area and did have a responsibility for these issues and therefore may be more confident and knowledgeable than other members of staff. As it has been suggested that the prevalence of cyberbullying is high and increasing (Rivers and Noret, 2009) it would appear important to explore the level of support other teaching professionals may require in order to be able to discuss these issues with pupils.

5.5.2 Involvement of Parents

In terms of working with parents there would appear to be a strong focus on wanting to support parents through giving e-safety information and advice. Furthermore, the teaching professionals highlighted that whilst they were willing to support parents in dealing with cyberbullying incidents there was a tension concerning when they should intervene (which was partly due to the limited time and resources available). The results suggested that at the present time, support that was offered to parents such as workshops and training were poorly attended.

The findings which highlight that parents are showing less interest in attending e-safety meetings may suggest that it would be more beneficial for schools to begin exploring cyberbullying issues with parents more specifically. This focus could potentially provide an opportunity for schools to highlight the emotional and psychological consequences of cyberbullying. This could be a valuable resource to

parents particularly given the research of Mason (2008) who suggested that parents often avoid discussing cyberbullying issues due to lack of knowledge in this area. Furthermore, given the findings in this study which suggested that school staff are potentially unaware of the long-term consequences of cyberbullying this may be an opportunity for school staff, parents and pupils to support each other to develop shared understanding of cyberbullying issues.

5.5.3 Involvement of the Community

The findings also highlighted that in order to deal with issues of cyberbullying it was acknowledged that it was beneficial to involve the wider community. The teaching professionals reported having worked with other feeder schools when issues had arisen. Whilst this would appear to be beneficial it may be necessary for schools to consider the need to work with settings outside their catchment areas given the nature of cyberbullying and the potential for it spread quickly and widely (Smith et al., 2008).

Finally, the findings also suggest that schools do involve members of the wider community to support them in working with issues of cyberbullying. At the present time it would appear that most of this support focuses on highlighting the potential consequences of cyberbullying in terms of punishment. It would now be beneficial to consider involving other agencies who would be able to work with pupils to

explore other areas including the emotional and psychological impact of cyberbullying.

5.6   Age Related Issues

In addition to the inductive analysis which was used to analyse the findings the data was also subjected to deductive analysis in order to ascertain any issues relating to the different age groups in the school settings. The findings suggested that for the Middle schools in particular there were a number of issues to be addressed due to the age range of pupils in their settings. It was considered that whilst as might be expected the older pupils required support in understanding issues of e-safety and cyberbullying there was also a significant number of younger pupils who were involved in their types of behaviours. Furthermore, it would appear that different age pupils were accessing different types of platforms.

In addition to these findings there was also the consideration that not all pupils in Middle schools were using technology regularly and may not be active in areas such as social networking sites. This is of consequence as pupils who are accessing these types of sites regularly are going to require different support to those who are not. Furthermore, it is important to note that these are only the perceptions of the school staff and may not reflect the true involvement of pupils with technology.

These findings are particularly interesting as they suggest that younger children are beginning to use technology which could be used for cyberbullying. This may in part also explain why there have been reports of increased prevalence in cyberbullying (River and Noret, 2009). It does however highlight that schools are going to need to respond to this in an appropriate manner which will require further investigation. Furthermore, at the present time there would appear to be paucity of research focussing on whether these younger pupils are involved in cyberbullying. The results from this study would appear to suggest that pupils as young as Years 4 and 5 are. Until recently many of the explanations for this have focused on issues occurring during adolescents (Willard, 2005) however this may need to be revisited if increasing numbers of younger pupils are involved.

The findings also suggested that unlike previous research in this area (Williams and Guerra, 2007) there was not an increase in cyberbullying noted in settings in the years after transition. This finding was the same for both secondary and high schools. Indeed the results suggested that in the secondary school it was reported more in Years 8 and 9 whereas in the high school there were a greater number of incidents in Years 9 and 10. The findings from the high school would however support the results of Ybarra and Mitchell (2004) that greater levels of cyberbullying were found amongst pupils aged fifteen to seventeen years as opposed to those aged fourteen years.

5.7   Limitations of the Research

Whilst this study has been able to provide a starting point when exploring the experiences of teaching professionals when dealing with issues of cyberbullying there are a number of limitations which require to be addressed. Firstly, it could be argued that the relatively small sample size (n = 8) could impact on the ability of this research to be applied to other settings. Given the interpretivist epistemological stance of this research generalisability to the wider population was never an aim. Furthermore, as suggested by Parker (1994) any increase in participant numbers would necessitate a method of data analysis which would involve grouping responses into more manageable categories thus increasingly losing the specificities of each participants' experiences.

This study was primarily designed to move away from the quantitative studies which have been conducted in this area and towards a deeper understanding of everyday experiences. I believe that to reduce the data gathered from the teaching professionals would have resulted in the loss of information which can be used to understand how to support children, young people, their parents and wider stakeholders in dealing with the issue of cyberbullying. The methodology and methods employed ensured that the findings remained those of the participants which in turn led to new and unexpected areas of discovery which may not have been possible using alternative means.

A further limitation of this study focuses of the different types of school which were involved. Again this could lead to suggestions that the research is not applicable to the majority of the UK which generally only has primary and secondary schools. Upon consideration the decision to use all the different types of schools in Westshire LA would appear to have been important and beneficial for a number of reasons. Firstly, one of the main aims of this research was to explore if there were differing issues in the various settings depending on the age of pupils on roll. This would not have been possible if the research only focused on two types of schools and would not have reflected the reality of Westshire LA.

Secondly, the findings focussing on age related issues highlight that this is a complex area and one which a single answer would not appear applicable. Each school setting reported very different experiences and approaches when dealing with issues of cyberbullying and it may therefore be proposed that whilst more general support can be given dependent on the age of the pupils it will be crucial that this is tailored to each setting and that schools are encouraged and supported in doing this.

A final limitation of this research focuses on the participants who were asked to contribute to this study. As part of the purposive sampling process it was stipulated that participants should be responsible for anti-bullying policy in schools in order to ensure that they would have an overview of issues throughout their setting. Whilst this was important during this exploratory study the findings indicated that on a

number of occasions these members of staff were only made aware of cyberbullying issues once they had reached a serious stage.

It would now be beneficial to explore this area with teaching professionals who have contact with pupils on a day-to-day basis. In addition to this, it would also be valuable to conduct some in-depth case studies in a small number of schools to explore and triangulate the experiences of teaching staff, pupils and parents to gain a fuller understanding.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

6.1   Addressing the Initial Research Aims

The overall aim of this study was to explore cyberbullying issues in schools from the perspective of teaching professionals. More specifically the research was designed to:

1	Provide an insight into the views, experiences and current practice of teaching professionals concerning cyberbullying issues in their school settings.
2	Explore the perspective of teaching professionals regarding the impact of cyberbullying on pupils and the wider school community.
3	Ascertain from teaching professionals whether cyberbullying issues are different dependent on the age of pupils and type of school.

Table 6.1: Research Aims

The research methods employed in collecting and analysing the data allowed me to explore these issues in depth. The analytical process which was applied to the data revealed a story of the experiences of teaching professionals in relation to cyberbullying in their settings. This was presented within and across themes, highlighting a range of issues pertinent to teaching professionals and the people they work with when dealing with cyberbullying in school. These findings were presented and further discussed and interpreted in relation to relevant literature and research.

To conclude the discussion, a summary which presents the findings in relation to the initial research questions is presented below:

Research Question 1: What is the extent of understanding of cyberbullying among teaching professionals in school settings?

The results of the study highlighted that teaching professionals had gained knowledge regarding cyberbullying issues from a wide variety of sources and had been able to apply this information and understanding within their settings. It would appear that at present, there is a divide between schools with some considering cyberbullying as an extension of face-to-face bullying whilst others viewed this behaviour as a separate phenomenon.

Teaching professionals acknowledged that cyberbullying is part of a wider issue which includes areas such as safeguarding and child protection. The findings highlighted that staff are particularly concerned that pupils do not follow advice they are given in schools regarding their safety. Furthermore, they are frustrated that their attempts to safeguard pupils are sometimes thwarted by parents not employing measures to keep their children safe online at home.

The findings also suggest that schools are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of cyberspace culture to children and young people. It was however acknowledged that differences of opinion between pupils and staff can occur, particularly in terms of acceptable use of language. It would appear that teaching professionals consider many of the interactions which occur between pupils online

as cases of cyberbullying, however this is not always recognised by the pupils themselves.

Teaching professionals highlighted that at the present time they felt that cyberbullying was an issue which was still developing. It was suggested that the fast moving nature of the technology used for cyberbullying was having a particular impact in terms of the roles played in this type of behaviour and the number of pupils potentially involved. It would appear schools are aware that, regardless of the prevalence of cyberbullying in their setting, this is an issue which will require on-going consideration.

Research Question 2: What do teaching professionals view as the role and appropriate response of schools when encountering cyberbullying issues?

In terms of how schools are responding to issues of cyberbullying in their settings, the findings suggest that this is a complex picture and one to which each setting had taken an individual approach. The results highlighted that there were certain areas and incidents which schools felt confident and compelled to respond to. These had primarily come about due to school policies and also as part of the ethos of the setting.

The teaching professionals also highlighted that there were areas in which they felt less certain whether to intervene. This primarily focused around cyberbullying which had taken place outside school premises and hours. This was not however

always clear-cut as participants reported that incidents which started online could come back into school and vice versa. Furthermore, schools felt the need to react to parental requests to become involved in incidents of cyberbullying which occurred outside the school day but involved pupils from their setting.

The teaching professionals suggested that the decision regarding the level of involvement schools should have in dealing with cyberbullying incidents was also affected by the resources available. It was reported that increasing amounts of time were being used to deal with issues and it was acknowledged that this would not be sustainable. Schools had responded to this issue by developing a number of methods for reporting cyberbullying incidents to parents and also through acting a mediators between parents when incidents had occurred but in which the school was not directly involved.

Research Question 3: What is the perceived impact of cyberbullying on members of the school community?

The impact of cyberbullying was considered not only in terms of the pupils but also the wider school community. The findings highlighted that teaching professionals were aware of instances where cyberbullying had resulted in school-based issues, such as refusal to return to school. Furthermore, there was also discussion concerning the emotional and psychological impact of cyberbullying. The teaching professionals did not however discuss the longer-term impact of these incidents

which may suggest that they are not aware of these effects and may require additional support to explore these with pupils.

The findings also highlighted that the teaching professionals were concerned regarding the lack of awareness many cyberbullying pupils demonstrated in regard to the impact their behaviour on others. The teaching professionals suggested that the pupils often did not make the connection between their behaviour and its impact due to it not being face-to-face with the victim. It was indicated that additional support would be beneficial in schools in order to highlight the potentially significant consequences of cyberbullying behaviour.

Finally, teaching professionals also discussed the impact of cyberbullying on members of staff. The results indicated that, in these school settings, this had primarily involved providing staff with e-safety information regarding how to stay safe online. In terms of the findings for this study there were no specific reports of staff being cyberbullied, however it would be beneficial to explore this area further in the future.

Research Question 4: How have teaching professionals in schools responded to and are dealing with cyberbullying issues in their settings?

The findings highlighted that teaching professionals are employing a range of methods when dealing with cyberbullying issues. In terms of proactive measures these have included practical steps such as implementing new policies and

procedures, also the introduction of specific areas of teaching focussing cyberbullying issues. The teaching professionals highlighted that proactive approaches such as generic teaching programmes had to be tailored to reflect the pupils in their setting. It was also highlighted that schools felt it was important to create an ethos in their setting in which pupils were able to discuss cyberbullying freely and with confidence.

The teaching professionals also discussed the need to have reactive stratagems in place for dealing with cyberbullying issues. The need for a reactive approach was primarily due to the fast-moving nature of cyberbullying which required schools to be constantly updating their policies and procedures in light of new technology.

The findings also indicated what had been considered successful when dealing with issues of cyberbullying. The teaching professionals highlighted that increasingly they were aware of the need to employ a holistic approach which involved not only pupils and staff but also parents and the wider community. There were however difficulties, for example events which had been introduced to support parents tackling e-safety issues at home had received little interest. Also schools reported concern regarding the lack of knowledge many parents had in regard to the content their children were viewing online.

Research Question 5: Does the type of school and age of pupil have a bearing on cyberbullying and the response required?

The final area which was explored through the use of deductive analysis considered the bearing of age on cyberbullying. The findings highlighted that this was a particularly relevant issue in Middle schools as pupils were experiencing very differing levels of involvement with technology. Teaching professionals reported that this had resulted in settings having to tailor their curricula very specifically to meet the pupils needs.

The findings also highlighted the importance of considering the experiences of even younger pupils when focussing on cyberbullying issues. The teaching professionals highlighted that pupils as young as Year 4 were involved in incidents and requiring support. It was suggested however that this can be a complex area as not all pupils are using technology in these younger age groups.

Interestingly the findings did not report an increase in cyberbullying behaviours after transition to schools settings therefore not replicating research focussing on face-to-face bullying. Furthermore, the schools reported differing prevalence rates in different year groups, therefore highlighting the importance of schools responding to cyberbullying issues based on the needs of their own setting.

6.2   Implications for Practice

Many of the research findings presented have a range of implications for the practice in handling cyberbullying in the school setting in which the study took place. It is important to bear in mind that each setting was unique and the epistemological stance taken by this study recognised this. Therefore, whilst the implications for practice presented below (see Table 6.2) reflect the overall findings from this study, they will be discussed with each individual school in order to explore issues arising in each setting.

Research Finding	Implications for Practice
1. There are differences of opinion between schools in regard to when teaching professionals should intervene in cyberbullying issues	• Teaching professionals need to develop clear policies and procedures regarding when to intervene with cyberbullying. • These should be shared with pupils and parents in order for them to understand the rationale behind these decisions. • It is crucial however, that regardless of whether schools are going to intervene, there are clear procedures put in place which enable pupils to report incidents of cyberbullying and receive support.
2. Teaching professionals and pupils can have different views about what behaviours constitute cyberbullying and the importance of cyberspace culture	• Teaching professionals need to keep up-to-date about the latest technology and its uses. This can be achieved through using pupils as mentors. • School-based programmes focussing on cyberbullying should provide opportunities for discussion between pupils and teaching professionals in order to come to a common understanding about the exact nature of cyberbullying behaviour. This will have to be reviewed regularly.
3. Dealing with incidents of cyberbullying is having a significant impact in terms of teaching professionals workload	• Teaching professionals should be aware and make use of the other groups in the wider community who can support them in dealing with cyberbullying issues. • It is however important that schools continue to provide a safe space where pupils can discuss issues if required. • It would be beneficial for schools to explore involving other staff members instead of relying on senior managers.

4. Schools are aware of the immediate impact of cyberbullying but require additional support to understand the longer-term psychological and emotional consequences	• Teaching professionals could receive support and guidance through working with other agencies including the School Nursing Service and the Educational Psychology Service to understand more fully the longer-term impact of cyberbullying and how to support pupils. • It would be beneficial for teaching professionals to discuss the longer-term impact of cyberbullying with all pupils including bullies, victims and bystanders.
5. Teaching professionals can feel frustrated that their attempts to safeguard pupils from cyberbullying issues are sometimes thwarted by parents	• Teaching professionals could support parents to understand more fully the impact of cyberbullying in addition to focussing on e-safety input. This may enable parents to be able to discuss such behaviour with their children more confidently.
6. Increasingly younger pupils are using technology and potentially being exposed to cyberbullying issues	• Further investigation is required in this area in order to establish the level of use amongst younger pupils. • Schools should be proactive in this exploration in their own setting in order to highlight if additional support or teaching is required in younger age groups.

Table 6.2: Implications for Practice

6.3　Implications of Research Findings for Educational Psychologists

The original starting point for this study was the number of anecdotal accounts of cyberbullying issues I became aware of in schools whilst working as a Trainee Educational Psychologist. These accounts came from a wide variety of people including pupils, school staff, parents and EP colleagues and appeared to suggest that, even though the vast majority of cyberbullying took place outside the school day and premises, cyberbullying was having a significant impact within settings.

My search of literature suggested that whilst there was considerable research focussing on bullying in schools, the issue of cyberbullying had received less attention. This was also true of the role that EPs should play when supporting schools dealing with issues connected to cyberbullying. It is therefore important to consider the ways in which the research findings from this study could be used to inform, enhance and develop this area of practice for EPs.

Several key issues emerged from the current research, which could be addressed through the application of EP skills, including supporting teaching professionals to:

- develop a wider knowledge of the psychological and emotional impact of cyberbullying;
- develop effective methods of working with pupils who have been victims of cyberbullying, who have perpetrated cyberbullying and who are bystanders;
- deliver information to parents which not only focuses on e-safety but addresses the wider issue of cyberbullying; and
- work with schools to enable them to develop a greater understanding of pupils experiences and perceptions of cyberbullying in their settings.

Area of Development	Potential EP Contribution
Develop a wider knowledge of the psychological and emotional impact of cyberbullying	• Provide training to schools regarding the impact of cyberbullying particularly focussing on the longer-term emotional and psychological issues. • Conduct further qualitative research with children and young people to develop a deeper understanding of the impact of cyberbullying. • Conduct further qualitative research with other members of school staff to explore their experiences of cyberbullying.
Develop effective methods of working with pupils who have been victims of cyberbullying, who have perpetrated cyberbullying and who are bystanders	• Consultation with school staff in regard to appropriate methods for intervening in cyberbullying using evidence-based approaches. • Individual/group work with pupils who have experienced cyberbullying. • Supporting schools to develop programmes of work for all pupils which focus on the emotional and psychological impact of cyberbullying.
Deliver information to parents which not only focuses on e-safety but also addresses the wider issue of cyberbullying	• Provide training to school staff and parents regarding cyberbullying issues. • Facilitate focus groups to gather information regarding parents' concerns.
Work with schools to enable them to develop a greater understanding of pupils experiences and perceptions of cyberbullying in their settings	• Work with schools to develop appropriate methods for gaining the 'voice of the child'. • Conduct further research to triangulate evidence from teaching professionals with that of pupils. • Facilitate focus groups to gain pupils' opinions.

Table 6.3: Potential Areas for Educational Psychology Contribution

6.4　Overall Conclusions

The results of this study have highlighted the importance of exploring the experiences of teaching professionals when focussing on issues of cyberbullying. This phenomenon is still relatively new and is increasing at a rapid pace. Teaching professionals highlight that they have a significant role in handling cyberbullying issues but are still learning how to fulfil their role appropriately. The findings have highlighted some differences between teaching professionals' opinions and literature and research regarding pupils' opinions and these require further exploration.

This study has highlighted that, from the perspective of teaching professionals, cyberbullying is a significant issue in school communities regardless of the age of the pupils and one which merits further consideration. The use of qualitative methods has enabled the exploration of the experiences and perceptions of teaching professionals to be considered in depth and provided a vivid picture of the issues at the present time. Further research is now required to enable the exploration of these issues in a similar manner with others involved including pupils, parents and the wider community in order to be able to understand and address cyberbullying issues more effectively.

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Literature Review Strategy

1.0   Literature Search Strategy

In order to identify literature from a wide range of sources, a number of different search engines were used. These comprised:

- ASSIA: Applied Social Science Index and Abstracts
- The British Education Index
- Education Research Abstracts Index
- ERIC: Educational Research Information Centre
- PsychArtices
- PsychInfo
- SwetsWise.

Access to the resources was granted through the University of Birmingham's Shibboleth Authentication. In using these search engines a number key terms using a Boolean search approach were used, in order to take into account international differences in terminology:

Cyberbullying and School	Technology and Cyberbullying
Cyberbullying and School and Pupils	Technology and Bullying
Cyberbullying and School and Students	Technology and School and Bullying
Cyberbullying and School and Staff	Technology and School and Cyberbullying
Cyberbullying and School and Teachers	Technology and Cyberbullying and Pupils
Cyberbullying and School and Parents	Technology and Cyberbullying and Students
Cyberbullying and School and Behaviour	Technology and Cyberbullying and Staff
Cyberbullying and School and Prevention	Technology and Cyberbullying and Teachers
	Technology and Cyberbullying and Parents
Bullying and School	
Bullying and School and Pupils	
Bullying and School and Students	
Bullying and School and Staff	
Bullying and School and Teachers	
Bullying and School and Parents	

2.0   Selection of Appropriate Literature

The literature search method resulted in a large number of sources being gathered due to the 'snowballing effect' of selecting additional sources from reference lists. Once these titles were identified, references were initially screened based on the relevance of research titles, and were subsequently refined by reading abstracts of more promising sources and then full articles. This approach allowed me to determine the relevance to the current study.

Cyberbullying and the Law

Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994

- This Act defines a criminal offence of intentional harassment
- A person is guilty of an offence if, with intent to cause a person harassment, alarm or distress, he/she uses:
  - threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour; or
  - displays any writing or visual representation which is threatening, abusive or insulting, thereby causing that or another person harassment, alarm or distress.

Protection from Harassment Act 1997

- The Act states that it is unlawful to cause harassment, alarm or distress by a course or conduct, which:
  - amounts to harassment of another; or
  - a person knows, or ought to know, amounts of harassment of the other.

Malicious Communications Act 1988

- Under this Act it is an offence to send an indecent offensive or threatening letter, electronic communication or other article to another person.

Communications Act 2003

- This Act states that a person is guilty of an offence if he/she:
  - sends by means of a public electronic communications network a message or other matter that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing nature; or
  - causes any such message or matter to be so.

- A person is also guilty of an offence if, for the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety to another, he/she:
  - sends by means of a public electronic communications network, a message that he knows to be false;
  - causes such a message to be sent; or
  - persistently makes use of a public electronic communications network.

Appendix 4

Letter to Headteachers

<div align="right">
School of Education
University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham
B15 2TT
</div>

SCHOOL ADDRESS

Dear

I am currently employed as a Trainee Educational Psychologist in Westshire County Council and I am writing to ask whether your school would consider participating in a study focusing on cyberbullying. The research aims to explore whether cyberbulling which primarily takes place outside school premises has an impact in schools. The study forms part of my thesis for a Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology at the University of Birmingham.

If you would be willing for your school to participate I would appreciate it if you would nominate either yourself or a member of staff responsible for Anti-Bullying strategy to take part in an interview. The interview would last approximately 40 minutes and would be organised to take place at a time and location suitable for the interviewee. I can assure you of complete confidentiality if your school does wish to participate. The name of your school and any members of staff will not feature in the final report. Any member of staff who does agree to participate will have the right to withdraw at any time before or during the interview if they no longer wish to be included.

If you would be willing for your school to participate please complete the reply slip naming a member of staff who I can contact to discuss organising an interview and return it in the pre-paid envelope. I have enclosed the participant information sheet which would be given to interviewees to provide you with further details of the study. If you require any additional information please do not hesitate to contact me by email ███████████████████████████████████████

Yours sincerely

Helen Johnson
Trainee Educational Psychologist

Participant Information Sheet

Cyberbullying Issues in Schools: An Exploratory, Qualitative Study from the Perspective of Teaching Professionals

Your school has agreed to take part in this research project. You are invited to participate in the research as part of your school role focuses on Anti-Bullying strategy. The study is being conducted by Helen Johnson, a Trainee Educational Psychologist at the University of Birmingham.

Before you decide if you wish to participate it is important for you to understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like any additional information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

1) **Study Title**
   Cyberbullying Issues in Schools: An Exploratory, Qualitative Study from the Perspective of Teaching Professionals

2) **What is the purpose of this study?**
   The focus of the research is to explore the impact of cyberbullying (CB) in schools from a teaching staff perspective in one Local Authority. The study is designed to investigate the opinions and experiences of teaching staff concerning issues surrounding CB in their employing schools.

3) **Why have I been asked to participate?**
   You have been approached to participate as part of your role in school involves responsibility for Anti-Bullying policy and strategy.

4) **Do I have to take part?**
   No. Participation is entirely voluntary. If you change your mind about taking part in the study you can withdraw at any time before or during the interview. If you decide to withdraw any data that has been collected from you will be destroyed and not used in the study. There are no consequences to deciding that you do not want to participate and any withdrawal from the study will be confidential between yourself and the researcher.

5) **What will happen if I take part?**
   You will be asked to take part in an interview which will take approximately forty minutes. The questions will focus upon cyberbullying and its impact within your school setting. If you agree to participate a consent form will need to be completed and sent in the enclosed pre-paid envelop. Upon receipt of the consent form the researcher, Helen Johnson, will contact you to arrange a convenient time and location for the interview to take place.

6) **What are the possible benefits of taking part?**
   Once the study in completed the findings will be shared with your school and the other schools which have taken part. It is hoped that the findings will increase knowledge and understanding of the issues of cyberbullying faced by teaching staff and also highlight some good practice. It is also intended that the results may suggest areas which require further support or training.

7) **What are the possible disadvantages of taking part?**
   A disadvantage of taking part is that you will be asked to give up approximately forty minutes of your time. Whilst there are no foreseeable physical or psychological risks for taking part in this study if you do feel uncomfortable you have the right to withdraw at any time.

8) **Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?**
   All information you provide will not contain any personal details (except whether you are a primary or secondary teacher) ensuring that you will not be able to be identified. The written report will contain the findings of the study, however all responses will remain anonymous and it will not be possible to identify names of participants or schools.

9) **What should I do if I want to discuss this study further before I decide?**
   If after reading this information you would like more details regarding the study please contact either the researcher (Helen Johnson) or the research supervisor (Collette Soan).

10) **Who should I contact if I have concerns about the conduct of this study?**
    If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of this study please contact Sue Morris (Educational Psychology Course Director) by e-mail at
    ████████████████████████████

11) **What happens to the results of this study?**
    The results of the study will be written up as part of a submission towards qualification in a Doctorate in Applied Educational and Child Psychology. If the results are interesting enough to be publishable it may be presented at

academic conferences and/or written up for publication in a peer reviewed academic journal. Each participant and their employing school will receive a summary of the research results and may request to meet with the researcher to further discuss the findings. The results will also be reported to the Anti-Bullying strategy group in Westshire County Council.

You and your school will not be identified in any report, publication or presentation.

12) Who is organising and funding the research?
The research is organised by Helen Johnson who is a student at the University of Birmingham. It is conducted under the supervision of Collette Soan. The study is not externally funded.

13) Who has reviewed the study?
The study has been reviewed and approved by the University of Birmingham's Ethics Committee.

14) Contact Details for Further Information

If you want to contact the researcher, Helen Johnson, please email

██

If you want to contact the research supervisor, Colette Soan, please email

██

Thank you for taking the time to read this information and for considering taking part in this study. If you wish to take participate, please sign the attached consent form and return it in the pre-paid envelop. This information sheet is for you to keep.

Appendix 6

Interview Schedule

1) How would you define cyberbullying?
2) What is your role in school regarding anti-bullying strategy?
3) In your school setting do you have any specific anti-cyberbullying strategy / policy in place?
4) If yes, why did you feel that this was necessary?
5) If no, do you not feel that it is necessary to view cyberbullying differently to other types of bullying?
6) Do you believe that pupils would define cyberbullying in a similar way?
7) The majority of cyberbullying happens outside school premises and out with the school day. Given these facts do you feel that CB has an impact on everyday school life?
8) Does your school feel that it has a duty to address cyberbullying even if it happens outside school premises and out with the school day?
   Is this shared by parents / pupils?
9) Do you believe that school staff feel confident to deal with issues regarding cyberbullying?
10) Do you believe that your pupils have the skills / knowledge to deal with issues regarding cyberbullying?
11) In your experience do different cyberbullying issues affect different age groups?
12) Is there any additional training / input that would enable you as a school to deal with issues surrounding cyberbullying?

Appendix 7

Pilot Study

The pilot study took placed outside the LA where I am employed as a TEP. The study used the semi-structured schedule to interview a primary school teacher. The purpose of the pilot was to establish the suitability of the questions which had been developed resulting from the literature review.

Following the pilot study, and after discussion with the primary school teacher who had taken part, I made several amendments to the interview schedule. The first was to change the order of the initial questions. After the pilot interview I reflected that it was important to understand how participants and their employing schools defined cyberbullying in their context, consequently I moved the definition question to the beginning of the schedule.

The second change I made was to include a question focussing on parents' views of schools being involved in tackling cyberbullying. Whilst I had covered this in my literature review, it became apparent that parental involvement was an important issue in the pilot school both in terms of facilitating and hindering addressing cyberbullying issues, therefore I wanted to explore this in more depth in the following interviews.

<u>Appendix 8</u>

Consent Form

Please read the following and **circle** YES or NO to let me know that you understand what it means to take part in the study.

I have read the information sheet and understand what this study is about	YES	NO
I have been able to think about the information and have been able to ask any questions about the study. I am happy with the answers given.	YES	NO
I understand that answering the questions in completely up to me and **I can stop at any time without having to give a reason.**	YES	NO
I understand that I have the right to change my mind about participating in the study after the interview has taken place. I understand that I must contact the researcher with my participant identification number in order for this to occur.	YES	NO
I understand that what I say may be used in the research report but that a pseudonym will be used and the only personal information given will be whether I am a primary, secondary, middle or high school teacher.	YES	NO
I agree to a tape recorder being used during my interview and understand that after transcription the recording will be destroyed. No personal information will be attached to the transcription other than whether I am a primary, secondary, middle or high school teacher.	YES	NO
I understand that I will be offered a summary of the research findings once the study is completed and the opportunity to discuss the findings in more detail.	YES	NO

Name of Interviewee: _____

Signed: _____

Date:_____

Name of Researcher: _____

Signed: _____

Date:_____

Public Domain Briefing Paper

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:1em;">

CYBERBULLYING ISSUES IN SCHOOLS: AN EXPLORATORY, QUALITATIVE STUDY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF TEACHING PROFESSIONALS

</div>

Context

This research has been completed in accordance with the requirements of the three year full-time postgraduate professional training programme in Applied Educational and Child Psychology at the University of Birmingham. The study was completed with the support and agreement of Westshire Council Educational Psychology Service which employed me as a Trainee Educational Psychologist during the final two years of my course.

Introduction

Cyberbullying is a recent phenomenon originally coming to the forefront of the public agenda following a number of anecdotal accounts (Tomazin and Smith, 2008). It has been defined as:

> "…any behaviour performed through electronic or digital media
>
> by individuals or groups that repeatedly communicates hostile or
>
> aggressive messages intended to inflict harm or discomfort on
>
> others" (Tokunaga, 2010: 278).

Whilst definitions may vary they usually focus on intentional, deliberate and repeated behaviour which is experienced over time (Kowalski et al., 2008). Definitions also highlight the real, non-trivial pain (psychological, emotional and relational) experienced by the victim (Patchin and Hinduja, 2010).

At the present time whilst there is growing interest in this topic there would appear to be limited research focussing on cyberbullying despite the general concern regarding its prevalence and potential increase (Tokunaga, 2010). Li (2006) argues that cyberbullying requires further research and understanding as a large number of young people are currently reporting being cyberbullied or are aware of friends who are exposed to this type of behaviour.

The research which has been conducted to date has predominantly focused on early formative stages of study including investigations into prevalence, frequency amongst specific groups and negative outcomes. This type of early exploratory research has been heavily influenced by the use of quantitative techniques to gather data and whilst it has begun to build a picture about cyberbullying it would now appear timely to begin to develop a deeper understanding. Mishna (2009) argues that qualitative research is required to explore this field further, in order to discover important discourses about cyberbullying and also to give a voice to people experiencing this sensitive issue which may not be possible through quantitative techniques.

This research study is designed to explore cyberbullying issues in schools from the perspective of teaching professionals in a variety of educational settings. The rationale for wishing to explore this area is based upon a number of factors. Firstly, research focussing on traditional types of bullying has suggested that teachers and pupils can have differing definitions and understandings of bullying. This is of consequence in terms of implications for reporting incidences of bullying in schools, understanding developmental trends in children's and young people's perceptions of bullying and evaluating the effectiveness of interventions (Naylor et al., 2006). It would therefore appear important to pursue research focussing on whether there are similar issues and understandings in terms of cyberbullying.

A second reason for studying cyberbullying from the perspective of teaching professionals concerns the high prevalence of unreported cyberbullying, with estimates suggesting that ninety percent of cases are not reported to adults (Juvonen and Gross, 2008). Li (2006) investigated this area from the pupil perspective and suggested that pupils did not report cyberbullying in schools as they believed that teaching staff would not understand this issue and would therefore not be able to help them. This in turn left affected pupils feeling scared and powerless. In order to understand whether this pupil perception is correct it would appear necessary to investigate this from a teaching staff perspective. Further to this it is hoped that the current research will highlight any areas in which staff may feel they require extra support.

An additional element of the present research is that it is designed to investigate the impact of cyberbullying from the perspective of teaching professionals working with a range of age groups. This is deemed important as previous research focussing on other forms of bullying has suggested that early adolescence is a particularly vulnerable time for bullying to take place due disruptions in social networks (such as moving to high school and making new friends) (Li, 2007). It would therefore appear important to investigate cyberbullying from a variety of perspectives to ascertain whether staff in varying educational settings require different types of support to address this issue.

The aims of this study were to:

- provide an insight into the views, experiences and current practice of teaching professionals concerning cyberbullying issues in their school settings;
- explore the perspective of teaching professionals regarding the impact of cyberbullying on pupils and the wider school community; and
- ascertain from teaching professionals whether cyberbullying issues are different dependent on the age of pupils and type of school.

The study sought to address the following research questions:

- What is the extent of understanding of cyberbullying among teaching professionals in school settings?
- What do teaching professionals view as the role and appropriate response of schools when encountering cyberbullying issues?
- What is the perceived impact of cyberbullying on members of the school community?
- How have teaching professionals in schools responded to and are dealing with cyberbullying issues in their settings?
- Does the type of school and age of pupil have a bearing on cyberbullying and the response required?

Methodology

As a researcher I was interested in how people make sense of, interpret and construct their experiences. I therefore sought a research methodology which would enable me to be able to explore these areas and as such took a perspective which is referred to as interpretivist. In this this study I was interested in exploring and interpreting how teaching professionals perceived cyberbullying issues in their school settings. The type of methodology I adopted allowed me to acknowledge that each individual would experience this phenomenon in a different way.

Research Sample

Eight teaching professionals agreed to participate in the research from a variety of settings including middle, high, primary and secondary schools. This is deemed important as previous research focusing on other forms of bullying has suggested that early adolescence is a particularly vulnerable time for bullying to take place due disruptions in social networks (such as moving to high school and making new friends) (Li, 2007).

Data Collection

The data for this study was collected using semi-structured interviews, which involve having a set of pre-prepared questions, with prompts and further questions incorporated. The intention was to develop a conversational approach with interviewees which enables and supports participants in sharing rich accounts and narrative of their experiences.

Ethical Considerations

This research was given full ethical approval from the University of Birmingham's Ethics Committee. Particular attention was given to securing informed consent from the participants and ensuring anonymity.

Method of Analysis

Thematic Analysis was used to analyse the data collected for this study. Specifically Braun and Clarke's (2006) six stage procedure was employed which enabled the data to be subjected to qualitative analysis to look for themes within each person's narrative and across the whole data set.

<u>Key Findings</u>

The results of this study indicate that:

1. There are differences of opinion between schools in regard to when teaching professionals should intervene in cyberbullying issues.

2. Teaching professionals and pupils can have different views about what behaviours constitute cyberbullying and the importance of cyberspace culture.

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3. Dealing with incidents of cyberbullying is having a significant impact in terms of teaching professionals workload.

4. Schools are aware of the immediate impact of cyberbullying but require additional support to understand the longer-term psychological and emotional consequences.

5. Teaching professionals can feel frustrated that their attempts to safeguard pupils from cyberbullying issues are sometimes thwarted by parents.

6. Increasingly younger pupils are using technology and potentially being exposed to cyberbullying issues.

Several key issues emerged from the current research which could be addressed through collaboration with the Educational Psychology Service including supporting teaching professionals to:

- develop a wider knowledge of the long-term psychological and emotional impact of cyberbullying;

- develop effective methods of working with pupils who have been victims of cyberbullying, who have perpetrated cyberbullying and who are bystanders;

- deliver information to parents which not only focuses on e-safety but addresses the wider issue of cyberbullying; and

- work with schools to enable them to develop a greater understanding of pupils experiences and perceptions of cyberbullying in their settings.

Appendix 10

Example of Transcript

HS1   We've got a zero tolerance policy about any foul language to staff or pupils anyway. It just astounded me about pupils, this use of language is clearly unacceptable…..so we've had to say this is not acceptable, you may think using it online is fine but we don't accept that and we find that offensive even though you haven't said it to cause harm.

So in other words what we've had to do is um, raise the threshold of acceptance for pupils.

HJ   So in terms of the fact that most cyberbullying happens outside the school day are you finding that it is having an impact on your school premises?

HS1   Oh yes to give you some context, there must be impact in any school. Let's say since Easter we've had three cases that I would consider to be serious cyberbullying incidents. Cases that have involved the police not that they've ended up in action as such. I think that as a school we're quite good at finding out about it, pupils will come forward and tell us because of the whole 'tell us' policy. What happens then if something does happen it really does have an impact, it is the stone in the lake, the ripples effect an enormous number and cause….well we've had for example a fight between a couple of Year 10s. They've had altercations on Facebook and they've been goading and unpleasant on Facebook. It might have been looked at in different ways but that was probably the most spectacular example of the ripple in the pond effect.

HJ   Do you find that it isn't just the pupils that are involved directly but the others for example the ones who read the feed on Facebook

HS1   **Yes for example when we had this particular incident there was the bully and the victim but there were probably about 20 youngsters who went on. A lot of then said they don't like it, stop it but there were 4 or 5 who clearly enjoyed it and contributed to it and we made a point of getting hold of them and their parents as well and we said listen "if this was something that was racist it would be like inciting racial hatred" and the police agreed.**

HJ   In terms of your staff do you feel that they are confident to deal with incidents of cyberbullying?

HS1   **In the end they know through the meetings we've had, through the examples and I mean again what I would do is to share this information with staff and so they know who is dealing with it and who to report it to and it's sometimes the case that if you do this a bit more information might come your way. They know it's taken seriously.**

Appendix 11

Initial Ideas for Codes

Proactive

Not issue in school

Pupils differing levels of awareness

Blurring of boundaries

Reactive

What is bullying?

Systems involving pupils

Changing media

Across school

Parents need educating

Needs led

Wide definitions

Need for school involvement

Cyberbullying only one issue

Realistic

Increase

Culture and young people

Additional bullying

Different thresholds

Onlookers

Shock of staff

Extension of school

Roles in cyberbullying

Different to face-to-face bullying

Outside school

Parents

Holistic approach

Different facet of bullying

Safeguarding

Staff knowledge

Day-to-day issues

Zero tolerance

Schools as mediators

Unique features

Impact on pupils

Tipping into school

Different types of cyberbullying

Seriousness of cyberbullying

Upfront, honest, open

Coming from school to home

When should schools intervene?

Police involvement – when?

"Tell us policy"

Significant type of bullying

IT orientated culture

Escalation

Frustration at parents

Wider issue

Highlighted Emerging Themes

Does CB fit in with your anti-bullying policy?

<mark>We've done extra things in addition. So as well as our anti-bullying policy we've also created specific strategies for dealing with CB and we've got our e-safety policy</mark> [reactive/preventative] **that all parents and pupils have to sign when they start in the school.** <mark>We do e-safety assemblies which cover the child protection side of things but also the CB side of things</mark> [wider issue]. **We've introduced CB as a topic within Year 9 Citizenship as well, we did just do bullying but now we do CB and also** <mark>we've created a specific letter which we send to parents which has got a series of tick boxes where we will photocopy if anything as been brought to our attention from outside school</mark> [conflict of inside/outside school] **we will post that to parents and say "this is what your child has been saying". We have a tick box of actions that we are going to take in school.**

So it's been quite a lot of work?

<mark>Of yes, probably in the last 3 or 4 years</mark> [increased workload]

Your role in it, do you take the lead?

We've got a head of year for each year group and we've got a link SLT for each year group as well. A lot of the CB goes across year groups so it might involve lots of staff [age issues]**. Because I oversee the ECM agenda I write the bullying policy. We've got another SLT member who's in charge of internet safety and he's had more to do with the e-safety policy.**

As a school how do you define CB?

Any sort of bullying so it could be name calling. Anything that could be verbal but it could be written in a text or on a social networking site. It would also include film footage and photos in that. [wide definition]

In terms of what you're seeing is school is it more one thing than another?

More social networking because they're not allowed to use those things inside school. We have had a few things with mobile phones incidents with photos in school which have been taken and passed around and sent to each other. [types of cyberbullying]

Has that changed your policy on mobile phones in school?

We decided not to allow mobile phones to be used or seen during the school day so we just carry on with that. [reaction – 'banning']

Do you think YP share your definition?

I think that they do share our definition but I don't think they think of it as perhaps as serious as we do [staff/pupil differences of opinion]. **So a lot of the chit chat and conversations they have on FB is a lot of nothingness just people making the odd work or comment they perhaps don't see that as much. With anti-bullying week it was focusing on verbal bullying but within verbal bullying we focused on written whether it be on phone or FB. Just this very casual use of language and name calling so they'll often say "it was only a joke, it was only a joke"** [tone and content]

Are you finding incidents of CB happening outside school are having an impact?

We're spending a large percent of time investigating sometimes though the parents are involved as well so you'll start reading something on FB and the parents have said something and then someone else is involved and then you have to get the parents on a level of understanding but we could spend hours investigating these if it's led to incidents in school we could investigate it [workload issues] **but perhaps if it's a parent telling us something that's happened outside school maybe a child and maybe that parent doesn't know the child or all the details of the other child they could use the school as a liaison and we could pass on any details and say are you aware this is what your child has been doing on FB outside school. We perhaps wouldn't investigate that so much but if it caused knock on events inside school then we would spend a lot of time investigating it** [deciding when to become involved]

Appendix 13

Initial Themes and Codes

Schools Understanding of Cyberbullying

- Definitions

- Gossip

- Different types of cyberbullying

- Wider issue

- Wide definitions

- Additional to face-to-face bullying

- Significance of bullying

- Realistic level of issue

- Escalating

- What is bullying?

Young People and Cyber Culture

- IT orientated

- Changing/different media

- Different thresholds

- YP definitions

- Culture and internet use

- Shock of staff

- Different pupils levels of understanding

Safeguarding

- Children – doesn't always work

- Staff – knowledge

- Frustration at parents / parents not knowledgeable

How Serious is Cyberbullying?

- Severity – goes straight to Senior Management

- Amount of time spent on cyberbullying

- Impact on pupils

- Impact on parents

Ultimate Goals in Schools

- Create upfront, honest, open ethos

- "tell us policy"

Schools Reponses to Cyberbullying

- Proactive – zero tolerance/across school

- Reactive – always changing

- Needs led

When Should Schools be Involved?

- Blurring of boundaries

- Outside school

- Spilling into school

- Not a school issue

- Across school

- Coming in from home

- School as mediator

- Some definite areas / more grey areas

- Dependent of school policy

- Need for school involvement in cyberbullying?

Holistic Approach

- Police involvement

- Parents

- Pupils

- Staff knowledge

- Wider community

- Other schools

Unique Aspects of Cyberbullying

- Onlookers

- Extension of school hours

- Differences between face-to-face bullying

- Roles in cyberbullying

- Fast / changing

Appendix 14

Extract of the Analysis Grid with Details of Initial Codes

Overarching Theme 2: Level of School Involvement

Main Theme and Subthemes	Extract	Transcription Location
The Role of Schools – Definite Areas	"…we have strong filters on our system but we do get name calling on email and the sanction is very harsh…there is zero tolerance"	PS 1 lines 52-53
	"We had one child who used their email address from school to act on a website as a parent and that we took strong action about because he was using the name of the school"	MS 3 lines 152-154
	"If they take the name into disrepute or take a photograph that they shouldn't… that was one incident that we had when they used it for a purpose which we didn't feel was appropriate"	MS 3 lines 146-148
	"We deal with everything even if some people might think "oh that's a bit pathetic""	HS 1lines 44-48
	"My line is if it impacts on our children I don't care where it happens"	PS 1line 90
The Role of Schools – Blurring of Boundaries	"You have to get the parents on a level of understanding that we could spend hours investigating these incidents"	HS 2 lines 49-50

	"We don't interfere because generally I think if it's outside school it's up to parents to do something about it. It's like if your child was being bullied down the park you wouldn't bring it into school. I sometimes think because technology is involved there's some twisted logic and they think "schools got to deal with that""	MS 4 lines 86-88
	"If it's caused knock-on events inside school then we would spend a lot of time investigating it"	HS 2 lines 55-57
	"We've had no difficulties on school site, we've got a filtered network. The incidences we've been made aware of happen outside school but we hear about them because we're the common factor, the common thing is that the people involved are both pupils"	MS 2 lines 10-12
	"It always comes into school because whatever is happening the night before it's the fall out that will come into school the next day"	MS 1lines 23-24
	"He took it a stage further so now I'm dealing with an in-school incident that had nothing to do with the original incident"	SS 1 lines 31-33
	"Usually parents that come in will bring printed sheets. I have to make a judgement about whether I want to get involved or whether I don't"	SS1 lines 80-81
	"It's bringing the weekends and evenings into my role"	SS 1 lines 63-65
	"What we get at home is nastiness through Facebook…it	MS 4 lines 65-71

	may be (brought to my attention) through a parent complaining and we just say go back to Facebook, sort out the settings and we've got advice on our website and then if it gets more serious and on-going we tell them to call the police"	
	"We've created a specific letter (for parents) which we send to parents which has got a series of tick boxes which we photocopy if anything has been brought to our attention from outside school"	HS 2 lines 8-11
The Role of Schools – Schools as Mediators	*"…if it's parents telling us something that's happened outside school…they could use the school as a liaison and we could pass on any details"*	HS 2 lines 46-50
	"We have acted as mediators. It depends what the situation is. If it's one child saying something about another child then quite often we've brought parents in and taken a snapshot of the page and…supported them in dealing with it"	MS 3 lines 132-135
	"…the person who was receiving messages via Facebook, the father brought the messages in on his phone and showed me and then I contacted the person who had sent them and their parents. There was no reluctance to get involved, our stance was this happened on a network that wasn't anything to do with us however the common factor was these children. We left the families to deal with it"	MS 2 lines 55-58
	"None of the kids have ever said to me "why are you getting involved, it's nothing to do with school"	MS 3 lines 31-32

	"…if a parent has concerns they will (come to us) because they know the relationship we've got. They will report it to us and then we'll work together"	HS 1 lines 108-109
	"They're never really that surprised that we're dealing with it. I think that parents will sometimes say "I know this is nothing to do with school but…". I've never had anyone say "this is out of school it's nothing to do with you" they always recognise and are happy for us to deal with it"	MS 1 lines 83-85
School Responses – Proactive Responses	*"…the message I've put over is that our policy is that we are a 'telling school' so it's all about creating the ethos where youngsters effectively help us to monitor and help us to make it clear that certain behaviours are not acceptable"*	HS 1 lines 123-125
	"We've done extra things…so as well as our anti-bullying policy we've also created specific strategies for dealing with cyberbullying"	HS 2 lines 2-3
	"We do…training assemblies to every year group…their awareness is constantly raised and we are always saying who to report it to, so they're definitely aware of what to do"	HS 2 lines 86-88
	"It's part of the curriculum that the children are shown how to close their settings and everything to do with Facebook even though it's not supposed to be for their age group"	MS 3 lines 108-110
	"We have a policy and it's the same for staff that they	SS1 117-119

	can't have their mobile phones on during lessons, it's an agreed rule"	
	"It's policy that when parents come into school they are asked to turn off their mobile phones"	PS 1 line 77
School Responses – Reactive Responses	*"…we're very reliant on teachers who are parents coming to us and saying "my son was on this site" or "have you realised what's going on at the moment" and teachers who use Facebook who perhaps use it in a monitoring way…so some teachers have come and said "did you realise these were comments about this teacher on this particular site"*	HS 1 lines 113-115
	"I'm alerted by parents and that's when people have inappropriate conversations"	SS1 lines 92-94
	"it (language used on Facebook) has impacted on other polices in school whereby if we hear any foul language…even if it's between friends then we will apply a sanction"	HS 1 lines 61-64
	"Facebook and text messaging are the main types so we've introduced a mobile phone and musical device policy. If we see any during the course of the school day we confiscate them"	HS 1 lines 161-164
	"You have to adapt the policy as you learn about the issues that you're having to face"	PS 1 lines 2-3

	"I think it's because more young people have access to the technology it's not something you could benchmark yet, it keep changing"	SS 1 lines 149-151