VOLUME 1

An Exploration of the Views of Six Children and Young People from Traveller Families: Educational Experiences, Ambitions and what they want from Education

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Abstract

There are large numbers of young Travellers living in the UK, and data demonstrates that both attainment and engagement in school are very low for this cohort (Cromarty, 2017). There is currently limited research investigating the views of young Travellers in the UK, particularly around education. This research therefore explores what six children and young people from Traveller families think about school, with the purpose of informing educational provision. This involves the use of semi-structured interviews to ask participants about their recent and historical experiences of school, their values and ambitions, and what form an ideal education would take. Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) is used to establish common threads throughout the responses. Different viewpoints are highlighted, with the aim of illustrating the significant variability within this population. Factors influencing attainment and engagement, implications for professionals and directions for future research are indicated.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Chapter Overview

This introductory chapter begins by outlining the national context for Gypsies and Travellers currently living in the UK, highlighting a need for the current study. The chapter also describes the positionality of the research and its underlying purposes, explaining the aims of the research.

Firstly, the terminology used throughout the current study is addressed, providing a clear rationale for the decisions reached. Factual information, including demographics and policy, is then provided alongside some current research evidence regarding outcomes and current support for Gypsy and Traveller children and young people. Consideration is then given to my previous experience in this field, and finally an explanation of the relevance of the research is given.

1.2 The National Context for Gypsies and Travellers in the UK

1.2 i) Definition

The terms 'Gypsy' and 'Traveller' can be difficult to define, as they are so often used to refer to highly diverse groups and communities with varied cultures and histories. The collective term 'Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Communities' is also often used, but this also lacks clarity as the needs of newly arrived Roma populations often differ greatly from those of other Gypsies and Travellers resident in the UK. There are other incidences of significant variations between different Gypsy and Traveller groups. As identified by Deuchar and Bhopal (2013), 'there are vast differences

between those who define themselves as “Fairgound Travellers” and those who define themselves as “Gypsies”. Fairgound Travellers see themselves as a distinct and separate ethnic group from Gypsies; they have a distinctive culture and lifestyle, which stretches back many centuries (as far back as the Middle Ages)’ (p.739).

Researchers have taken different approaches to address this issue of terminology. Myers (2015) uses the self-descriptions given by individual family members when describing their own backgrounds. However, when describing more general findings that related to the study as a whole he used the generic term ‘Gypsy and Traveller’ rather than ‘Gypsy, Roma and Traveller’. This was partly due to the fact that no respondents described themselves as ‘Roma’, but also to provide clarification to readers that the experiences of Roma people form a European background were not included in the research.

For the purpose of this research, the term ‘Gypsy and Traveller’ is used to refer to a wide range of individuals and groups, including Romany Gypsies, Irish Travellers, Scottish Gypsies/Travellers, Welsh Gypsies/Travellers, showmen/circus families and Bargees/waterway travellers. Participation in the research project simply required that children and their families identified as Gypsies or Travellers, leading to a varied sample with Irish Travellers, Romani Gypsies and Bargees taking part. The terms ‘Roma’ and ‘Romany’ are used when referring to other authors/legislation using these terms.

1.2 ii) Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Populations

The current study involved participants of primarily Irish Traveller heritage, with some English Romany Gypsies and Bargee Gypsies also taking part. The table below collates information from The Traveller Movement website (The Traveller

Movement, 2020) with literature (Cressy, 2018; Taylor, 2013; Taylor, 2014) to give a brief history of these and other Travelling communities. Reference is also made to relevant legislation regarding these Travelling communities. This helps to provide some context for the interpretation of the data. Data gathered relating to population numbers is difficult to report, as the census does not distinguish between different Gypsy and Traveller populations.

Population	History	Culture, Values and Beliefs	Access to Education
Irish Travellers	Irish Travellers originate from Ireland. Migrations to Great Britain can be traced back to the 19th century (Belton, 2005). Irish Travellers have traditionally been a nomadic group of people, but many now live in settled accommodation. The Race Relations Act (2000), the Human Rights Act (1998) and the Equality Act (2010) categorises Irish Travellers as an ethnic minority group.	Irish Travellers are traditionally Catholic. Many Irish Travellers speak Shelta- their traditional language (The Traveller Movement, 2020). Many Irish Travellers hold traditional values relating to gender roles. Men are often encourages to learn a trade and provide for the family, and women are expected to look after the household and care for younger family members. Cleanliness and tidiness are often highly valued (The Traveller Movement, 2020). Myers, McGhee & Bhopal (2010) carried out research with Irish Travellers and described 'early onset adulthood', whereby Traveller children and young people were expected to begin adopting adult roles from a young age (e.g. 13/14).	There is a growing recognition amongst the Irish Travelling population that reading and writing are important skills. Educational aspirations amongst Irish Travellers are likely to vary significantly (Levinson, 2007). Whilst many Irish Traveller families now live in settled accommodation, many continue to travel and this presents a number of barriers to sustaining school attendance (Cressy, 2018). The term 'pikey' is used pejoratively to refer to Irish Travellers, and is just one example of the racist language still sometimes used to describe this population (Taylor, 2013). Fearing racism and prejudice from the wider society is another barrier to attending school. Levinson's (2015) research with Irish Travellers highlights a fear of cultural assimilation to the wider mainstream society through school attendance and subsequent avoidance of school.

Romany Gypsies	It is thought that the Romany community originated in India and began migrating through Europe in the 11th century (Kenrick, 2007). There are therefore a number of Romany communities spread throughout Europe. Romany communities in different European countries may share similarities, but may have also developed significant cultural differences over time. The presence of Romany Gypsies in the UK can be dated back to the early 16th century. The settled population believed them to be from Egypt due to their dark complexion, and the term 'Gypsy' comes from 'Egyptian' (The Traveller Movement, 2020).	Linguistic analysis of the Romani language suggests that it originates from India (Kenrick, 2007). There are links between the social rules of Romany Gypsy traditions and Hindu purity laws (Weyrauch, 2001), where the lower body/genital organs are considered 'impure'. The ancestors of modern day Romani people was Hindu, but many adopted Christianity during their migration to the UK (The Traveller Movement, 2020). There have been marriages between Romany Gypsies and other nomadic groups, and cultures have therefore merged to an extent (Taylor, 2014).	Having, to an extent, merged with other travelling groups, Romany Gypsies experience many of the same difficulties in accessing education. Those that continue to travel find it hard to sustain school attendance, and aspirations may link to the traditional gendered roles they may be expected to fulfil (Taylor, 2014). The Romany Gypsy community has faced persecution over several centuries, and many fear further discrimination from the wider society (Matras, 2015). This impacts upon school attendance, as communities often fear that this will expose their children to racism and prejudice.
Show People and Fairground Travellers	Families began operating circuses and fairgrounds in the UK during the Victorian era. Many of these families have passed on the trade and continue to travel as Showmen today (The Traveller Movement, 2020). Show People have owned and operated circuses and funfairs for generations. Their identity relates to this family business and the travelling lifestyle it	Families typically became Showmen during the Victorian period in order to earn a living. As such, many families see themselves as 'cultural' Travellers rather than 'ethnic' Travellers (The Traveller Movement, 2020). Whilst Showmen do not typically perceive themselves as belonging to a distinct ethnic group, there are reports of	Sustained access to education is again limited by travelling, but there are reports of Showmen attending boarding schools while their families are travelling (Kasprzak, 2012). Whilst many children from Showmen families attend school, many choose to stay in the family business. (The Traveller Movement, 2020). It is therefore important to consider the

	involves. They typically travel most during the summer months, and spend some settled time during the winter to repair equipment and prepare for the next summer's tour (Showmen's Guild, 2019). The Showmen's Guild works with both central and local UK governments to provide advocacy and support for Show People and Fairground Travellers, and currently supports nearly 5000 families.	being exposed to negative stereotypes (Showmen's Guild, 2019).	perceived relevance of the curriculum taught in mainstream UK schools for Showmen.
Bargee Travellers/ Boat Dwellers	Bargee Travellers live on Barges and travel the canals and waterways across the UK. The modern canal network was established in the 18th century to support the British Industrial Revolution. Many people working on the canal network adopted a travelling lifestyle that subsequent generations have followed (The Traveller Movement, 2020).	It is difficult to gather information about the held beliefs and values of this population, possibly due to the fact that there is great variation.	Whilst it is difficult to gather data for this population, it is likely that the act of travelling impacts upon sustained access to school. As Travellers, it is also possible that they are exposed to negative stereotypes.
New Travellers	New Travellers are also sometimes referred to as 'New Age Travellers'. Most New Travellers took to life on the road in the 1960s as part of the hippie and free-festival movements. Some of these families have now been on the road for 3 consecutive generations (The Traveller Movement, 2020).	New Travellers often espouse New Age beliefs relating to the hippie culture of the 1960s. Often living in converted trucks, vans and buses, they travelled in convoys during the 1980s. One particular group became known as the 'Peace Convoy' following their regular attendance at CND protests. The	New Age Travellers have faced continued opposition from the UK government (Wikipedia, 2020). Whilst information regarding access to education is limited, it is likely that they also experience issues related to attending school whilst travelling and prejudice.

		movement was opposed by the British government and free festivals were banned, making arrests where convoys congregated during the 1980s. The Criminal Justice and Public Order Act (1994) aimed to prevent such future congregations by preventing unauthorised encampments. Whilst many left the UK, some continue to 'squat' on unauthorised sites (Wikipedia, 2020).	
The Roma	The Roma are newly arrived in the UK from primarily Eastern European countries. They were originally part of the same 12th century migration from India, but their Romani language has developed separately since and has many differences from the Romani language spoken by Romany Gypsies who have been in the UK since the 16th century (Cressy, 2018).	There are many cultural differences between the Romany Gypsies that settled here in the 16th century and the newly arrived Roma. They have faced extreme discrimination until recently, often living in unfit housing (e.g. abandoned tower blocks) and unable to access mainstream education due to their limited native language skills (Cressy 2018). Beliefs and values vary, with some families having adopted Christianity and others not.	The newly arrived Roma populations are learning English as an Additional Language (EAL) and have often not attended school previously, so have specific academic needs. They have also faced discrimination in the countries they have left, and often fear professional involvement (Cressy, 2018).

Table 1: Table to illustrate the different populations within the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community highlighting key differences in culture, values and beliefs and how this impacts on access to education.

1.2 iii) Demographics

The need to raise national awareness of Gypsy and Traveller children's needs has not gone unnoticed by UK governments, and a briefing paper on Gypsies and Travellers was recently presented to the House of Commons (Cromarty, 2017). The paper outlines key information relating to this sector of the UK population, such as estimated numbers and other demographic data. It goes on to highlight inequalities, racial discrimination and hate crime often directed towards and experienced by Gypsies and Travellers. In addition to accommodation, there are chapters outlining education, training and employment for Gypsies and Travellers. Less emphasis is given to health, welfare and justice, although these areas are also addressed. Overall, the paper highlights discrimination, accommodation and education as priority areas.

Cromarty (2017) draws attention to the difficulty in gathering demographic data for Gypsies and Travellers in the UK by describing how, until the 2011 Census, there was no ethnic category for this group. Whilst this Census identified around 63,000 Gypsies and Travellers living in the UK at this time, many sources suggest that this was a gross underestimate do to difficulties obtaining data (Dar et al., 2013). There may have been many people who would identify as Gypsies or Travellers amongst their own communities, but were hesitant to do so in a more formal capacity. There will also have been Gypsies and Travellers who did not complete the Census. It was estimated that roughly 4% of the UK population at the time did not return their forms for the 2011 Census. Families with no fixed address were less likely to have recieved these forms, and the relatively high rates of illiteracy amongst some Gypsy and Traveller communities will also have made it difficult for them to complete the Census (Parry et al., 2007; Wilkin, Derrington and Foster, 2009).

1.2 iv) Health, Education and Life Outcomes

Inequalities experienced by Gypsy and Traveller communities influence a range of outcomes. The National Inclusion Health Board (2014) identified Gypsy and Traveller groups as particularly vulnerable, with higher rates of suicide, mental health disorders, long-term physical health conditions, stillbirths, infant mortalities, maternal deaths and contraction of infectious diseases normally prevented through immunisation (e.g. measles). Gypsies and Travellers are also disproportionally represented in the criminal justice system. Whilst the 2011 Census recorded Gypsies and Travellers as accounting for just 0.1% of the UK population, a 2012-13 survey reported that 5% of prisoners considered themselves to be Gypsy, Romany or Traveller. Employment prospects are also affected, and the 2011 Census recorded 20% unemployment rates for Gypsies and Travellers: a rate far higher than other population norms and other recognised vulnerable sub-groups- the unemployment rate for White people living in the UK in 2011 was 4%, for Black people it was 9% and for people of Asian heritage it was 7%.

Education outcomes are often poor for Gypsies and Travellers. There has been continued reference to the low attainment and attendance of Gypsy and Traveller pupils in successive UK government reports. A report from the DfE (2017) recorded that Gypsy and Traveller pupils were performing significantly below their peers and that 52% did not have recorded Key Stage 1 levels due to absence. Cromarty (2017) reports that, whilst 53% of the national population of children reached expected levels for English and maths at the end of Key Stage 2, this was true for only 18% of Irish Travellers and 13% of Gypsy/Roma children. Whilst 57% of the national population of young people gained at least 5 GCSEs with grades A*-C including English and maths at the end of KS4; this was true for only 18% of Irish Travellers and 9% of

Gypsy/Roma students. Research and statistics also show that attendance at school has been consistently low for Gypsy and Traveller children (Plowden, 1967; Swann, 1985; Liégeois, 1998; Acton, 2004). Exclusions from school are also higher for this group (DfE, 2017).

Much of the data regarding the attendance and achievement of Gypsy and Traveller children results from recent research, and does not yet provide a clear picture of trends/how long needs have persisted. For example, the Pupil Level Annual Schools Census (PLASC) has only recorded data under the ethnic categories 'Gypsy/Roma' and 'Travellers of Irish heritage' since the 2004/05 school year. Despite these limitations to the data, the Department for Children, Schools and Families (2008) was able to highlight that since 2004, Gypsy and Traveller children have consistently been at the bottom of measures of achievement. It appears that the low attendance and achievement of Gypsy and Traveller pupils constitutes a long-standing phenomenon.

1.2 v) Policy and Support

There have historically been a number of targeted support services available to Gypsies and Travellers. Many local authorities have a Traveller Education Service or Team (TES/T) funded through the Designated Schools Grant. However, decisions about how this money is spent lie with the local authority: it is not compulsory to designate funding towards Gypsy and Traveller support. Many local authorities have a need for such a service, but struggle to justify the funding if data suggest that there are few Gypsy and Travellers living in the area, and there are so many competing priorities. Other avenues of support are available, such as The Traveller Movement,

who work as advocates for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and provide policy guidance. Unfortunately, such organisations are struggling to remain open and the National Association of Teachers of Travellers and other professionals (NATT+), for example, became inactive in October 2018.

In order to provide flexibility to Gypsy and Traveller families, children currently travelling can be on roll at more than one school at a time. Policy (DfE, School Attendance, 2016) encourages parents to apply for new school places when they move into a new area. Despite these attempts to facilitate school attendance, the number of home-schooled Gypsy and Traveller children is much higher than the population mean (Cromarty, 2017). Local authorities are not bound to monitor elective home education, which can vary significantly.

1.2 vi) The Role of Traveller Education Services/Teams

TES/Ts were introduced to local authorities in the 1970s to act as a third party mediating between Gypsy and Traveller communities and schools. Spending a lot of time building relationships and getting to know families in the local area, and trained to have specialist knowledge and understanding of these communities, it was anticipated that members of TES/Ts could help to facilitate relationship building between the family and school. Their role would also be to encourage greater school attendance by helping to point families in the right direction with regard to forms and applications etc., as well as promoting a better understanding and good practice in schools. Many TES/Ts lost funding in 2010, but some are still operating within local authorities and have been working with the same communities for several decades. This has enabled the development of trusting relationships between professionals and

families. It is easy to see, therefore, how powerful the TES/Ts input can be in promoting the inclusion of Gypsy and Traveller children, as is confirmed by a number of studies (Bhopal and Myers, 2009; Derrington, 2005; Lloyd and McCluskey, 2008; Myers, McGhee and Bhopal, 2010).

1.2 vii) Synthesis

The factual information and research information briefly summarised above provides an emerging picture of the needs of Gypsy and Traveller children in the UK. There are ongoing concerns regarding attendance and attainment, alongside a need for further demographic data. Policy addressing the recognised need to support these groups is limited, however, perhaps in part due to weak/incomplete evidence resulting from difficulties obtaining reliable, locality specific data, but also due to the lack of evidence informed guidance about how to best intervene. The current study therefore explores how Gypsy and Traveller children and young people perceive attendance and attainment, and how they could be better supported.

The current study uses systemic psychological theory to explore the interacting factors influencing Gypsy and Traveller children's access to education. The bioecological model (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994) sets out the different interacting systems influencing a person's development as levels. It takes into account both the biological influences upon a person (e.g. genetics) as well as environmental influences (e.g. the school). Environmental influences are split into the microsystem (i.e. the immediate family and home), mesosystem (i.e. the local neighbourhood and school), exosystem (i.e. local media, community services, local government) and macrosystem (i.e. national government, widely held beliefs and values, laws and

policies). This model is used throughout the current study to make reference to how different individual and environmental factors have influenced Gypsy and Traveller children and young people's access to education.

1.3 Context of the Current Study

1.3 i) Positionality

My personal interest in this research topic came from working with newly arrived Roma children in a secondary school, where I taught for two years. The Roma children and their families had experienced oppression in the countries they had left, which had generated significant social, emotional and mental health needs for many. Immersion in a setting where children were experiencing these difficulties contributed to my drive to develop my understanding of how best to support children and families with similar needs.

During my time as a teacher, I observed that the Roma community's value system sometimes conflicted with values held by the school. For example, practical skills were often held in higher esteem than academic skills; parents expected that schoolwork would take place at school (i.e. no homework), and family events/trips to visit family abroad were prioritised over school attendance. In addition, many families had experienced hostility from professionals in the countries they had travelled from, and viewed school staff with some trepidation. I therefore noted the difficulties that can arise when there is disparity between what individuals from a community want from education and what an educational setting provides. For example, professionals contacting families about their children's attendance, lack of homework and

performance in English and maths were often interpreted negatively, risking precipitating relationship-breakdown between home and school.

As a trainee educational psychologist, on placement in a shire county ('Greenshire'), I wanted to investigate whether similar difficulties were experienced in other contexts, and if so, what support would be valued/accepted.

One of the first steps I took when considering this research topic was to arrange a meeting with a member of Greenshire's TET. She advised that Irish Travellers and Romany Gypsies currently residing on local authority sites experienced similar difficulties in participating in education. She reported that many Gypsy and Traveller families in Greenshire opt for home education: in some cases, as a result of difficulties caused by disparity between school and family values. I considered that finding out whether Gypsy and Traveller children (both electively home educated and attending educational settings) were content with their current provision would help to shed light on how to ease these reported tensions, and/or other influences constraining or enhancing their experience of education, producing knowledge which could be applied to promote improved access to educational participation and outcomes.

1.3 ii) The Local Authority

The research was carried out within a local authority: a shire county with a diverse population, comprising pockets of both affluence and deprivation. Greenshire had its own designated TET, working as part of the Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service. This team of staff worked to build relationships with Gypsy and Traveller families within the county, supporting children to access education.

Many people working for the TET had been in post for over a decade, and believed they had built trust with families over this time.

At the time that the research study took place, Greenshire provided four sites with around a hundred pitches in each. The TET estimated that there were also, at the time of data collection, approximately forty private sites across the county where Gypsy and Traveller families currently resided. Many families had lived on the sites for a several years, whilst others were known to be seasonal Travellers (travelling mostly during the summer months, and returning to their pitches in the winter). The TET also knew a number of Showmen and Bargee families, many of whom travelled in and out of the county on a regular basis. There were also a number of Gypsy and Traveller families living in stationary accommodation, in homes they owned, council houses or in temporary accommodation. At the time of data collection, no Roma families from Europe were known to the TET in Greenshire. Whilst the TET made ongoing efforts to ensure the support service was known and accessible to as many Gypsy and Traveller families as possible, it was considered likely that many families were not known to them.

National Census data recorded 500 Gypsies and Travellers living in Greenshire in 2011. The Census also demonstrated that, whilst 24% of the population as a whole are under twenty years old, 39% of the population of Gypsies and Irish Travellers are under the age of twenty. This indicates that at least 200 Gypsy and Traveller children lived in Greenshire. Again, it is likely that the actual number is much higher, for the same reasons as discussed in relation to national population estimates. It is also likely that the number of Gypsies and Travellers living in Greenshire is inconsistent over time. There are also many families who need regular

support from local authority education services, which are not resident in the county for large proportions of the year.

The TET were instrumental in supporting participant recruitment to the current research, and were keen to ensure that the sample gathered was broadly representative of Gypsy and Traveller families within Greenshire. Participants therefore came from families living across the county in council homes, on Traveller sites and currently travelling (see section 3.6v).

1.3 iii) Research purpose

The purpose of this research was to explore what children and young people from Gypsy and Traveller families in Greenshire thought about education. This encompassed finding out about their personal experiences of school, both recent and historical. My aim was to ascertain whether there were any consistent themes regarding those factors that influenced positive and negative aspects of their experiences and evaluation of their schooling/statutory education. I also sought to understand participants' values, ambitions and hopes for the future. This was supported by an exploration of how the participants saw themselves, and how being from a Gypsy or Traveller family influenced their self-concept. The research also aimed to find the form an 'ideal' education would take in relation to the children's values, ambitions and hopes for the future. This included gathering their ideas about how the education system could be adjusted to bring it closer to this ideal.

The intention was to elicit meaningful viewpoints from a small number of participants, to inform an in depth analysis. Information gathered and conclusions

drawn from this study were therefore not intended to support generalisations about the views of Gypsy and Traveller communities. Indeed, I judged that to do so could potentially promote dangerous oversimplifications. The goal of the research was to contribute a local perspective to the currently limited body of literature regarding the education of Gypsy and Traveller children in the UK.

1.3 iv) Relevance

I intended that this research study should bring attention to the perspectives of Gypsy and Traveller children. In doing so, the research sought to inform improvements to professional practice in supporting Gypsy and Traveller children and young people's education. Findings would have particular relevance for the local authority in which the research was carried out, and for approximately ~two hundred+ children and young people living in Greenshire.

1.3 v) Synthesis

I have a personal interest in this research topic, based on my previous experience working with Roma children. The Greenshire TET indicated that many of the Gypsy and Traveller children with whom they worked with experienced difficulties similar to the Roma children I described. My aim was to interview Gypsy and Traveller children and young people in Greenshire to ascertain their views regarding their experience and evaluation of school. The purpose was to inform professionals supporting Gypsy and Traveller pupils as to how best encourage access to education.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Chapter Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to outline literature relevant to this field of research. A brief overview of how the literature search was conducted precedes the review of literature. There are a number of studies that have explored the views of Gypsy and Traveller children and young people, and these studies are included first. There are also studies that have ascertained the views of parents and professionals, as well as research involving viewpoints from different sources. As well as studies exploring views on education, there are also evaluations of interventions designed to support Gypsy and Traveller children and young people. These studies are also reviewed. Consideration is then given to psychological theories relevant to minority groups and their interaction with education.

To conclude, key points emerging from study of the literature are summarised, and my own methodological decisions are considered. Implications for the current study are drawn, such as how the purposes were informed by existing evidence and how the methodology evolved as a response to my evaluation of the strengths and limitations decisions made in previous studies.

2.2 The Literature Search

The literature search was carried out using 'Findit@Bham', the University of Birmingham's online library search tool. This enables access to 1.8 million print books, 500,000 eBooks and 50,000 electronic journals (University of Birmingham,

2019). Databases used included PsycINFO, EBSCO Education Databases and ProQuest.

Key words and search terms used included ‘Gypsies/Travellers’, ‘children/young people/adolescents’ ‘education/school/learning’ and ‘views/experiences/outcomes’. Boolean operations were used to combine and edit terms (e.g. ‘Gyps* AND/OR Traveller*’ to ensure that any titles containing the words ‘Gypsy’, ‘Gypsies’, ‘Traveller’, or ‘Travellers’ were found). A ‘funnelled’ approach (Thomas, 2013) was used to initially search for research relating to Gypsy and Travellers in the UK, before moving on to look for research looking specifically at the education of Gypsy and Traveller children and young people, and eventually those taking the viewpoints of Gypsies and Travellers/those working with Gypsies and Travellers regarding education.

As this is an under-researched area, few criteria were used to limit the search, such as ‘only research published since 2000’. Such criteria help to ensure that the literature reviewed is up-to-date. However, this field of study has received a greater level of interest in recent years, and therefore most research discussed has taken place in the last decade. Grey literature is also discussed and referred to where relevant, including theses (e.g. Thomson, 2013) and policy guidance (e.g. Cromarty, 2017).

After an initial scope of the literature, it became clear that there were a number of seminal researchers in this field. This realisation enabled me to conduct searches of their published research, ensuring their most up-to-date findings regarding the educational experiences of Gypsy and Traveller children and young people were included.

2.3 Gypsy and Traveller Views

2.3 i) Young People

Levinson (2015)

One of most influential researchers in this field is Martin Levinson, who has been conducting ethnographic research with Gypsy and Traveller communities for over twenty years. Levinson's focus is on experiences of education, and he has conducted and contributed to studies looking specifically at young 'Gypsy females' (Levinson and Sparkes, 2006), 'literacy in English Gypsy communities' (Levinson, 2007) and 'aspirations among Gypsy youngsters' (Levinson, 2015). Throughout his work he draws regular attention to the theme of conflicting value systems between home and school for Gypsy and Traveller children.

During my literature search I noted that Levinson (2015)'s research would be highly relevant to my area of interest. This particular study was 'designed to provide information and support for schools, other agencies, policy-makers, and so forth, but most importantly to help Gypsy/Traveller youngsters and their families to reflect on educational experiences, opportunities and outcomes' (p.1154). My research aims are similar, so I decided that a fuller analysis of Levinson's (2015) approaches, methods and conclusions would be beneficial.

The study took the form of a participatory action research. Semi-structured and structured interviews were used but he also delivered workshops to train participants to interview their peers. A particular strength of this study is that, by using peer interviews, participants were heavily involved in the research project and played an active part in ensuring that their views were accurately represented. The

views elicited in this study led Levinson to conclude that his participants were feeling torn between two cultures with 'diffused and fragmented identities' (p.1150), as a result of spending time both at school and on site with the Gypsy community. He also highlighted that, within this particular community, there was a perceived need for some proportion of the community to be literate and educated, but not a need for everyone to develop these skills. Conclusions were also drawn about school attendance, suggesting that participants perceived that they and their community were at risk of assimilation to the wider mainstream society, and that attendance at school would serve to exacerbate this process. By not attending, they were protecting themselves, and by hiding or slipping under the radar, they were less likely to be detected as school avoiders.

Deuchar & Bhopal (2013)

Another important researcher of Gypsy and Traveller communities is Kalwant Bhopal. As well as taking an interest in education, she also focuses on social justice and inclusion. She has looked at a broad range of factors specifically influencing Gypsy and Traveller access to education, including '"White racism" in secondary schools in England' (Bhopal, 2011b), 'promoting the citizenship rights and cultural diversity of Traveller children in schools' (Deuchar & Bhopal, 2013) and 'Gypsy and Traveller parents and home education in England' (Bhopal and Myers, 2016). Again, search of Bhopal's research highlighted many papers that may be of relevance to my study. Deuchar & Bhopal (2013)'s paper appeared particularly interesting, as many of the methodological decisions were well informed and conducive to evidence-based conclusions.

Deuchar & Bhopal's (2013) aim was to explore the views of Gypsy and Traveller children living in London and Glasgow regarding social values, social inclusion and the cultural contexts within schools. Samples of children were taken from four primary schools (two in each city), and semi-structured group interviews were used. In order to recruit more participants, they carried out their research for four years (a total of twenty seven participants took part). The recruitment process was supported by local authorities and through use of Gypsy and Traveller support services, and schools with high populations of Gypsy and Traveller children were chosen to seek volunteers to participate in the research.

Deuchar & Bhopal's findings suggested that pupils were, on the whole, happy about their living situation and how this enabled them to stay close to their families and community. They also expressed positive views regarding their membership of the community, and aspired to follow their parents' examples in the future. Some expressed concerns about travelling, and how this could make it difficult for them to make new friends and settle in again. Some also added that the travelling lifestyle meant that it was difficult to sustain engagement in extra-curricular clubs, as these so often operate on an annual or termly basis. There was also a strong suggestion that children felt that the range of opportunities available to them was limited by the attitudes of others (e.g. 'they won't let Travellers in', 'if they found out he was a Traveller, he would get dropped from [the team]' p. 743). There was also a sense that their life experience was not important to the school (e.g. 'the teachers don't really want to know what you're like', p. 744). There were also many examples of racism and bullying from the public and peers at school, and a sense that more could have been done to prevent this. This was compounded by a feeling that teachers did not really understand the Travelling community, and one participant commented that,

being White, the teachers did not take their accusations that others had been racist towards them seriously.

The authors conclude by stating how these perspectives reflect commonly held views of young people from minority ethnic groups that experiencing racial prejudice is like being treated as ‘aliens’. They identify discriminatory attitudes and a lack of understanding of Travelling lifestyles as key factors impacting upon the children’s sense of exclusion.

2.3 ii) Parents

Myers, McGhee & Bhopal (2010)

Martin Myers has also conducted research into the experiences of Gypsy and Traveller communities. He has conducted and contributed to research looking at Gypsy and Traveller ‘understandings of community and safety’ (Myers & Bhopal, 2009), ‘inclusion and “good practice” in schools’ (Bhopal & Myers, 2009) and ‘parents’ perceptions of education, protection and social change’ (Myers, McGhee & Bhopal, 2010).

Myers, McGhee & Bhopal (2010) look specifically at gaining parent views. Whist my intention was to interview children and young people, I understood from my scope of the literature that building trusting relationships with parents would be an important step towards gaining consent and ensuring that they and their children felt comfortable participating in the project. This study therefore provided a number of helpful ideas regarding this element of my research. It also adds some helpful

considerations regarding the important role of TES/Ts, and the value placed on their support by Gypsy and Traveller communities.

Ten parents were interviewed, alongside four members of the Traveller Education Service. Some themes identified through this research included parental concerns around the relevance of the school curriculum and cultural erosion as a result of school attendance. Parents also regularly reflected on their own negative experiences of school, and how this has influenced their choices. Findings were mixed, with some parents viewing basic reading and writing skills as adequate and others valuing a more comprehensive education. Myers et al. therefore identify more traditional and more progressive cohorts of parents, reflecting Levinson's (2007) observation that the changing value placed on literacy standards within Gypsy and Traveller communities is often linked to economic prosperity. Myers et al. also note that, since Levinson's (2007) study, where there was a sense that illiteracy could be viewed as a 'badge of honour' (p.33), attitudes appeared to have changed somewhat, with all parents interviewed valuing literacy of some proficiency.

Myers et al. also found that parents regularly mentioned fears of 'cultural erosion', and there appeared to be a general sense that traditional ways of life were being forced out by schools. This reflects findings from Levinson's (2015) study, where children and young people also reported fears of assimilation into the mainstream society. In Myers et al.'s study, parents also frequently referred to their experience of education, how this has impacted on their life as adults and how this influenced their decision-making regarding their own children's schooling. For example, one participant described how he 'can't go out and get a full time job because [he] can't read and write' (p. 536). Parents also commented on how they would like more practical skills to be taught by schools, such as tree surgery.

Family obligations were also raised as a barrier to children's access to full-time education, as within the Traveller community, other commitments take priority over school and education. Myers et al. commented on how, when this cultural difference was not fully acknowledged and accepted by staff, tension could arise between the family and school and this could lead to further absence and difficulties. Myers et al. also referred to the 'early onset adulthood' that occurs in many Gypsy and Traveller communities, where children and young people are often perceived as moving into adulthood at around the age at which they start secondary school. This leads to difficulties in school, as there is often a level of frustration associated with being treated with a lesser degree of independence at school compared with what they are granted at home.

Bhopal (2004)

In another study, Bhopal (2004) explored Gypsy and Traveller parent views on education. She found that parents' views on school often reflected their own experiences of education, many of which had been negative (i.e. dropping out of school). Whilst the majority of parents were keen for their children to have a basic education so that they could secure employment in adulthood, they reported feeling that they could not force their children to stay in school if they did not want to.

As well as describing the influence of parents' own experiences on their children's schooling, Bhopal (2004) also described the impact of society and how this had changed perspectives within Gypsy and Traveller communities. She described how 'there was a feeling that much of the work traditionally associated with the Gypsy Traveller lifestyle was "drying up"' (p.53), and that this has led to parents

feeling that children would need to go to school to develop the necessary skills for employment beyond the family business.

Despite generally agreeing that there was a need for schooling, many parents expressed concerns about the education system. Bhopal (2004) writes that parents 'believed that some of the content of the education might be irrelevant to children of Gypsy Travellers', and that they 'felt a more "hands on" approach to education could benefit their children' (p.53). Parents also feared the risk of exposure to sex and drugs. There were also fears that children might experience harassment and hostility from other pupils, and as so much name calling and bullying is directed at Gypsies and Travellers, these fears were regularly reinforced. Even where schools have put in place measures to prevent racist bullying, parents reported children experiencing this on their way to and from school. Bhopal also gives an insight into the often 'partial engagement' (p.53) of pupils from Gypsy and Traveller communities. Parents reported encouraging children to learn the necessary basic literacy and numeracy skills, but that they did not need more than this.

Parents also expressed their appreciation of the positive relationships they had built with the members of the TES and teachers who had made the effort to visit Traveller sites. Parents also reported positive experiences of the adult literacy classes schools had provided. This helps to point a clear way forward for schools wishing to promote further engagement from Gypsy and Traveller communities.

2.4 Education and Schools

2.4 i) What is Education?

The term ‘education’ is taken to reflect many broad concepts in the UK. Education for children and young people is predominantly delivered through schools, although a small percentage of parents (0.5%; House of Commons Briefing Paper, 2019) opt to educate their children at home. Many children and young people also attend specialist settings and alternative provisions where parents and the local authority agree that mainstream school is not suitable.

In the UK, schools are typically institutions where children are taught in classes with other children of the same age. Lesson content is guided by the national curriculum, which covers 12 programmes of study (English, maths, science, history, geography, languages, music, art and design, design and technology, computing, citizenship and PE). The national curriculum also outlines religious studies and personal, social, health and economic education (National Curriculum, 2020).

Schools maintained by the local authority must follow the national curriculum, whereas academies and independent schools can use it as a guide. Local authority maintained schools and academies are inspected by Ofsted to ensure quality education provision, and independent schools are accountable to a separate inspection system. As well as assessing the implementation of the national curriculum, Ofsted also hold schools to account regarding the personal development, behaviour, welfare and outcomes of pupils.

The UK education system therefore aims to deliver a comprehensive education focusing on all areas of pupil development; supporting children's social skills, independence, wellbeing and physical health as well as their academic needs.

2.4 ii) Potential Areas of Conflict for GRT Communities

As referred to in section 1.2iii, certain aspects of the culture, values and beliefs of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities impact upon their access to education in the UK. This is because certain aspects of the UK education system are at odds with these cultural values and beliefs. For example, Irish Travellers and Romany Gypsies often disapprove of sex education in schools (The Traveller Movement, 2020; Weyrauch, 2001). Whilst the education system aims to be comprehensive, there remains a focus on developing pupils' academic attainment to a standard beyond which many GRT communities perceive to be necessary (Levinson, 2007). There is perhaps not enough focus on developing those skills that GRT communities value most (e.g. domestic skills or learning a trade; The Traveller Movement, 2020).

GRT pupils are therefore subject to conflicting messages between home and school. This presents a particular problem for secondary schools, where there are fewer opportunities for communication between home and school (i.e. parents of primary school children can meet teachers each day at drop off/pick up time). There are therefore fewer opportunities for teachers to explain the purposes for educational provisions (i.e. to support personal development across a broad range of skills), reassure parents about their concerns and liaise cooperatively with them to make necessary adjustments to what is being offered in school.

2.4 iii) Legislative Frameworks

Education policy and infrastructure lead to inherent challenges for professionals, parents and these children and young people navigating their cultural heritage norms and those of the school system.

The UN convention defining the rights of children states that the government must provide children with an education on health and wellbeing (article 24). The UK Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) statutory guidance (DfE, 2019) supports this. However, it also states that every child should have the right to learn and use the customs of their family (article 30). Ensuring that Gypsy and Traveller children access education around sexual health as well as ensuring they have the right to use the customs of their family requires careful balancing.

The Children's Act (1989, 2004) outlines the 'paramountcy principle' (section 1) to ensure that children's welfare is considered as paramount when making decisions about their upbringing, and to ensure that their views are taken into account. This again presents a problem for professionals where GRT parents disagree with their children about what they want. Due to the nature of the UK education system, academic pursuit is encouraged over trade and domestic skills. This may be at odds with what parents from some GRT communities want to encourage in their children.

2.4 iv) Interventions

Bhopal & Myers (2009)

As well as highlighting the current situation for children and young people from Gypsy and Traveller communities, researchers have also sought to demonstrate

good practice and promote successful strategies/interventions. A study by Bhopal & Myers (2009) examines inclusionary practices in both primary and secondary schools. They argue that the role of the TES in this particular area of the UK is invaluable in promoting the inclusion of children and young people from Gypsy and Traveller communities. They also add, however, that that the role of support teams such as the TES in this study should never be to substitute the school's own welfare responsibilities, and commitment from schools' senior leadership teams is also essential. Sometimes the existence of TESs is criticised as their presence could lure schools into feeling that it is not their responsibility to ensure the inclusion of this cohort. However, this study shows that where schools have fully utilised the TES their support can enhance practices that the school are putting in place independently. Inclusive practice is therefore about attitudes from the school and TES, and the existence of TESs cannot alone be blamed for schools' lack of inclusivity.

One of the recurring themes throughout the paper is that of attitudes towards inclusion, or an inclusive ethos. For Gypsy and Traveller communities, this involved social engagement between the school and community and building trusting relationships with the parents and families of children attending the school. This typically involved visits to the Traveller sites (facilitated by the TES) and rapport building over a long period of time. Outcomes used to measure good practice included positive feedback from parents and children, low exclusion rates and higher attendance and achievement.

One of the more successful approaches implemented by school leadership involved adopting an open door policy, where teachers made time to see parents wanting to discuss concerns. Where this strategy was implemented it helped to diffuse conflict before it arose, and led to fewer absences. Another helpful strategy used by

schools was to present a display board near the entrance of the school, celebrating Gypsy and Traveller heritage. This was co-created with pupils and parents from local Gypsy and Traveller communities, so gave a representative portrayal to welcome pupils into the school. Behaviour policies also ensured that name calling directed at Gypsy and Traveller pupils was treated as racially abusive behaviour, and therefore unacceptable. A Race Equality Officer was even appointed at one of the schools, responsible for all issues of racism.

This study also revealed the conflict that can arise within a body of staff whereby some feel that rules are being bent to suit one cohort over another. In the same school that adopted the open door policy, some teachers complained that allowing girls of English Romany heritage to wear large earrings was unfair, as other children were not allowed to do this. Other teachers accepted this, as a mark of cultural understanding.

Gould (2017)

This study looks at support strategies used in one particular secondary school. Gould's (2017) thematic analysis of pupil views highlighted similar themes to Bhopal & Myers (2009), with strong parent, community and school links, staff knowledge and understanding of cultural history, openly valuing Gypsy and Traveller culture and supporting professionals with strong links to local sites all contributing to a greater sense of inclusion experienced by Gypsy and Traveller pupils. Staff knowledge and understanding was promoted through attendance at specific whole school training. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Teaching Assistants were employed by the school, so that parents could discuss their concerns with familiar staff with whom they were able to build up a relationship with over time.

Flexibility was also highlighted as a key factor in promoting better outcomes for Gypsy and Traveller children and young people, particularly with regard to attainment and achievement. Where teachers were able to provide additional academic support outside of lessons, or where paper copies of homework were provided (rather than electronic).

2.4 v) Staff Views

Bhopal (2011a)

Bhopal (2011a) examined the attitudes of teachers, heads, deputy heads and classroom assistants in schools that had high proportions of Gypsy and Traveller pupils. She found that, even when inclusive practices were put into place, staff did not always adopt positive attitudes towards this cohort. In fact, some of the practices put into place by schools (with the intention of supporting children and young people from Gypsy and Traveller communities) served to breed resentment amongst staff. This mirrors the findings of Bhopal and Myers (2009), where some members of staff felt uncomfortable about making exceptions to whole school rules. Bhopal (2011a) describes how this actually reinforces the 'othering' of Gypsies and Travellers (p.465).

Despite having OFSTED reports stating that two particular schools celebrated different cultures and supported their Gypsy and Traveller pupils, staff at these schools did not always take a positive view of teaching Gypsy and Traveller children. One member of staff reported that 'to me, [Gypsy and Traveller pupils] are different to the other kids. They have got some sort of negative attitude and they take it out

on… the teachers' (p.471), and another stated that they couldn't 'see why education should be different for them' (p.474). A common theme emerged, whereby teachers felt the Gypsy and Traveller pupils they had taught 'did not know how to deal with authority' (p.471), and that this was unfair because other children were expected to do as told.

Another theme identified was that Gypsy and Traveller pupils were often seen as 'difficult'. One staff member described them as 'the most difficult pupils I have ever taught. Their behaviour, both verbally and physically, is uncontrollable' (p.473). Another teacher described how 'they cause a lot of problems and they make a lot of noise' (p.474), and another even reported feeling frightened because 'they threaten you' and 'they use intimidation and force' (p.474).

Bhopal also highlighted that where good practice was observed staff voiced more positive attitudes. The point made in this article is that the adoption of inclusive practices by a school does not automatically result in unanimous staff acceptance. In order to ensure that the 'othering' is not enforced and that the school approach is truly inclusive, teachers need to be supported to develop a better understanding of Gypsy and Traveller children and get on board with inclusive practices.

Thomson (2013)

Thomson, a trainee educational psychologist, investigated staff views regarding children and young people from Gypsy and Traveller communities for her thesis research. One of the themes picked up in her research was around staff perspectives of Gypsy and Traveller ambition, and how this resulted in poorer attainment from this group. Many teachers spoke about children and young people dropping out of school to learn a trade or learn to 'look after the men folk' (p.82), but

there were also other teachers who acknowledged that some Gypsy and Traveller parents were keen for their children to develop a better standard of literacy than their own, and saw school as playing an important role in encouraging this.

Another important viewpoint identified through this thematic analysis is that, as many teachers have an expectation that the Gypsy and Traveller pupils will not finish their schooling, they see less point in teaching them. One teacher said ‘do you put all our resources into one child… when they will probably get pulled out of school at some time anyway’ (p.85) and another reported that ‘it is easy to go “oh well they won’t carry on after 14 anyway”’ (p.86).

Another observation abstracted from staff accounts was that necessary components of the UK education system presented a barrier to inclusion. One teacher reported that ‘we try to as much as we can but we have boxes to tick, we have targets to hit and unfortunately that is tailored to those children who will sit and listen and do exactly as they’re told and find it okay to be confined in a classroom for six hours a day’ (p.87), and other teachers also shared views suggesting that the current education system is not fit for purpose. This view is supported by Cudworth (2008), who suggests low attainment of Gypsy and Traveller pupils is a result of the system as a whole, as opposed to resulting from teacher attitudes.

Thomson also draws out themes relating to social exclusion and racism experienced by Gypsy and Traveller pupils from their peers. Teachers commented on this, stating that parents have said to their children ‘you are not playing with those Gypsy kids you stay away from them’ (p.102).

2.5 Holistic Approaches

Difficulty in recruiting participants is one of the most frequently cited reasons for the small sample sizes used in the majority of studies in this area. Recruitment difficulties are also used to justify the use of just one respondent category to draw conclusions (e.g. interviewing staff rather than members of the Gypsy and Traveller community). Nevertheless, there are some researchers who have been able to collect data from several different groups of participants (e.g. staff, parents, children and other members of the community). This helps to strengthen the conclusions, as the evidence is supported by a variety of sources. This presents a more holistic approach to answering research questions.

Bhopal's (2011b) study of ''White racism' in secondary schools in England' takes an ethnographic approach and interviews Gypsy and Traveller pupils, their mothers and members of the Traveller Education Service. Views among these cohorts were often aligned. Bloomer and Hamilton (2014) interview both children and their parents about perceived barriers to education, and again children and their parents were largely united in their views. D'Arcy (2014) explored reasons for uptake of elective home education through family interviews, where families could select who would take part in the interview. There are practical benefits to this approach, and it also gives a greater sense of ownership and control to participants. Derrington (2005; 2007) investigated perceptions of Gypsy and Traveller children's behaviour in school by interviewing pupils, significant adults, key professionals, parents (mostly mothers), other relatives, school staff and TES staff, and findings provided a variety of viewpoints. Another strength of this study was that they used a longitudinal design, and interviewed participants over a five-year period. Lloyd and Stead (2001) looked

at name calling and bullying of Gypsies and Travellers in school by speaking to both pupils and staff.

Overall it would seem that where both children and relatives are interviewed, views are aligned and there is a shared understanding amongst the family, even if different families disagree with one another. Where TES/Ts are interviewed views also often align, most likely because professionals working for these services have often spent a significant amount of time working with Gypsies and Travellers so have a good understanding of their perspectives and experiences. The conflict arises where school staff have been interviewed, particularly at secondary age (Derrington, 2007). Their views about the reasons for difficulties experienced by Gypsies and Travellers in school often focus on Gypsy and Traveller culture and mobility patterns, rather than problems within the school (D'Arcy, 2014).

Whilst there is not an abundance of research into this field, studies focusing on the experiences of Gypsies and Travellers in school go back several decades. Molander (1991) used a sample of Gypsy and Traveller participants based in Norfolk to explore educational perspectives. This study also takes a holistic approach, including interviews with local residents, attitudes of school staff, experiences of children and family views. Findings reflect those from later studies, such as the experiences of racism and discrimination in school. Research has continually expressed the needs of this cohort, yet so little is being done to provide support. This highlights the ever-growing responsibility held by those in positions of authority to better promote the inclusion of Gypsies and Travellers.

2.6 Other Research Methods

As well as carrying out interviews, other approaches have also been used to explore educational provision for children and young people from Gypsy and Traveller communities. One example is Levinson's ethnographic approach. He spent three years visiting Gypsy and Traveller communities on sites and schools, spending prolonged periods with the community. Levinson was able to carry out a number of studies during this time. Many of these have already been mentioned, but Levinson also carried out a study looking at children's play (Levinson, 2005) and another study looking at children's interaction with space in schools (Levinson & Sparkes, 2005).

Other researchers have also used alternative research methods and designs. Lloyd & McCluskey (2008) gathered information regarding legislation and practices across the UK with regard to the education of Gypsies and Travellers, and drew conclusions based on this. Smith (2017) does carry out interviews, but interviews adult members of the community about their experiences of education. Using just three participants, she is able to carry out an in depth analysis of their narratives.

2.7 Positionality of the Researchers

2.7 i) Levinson

The conclusions drawn in Levinson's (2015) study reveal value placed on school attendance, as he refers to greater attendance at school as a good outcome. One of the theoretical assumptions made is that some minority communities protect themselves from assimilating to the mainstream culture by disappearing ('for Gypsies, the tendency of some individuals to vanish seems to be a consequence of a powerful

group response to perceived assimilation' p.1150). This ties into the focus on school attendance, as Levinson describes how 'the partial invisibility of these communities has facilitated school avoidance.' (p.1151).

Overall, the perspectives taken by Levinson reflect his personal knowledge and experience of this particular community, as his ethnographic studies have equipped him with a relatively unique insight. One of the key messages presented in Levinson's research is that government reports are missing the point, as they focus primarily on attainment, rather than the complexities of why Gypsy and Traveller pupils may not see the point in school.

2.7 ii) Thomson, Cudworth and Bhopal

Thomson (2013) draws attention to arguments made by Cudworth (2008), suggesting that problems with the education system as a whole lie at the heart of Gypsy and Traveller children's difficulty with school. Other researchers, including Bhopal, have taken the stance that teacher/school attitudes are at the heart of this problem. This is an interesting reflection point, and one that I felt important to consider when interviewing participants, ensuring to ask about the education system as a whole as well as teachers and experiences specific to certain schools. I also felt it would be important to reflect on these lines of arguments in my analysis.

2.8 Psychological Theories

Gould (2017) and Thomson (2013) are both psychologists who have approached this subject area with explicit consideration of psychological theories and frameworks. Gould (2017) uses theoretical propositions from existing research to inform the design of her interview, including recurring themes relating to social

inclusion and academic progress (e.g. staff training and study support). Gould (2017) also makes reference to the cultural-ecological theory of school performance (Ogbu and Simons, 1998), which argues that many minority groups' school attendance is involuntary. Ogbu & Simons make suggestions as to how to increase voluntary involvement in school by building trusting relationships, accommodating cultures, addressing opposition, providing role models, demonstrating high expectations and involving the community.

Thomson (2013) discusses critical race theory (Gilborn, 2008), which argues that institutional racism is ingrained in society. Thomson points out that, taking this perspective, children and young people from Gypsy and Traveller communities will be exposed to racism in school, resulting in the difficulties they experience. Whilst Thomson argues that there are more complex interacting factors at play, she does consider that some element of prejudice may be present among school staff, and that often difficulties are associated with 'cultural factors'- a 'smokescreen for institutional racism' (p.18).

Evidence suggests that many Gypsy and Traveller pupils are exposed to racial discrimination in schools (Bhopal, 2011b; Deuchar & Bhopal, 2013; Thomson, 2013). Psychological studies have explored the affects that discrimination has on the development of children and young people. Benner and Graham (2013) studied the consequences of experiencing racial/ethnic discrimination during adolescence. They were particularly interested in investigating the source of discrimination and whether different sources impacted on participants in different ways. They found that, whilst discrimination from peers was likely to impact directly upon participants' social and emotional wellbeing, discrimination from school staff was most associated with poor

academic performance. Societal discrimination led to participants developing a heightened sense of racial awareness.

Another trainee educational psychologist researching this field of study (Mhuircheartaigh, 2015), adopts a systemic approach, recognising that a 'complex array of inter-relationships located within multiple levels of society impact upon the education of these children and young people' (p.10), and makes reference to ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1989). This adds an original contribution to the literature regarding the education of Gypsy and Traveller children through the application of psychological theory.

2.9 Applications to the Current Study

2.9 i) Recruitment and Data Collection

The article by Deuchar & Bhopal (2013) was particularly informative regarding their data collection processes. They provided a participant information sheet that was designed to contain all the necessary details and be easily understood by primary school children. They also highlighted the importance of building trust with participants to ensure they felt comfortable participating in the study, and achieved this through rapport building visits during which they engaged in relaxed conversations. This guidance helped to inform my approach and the information I presented to participants. Interestingly, parental permission was simply sought by sending a letter home. Perhaps applying the principle of building trust to the parents as well as children would have prompted more parents to give their consent, allowing for a larger sample size. I therefore considered that, when conducting my research, I

would carry out rapport building visits and attempt to build trust with both parents and children.

Another interesting aspect of the study carried out by Deuchar & Bhopal (2013) is that they were able to recruit more participants in London than in Glasgow. The London recruitment process was supported by a TES, so it would seem that they played a role in ensuring the participants' sense of trust. I therefore planned to involve the Greenshire TET in my recruitment process, so far as they were willing and able.

As many of the participants at the schools selected in Deuchar & Bhopal's (2013) study were from Fairground Traveller communities, it was important for researchers to plan their research around this, collecting data during the winter months when the majority of families would not be travelling. This informed a shift in my thinking, as my plan was to carry out my data collection during the summer. Reading Deuchar & Bhopal's account brought to my awareness that to do so would limit my sampling frame and, contingently, the research findings, as they would not include the views of this research. I therefore carried out my data collection in October.

2.9 ii) Further Exploration

Many of the studies reviewed in this literature search helped to form my thinking with regard to the interview questions. For example, the study by Myers et al. (2010) helped drew my attention to the importance of family commitments and 'early onset adulthood', and I considered that these would be important areas for further exploration in my interviews. Gould's (2017) approach of using theoretical propositions from existing research to structure interviews also informed my own interview design.

One helpful idea from Levinson's (2015) research that has refined my thinking is the possibility that some Gypsy and Traveller individuals may not recognise that other groups are marginalised in the way that they are, as there are just Gypsies and 'gadjes' (non-Gypsy people), and also the sense of betrayal of heritage/risk of jeopardising Gypsy heritage that Levinson describes. This led me to consider that it would also be worth exploring these potential viewpoints in my interviews.

From Thomson's (2013) research, I considered that it would be important to acknowledge the use of the terms 'cultural factors' and 'cultural differences' as potential indications of underlying stereotypes, and this is raised again in the discussion. I also apply the cultural-ecological theory of school performance (Ogbu & Simons, 1998) to my interpretation.

2.10 Chapter Summary

The literature search demonstrated that researchers have already conducted interviews with children and young people from Gypsy and Traveller families, many of which focus on experiences of education. When considering whether to pursue this line of research I reflected that there were still a limited number of studies, so it would be helpful to contribute to the growing body of evidence. Like my research plan, much of the research already conducted used a small number of participants and focused on a particular area of the UK, so I judged that my evidence would therefore not only add to the currently limited literature, but also outline findings from a new area. As the Gypsy and Traveller community is so diverse, I considered that it would be important to add to the literature to ensure greater representation of different viewpoints.

Scoping the literature also highlighted a number of gaps, and it occurred to me that the use of applied psychology could add to the field. Current research accounts for school experiences and different viewpoints, but does not explore the social, emotional and mental health implications of experiencing conflicting value systems. As a psychologist equipped with tools to further explore these areas, I planned to facilitate this addition of an original contribution to the current understanding of Gypsy and Traveller experiences.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter summarises the methodology, beginning by outlining the research questions and explaining how these were established. The philosophical underpinnings of the research are then considered, followed by accounts of the research design, ethical considerations, recruitment, the interview process, analysis of findings and dissemination of the research.

3.2 Research Questions

3.2 i) Development of the Research Questions

The broad remit considered at early stages of the research process developed from my experiences of working with Roma pupils (see section 1.3i) and further developed as I engaged with policy, theories and research in this field. The existing literature has explored specific ways in which factors have impacted upon Gypsy and Traveller experiences of education. For example, Levinson specifically explored aspirations (Levinson, 2015), literacy (Levinson, 2007) and the experiences of Gypsy females to explore the interacting effects of their gender and culture (Levinson & Sparkes, 2016). Bhopal (2011b) sought out experiences of racism and Deuchar & Bhopal (2013) examined supports in place to foster citizenship rights and cultural diversity. Although there are advantages to focusing on specific areas of need, I judged that to do so would not promote participants' voice and agency by allowing them to foucs on those aspects of education they considered most important. By

keeping my research aims open, I aimed to explore which aspects of education were most central to Gypsy and Traveller participants' experiences. This approach supported an original contribution that was built upon the foundations of findings from prior research.

My first aim was to explore participant experiences of education, but I also wanted to consider with participants what the best education would be. This led to reflections on what education is and what its purposes are. The Oxford English Dictionary defines education as 'the process of receiving systematic instruction, especially at a school or university' or 'an enlightening experience'. Assuming that the purpose of education is to equip children and young people with the skills necessary for success in later life, it is important also to consider what 'success' comprises fot different groups and communities, so that our education system can better facilitate this form of success. One of my aims was therefore to elicit the views of Gypsy and Traveller children about what they believed would be constituents of 'success'; what they would like to be good at; and what sort of life they would like to have. I planned that this would then lead to discussion about how the local authority/government on a wider scale could better support them to achieve their goals/the forms of success that were meaningful to them.

Initial questions therefore included:

1. What are participants' perceptions of school/education?
2. How do participants think their other family members view school/education?
3. What are participants' experiences of education?
4. What are participants' future aspirations?
5. What do participants want/what would they like from education?

Whilst there was a need to address all of these questions in this field of research, I referred back to my primary aims in order to further refine the research questions for the current study. This primarily included eliciting the views of Gypsy and Traveller children and young people regarding their experiences of education. Reporting the experiences of others can be a powerful tool in promoting improved understanding and cultural sensitivity (Daher et al., 2017). The decision to focus solely on the views of the children and young people was made in order to ensure that their views are recognised and given precedence (Kellet, 2005; see section 3.4).

As well as exploring participants' educational experiences, I also wanted to support participants in defining what 'success' and promote ideas about what would support positive experiences of education.

3.2 ii) Final Questions

The final questions evolved from the initial/preliminary questions after further consideration of the above points. Upon further reflection, it was decided that the first preliminary question (what are participants' perceptions of school?) could be answered through responses to the other questions. The second preliminary question (how do participants think their other family members view school?) was also ruled out, as this would potentially be better explored through another study that also elicits the views of the family and looks for interactions. The final three preliminary questions are reflected in the final research questions:

1. What are the educational experiences of Gypsy and Traveller children and young people?

2. What does it mean to participants to be a Gypsy/Traveller? How does being a Traveller influence self-concepts, perceived strengths and future aspirations?
3. How could the inclusion and education of Gypsy and Traveller children and young people be better supported?

My rationale for Research Question 1 is clear, as my primary aim was to explore the educational experiences of Gypsy and Traveller children and young people in order to highlight barriers and facilitators towards positive experiences of education. Research Question 2 developed as a result of wanting to understand participant ideas about what success would look like, in the context of being from a Gypsy/Traveller family. Whilst I considered that simply exploring recent educational experiences would provide some guidance as to how the education of Gypsy and Traveller children might be better supported, Research Question 3 was added separately to allow for consideration of participant views regarding things they thought would make the education system better that they had not yet experienced. Research Question 3 also allows for interpretation of the findings beyond those direct reports from participants, including the application of psychologically based interventions and support strategies to meet areas of need implied through participant views.

It is important to emphasise that this research did not seek answers that could be generalised to all Travellers. As planned, the findings are specific to the individuals participating in this study. One of the aims is to demonstrate the diversity between Travellers; assumptions should therefore not be made about all Travellers based on the findings presented here (see Chapter 4).

3.3 Philosophical Assumptions

Thomas (2013) describes how a researcher's philosophical assumptions mould their research, influencing ontology (what is studied) and epistemology (how it is studied). Denzin and Linkoln (2000) argue that the position that a researcher takes can never be entirely independent of their values. Holloway and Todres (2003) also emphasise the importance of being explicit about epistemological assumptions, particularly when using the chosen method of data analysis (thematic analysis; see section 3.9). It is therefore important to ensure transparency regarding my epistemological position and how this has influenced my choice of design and methodology.

I have approached the current research from the position of an interpretivist, understanding that research investigating social phenomena requires an alternative epistemology to the scientific method. Founded by Max Weber in the late 19th century (Tucker, 2995), interpretivisim or 'antipositivism' was proposed in reaction to and in opposition with the positivist stance previously used in sociological study. This approach allows for focused consideration or role of social influence, and how people's perceptions of the world are moulded by their interactions with others. When considering the experiences of children and young people from Traveller families, an interpretivist approach focuses on views (i.e. the prejudices and stereotypes) held by the wider society, and how these may have impacted upon individuals' understanding and perception of the world, as well as considering the societal perceptions held by Travellers and the role these play in forming attitudes towards education.

The interpretivist stance recognises that methodologies and findings are designed and interpreted by the researcher, and are therefore influenced by the

researcher's values. In line with interpretivist principles, I recognise that the current study has been significantly influenced by my held beliefs as a researcher. For example, I believe educational attainment to be positive in its facility to provide increased academic and economic opportunities for children and young people. The same can be said for attendance at school, which can be extremely positive in its capacity to provide increased social and emotional support. These beliefs are apparent throughout the current study, in both the design and interpretation.

Approaching this research within a more flexible, interpretivist framework enabled me to reject more positivist methodologies that require structure, and so harness opportunities for flexibility and openness in the design and implementation of data collection and analysis methods (i.e. semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis). Other researchers have stated that 'highly structured approaches may distort [participant] views through the nature and phrasing of the questions' (Lewis, Newton and Vials, 2008; p.26). Some structure was necessary in order to address the research questions, and the wording of questions was considered in advance to ensure openness and avoiding leading phrasing/vocabulary, but flexibility and openness were prioritised during methodological decision-making processes. This aimed to ensure that I, as the researcher and interviewer, did not too heavily influence participant responses. This also served to ensure participant comfort, as the interview took a more conversational style.

3.4 Design

Kellet (2005) argue that the perspectives of children and young people are preferable to any other source of data in matters that concern them. When considering

that I would only feasibly be able to interview participants from one group (i.e. children, parents or professionals), I concluded that the most valuable information I could collect would be from the children and young people themselves.

A qualitative design was used for the current study to reduce risks of homogenising children's experiences, as a quantitative study might seek to do (Greene and Hogan, 2005). Quantitative data may demonstrate, for example, the attendance and attainment of Gypsy and Traveller pupils, but would not explore the explanation or true impact of this information (Henwood, 1996). Interpretivism places emphasis on the importance of the cultural and symbolic nature of what people say, as opposed to the objective 'facts' they may communicate. This has positive implications for qualitative as opposed to quantitative research, as it allows for the aim to be ensuring that participants speak freely, as opposed to ensuring they articulate themselves accurately.

The literature highlights that researchers within this field (Levinson, 2015; Deuchar & Bhopal, 2013) have typically taken a multiple case study design. A case study can be defined as 'an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, program or system in a "real life" context' (Simons, 2009; p. 21). Thomas (2011) describes how, where some element of comparison is present, a case study becomes a multiple case study. The current research emulated this design, interviewing 6 participants and making some comparisons between participants. This involved taking guidance from Thomas' (2013) account of how to conduct case studies. This enabled me to develop a detailed picture of the educational experiences of a small group of participants, as well as an in-depth exploration of their values and aspirations for the future.

Other qualitative research methodologies were also considered, including ethnography- living amongst participants over a longer period of time. As already highlighted by the literature search, this has proven to be a successful method of obtaining data, particularly with this cohort, however practical constraints rendered this less feasible for the current study. The same can be said for longitudinal designs in general, where time constraints were the primary limiting factor.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was secured through the University of Birmingham's Research Ethics committee. Ethical issues were addressed through guidance from both the British Psychological Society and British Educational Research Association.

Freely given informed consent (Wiles et al., 2005) was achieved by ensuring that all participants received both an oral and written explanation of what the study and their participation would involve. Negotiation and confirmation of consent took place over a number of visits where participants had the opportunity to ask questions. They gave both oral and written consent; written consent was also gained from participants' parents (see Appendix A for information sheets and consent forms).

Alderson and Morrow (2004) highlight concerns about children's capability to give consent when research is complex. Hardy and Majors (2017) argue that this is where the educational psychologist's skill set is most valuable; in ensuring developmentally and culturally appropriate communication of the purposes of the work to children and young people so that they understand what they are consenting to. This involves rapport-building, using child-friendly language and facilitating the

child's questioning, all of which I sought to achieve in this research.

To ensure confidentiality, audio-recordings of the interviews were stored on an encrypted memory stick before being transferred to the University of Birmingham's secure data storage. No potentially identifiable information was included in the write-up. Participants were allowed to choose their own pseudonyms and these were used. Locations, educational institutions and people referred to during the interview were also changed to ensure anonymity. Interviews took place in participant homes, where privacy could be ensured.

Following interviews, participants were debriefed and afforded opportunities to ask further questions. Participants and parents were made aware that, should discussion indicate any risk of significant harm to themselves or others, local authority safeguarding procedures would be followed.

To reduce risks of harm to myself as the researcher, I made sure that all initial visits were carried out accompanied by a member of the TET who knew the family well. Greenshire's Educational Psychology Service had a home visit policy, which I followed when carrying out both the initial rapport-building visits and the interviews. This involved pre-recording the visit on a secure database viewable by other educational psychologists, identifying a 'buddy' who would monitor the visit and take steps if they had not heard from me, and making a phone call to let them know I was safe after the visit. Members of the TET also considered my safety as a researcher when considering which families to approach for consent, as part of the inclusion criteria and purposive sampling approach (see section 3.6).

All participants were made aware that they had the right to withdraw from the study leading up to, during and up to one week after the interview had taken place.

Participants were reminded of this right before and after interviews, and given details of how to contact me if they did choose to withdraw.

An important ethical consideration with research of this nature is that the findings risk promoting stereotypes. Care has been taken to avoid portrayal of responses in a way that might promote such risks. Grace's transcript does highlight some underlying issues within certain parts of the Traveller community she belonged to, but also illustrates that she and her family do not fit this stereotype and this is highlighted in the findings (see section 4.3i). Other transcripts showed great variation between Travellers, and the importance of avoiding homogenisation is made clear throughout the current study (see sections 1.2i, 1.3iii, 3.4, 4.1, 5.4ii, 6.4iv).

3.6 Recruitment

3.6 i) Process

The first step was to meet with the TET to discuss the purpose and nature of the research study, providing an opportunity for the team to ask questions and propose ideas. During this meeting, members of the TET agreed to support the recruitment process. This involved: advising on participant selection, discussing the project with families, providing parents and children with recruitment leaflets, introducing me to the families and accompanying me on rapport building visits.

After discussing the research with their children, parents were advised to contact their link TET member and let them know if they would be interested in participating in the research. Introductory visits were then arranged, so that I could meet with parents and children to further explain the project orally and answer any

questions. Where children and parents both agreed to take part in the research an interview date was arranged.

3.6 ii) Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The first criteria set was that children and young people should identify as being from a Gypsy or Traveller. It was also decided that the participants should not be younger than 9, as they needed to access conversation and attend for an hour. They also needed to have some recent experience of education.

I knew that the reading and re-reading of data necessary in most forms of qualitative analysis would be time consuming, so a small data sample was selected.

3.6 iii) Participant Selection

The TET's Senior Leader acted as a gatekeeper for the research, and flyers were only given to the gatekeeper for distribution to parents of the children and young people they visit who met the selection criteria. Sampling was purposive, as members of the TET proposed suitable families. It was agreed that an attempt would be made to select participants from a range of backgrounds/situations in order to reflect the diversity of Gypsies and Travellers living in Greenshire. This included attempting to recruit some participants living on sites, some living in homes, some attending an educational setting and some accessing home education, as well as seeking a natural distribution of participant age, gender and group (i.e. Romany Gypsies, Irish Travellers, Showmen or Bargees). This varied sample was sought to demonstrate different demographics, and to challenge stereotypes.

Depth was sought after as a key characteristic of the data. This meant that interviews needed to be lengthy; exploring constructs and promoting reflection. This would allow for a focus to be given to the experience of these individuals, rather making generalisations about a group. This meant that the transcriptions would be long, taking a significant amount of time to produce and analyse. Another factor adding to the amount of time taken to gather this data was the need for rapport building visits. To ensure participants felt able to share their views, it was important that they felt comfortable speaking to the researcher. This helped to promote richer responses. This approach meant that it was deemed appropriate to limit my recruitment to roughly 6 participants.

3.6 iv) Materials

Recruitment materials were designed for the purpose of this study, outlining the specific details of the research. This primarily included a flyer for participants and parents, as well as a script that was prepared in advance of the oral explanation during rapport building visits. An information sheet for professionals was also created, and this was sent to members of the TET before our meeting so that they could consider amendments to the research and questions that needed addressing. This also provided a useful tool for professionals to refer to when meeting with potential participants and explaining the research to families.

3.6 v) Final Sample

Following the recruitment process, members of the TET introduced 4 families,

from which 6 children agreed to take part. The first family were Irish Travellers living in a council home in the north of the county; their son Billy (12 years old) agreed to take part. The second family were a mixture of Irish Travellers and English/Romany Gypsies also living in a council home in the east of the county; their daughters Elle and Sydney (both 16 years old) agreed to take part. The third family were Irish Travellers who had very recently been moved off site from the north of the county and into temporary accommodation in the South; their daughter Grace (16 years old) agreed to take part. The fourth family were Bargees living on a houseboat, moving through the south of the county; their sons Oliver (15 years old) and Bryn (11 years old) agreed to take part.

3.6 vi) Access to Participants

Interviews took place in the home. The TET members supporting my recruitment process advised that parents would be less likely to give consent if I asked to interview their children elsewhere, where they could not also be present. I also wished to ensure consistency, and judged that if some parents asked for the interviews to take place in the home, it would be better to do this for all participants. Whilst parents did not stay in the same room while participants were interviewed, it is important to consider that this methodological approach may have had an impact upon the data gathered.

The bioecological model referred to earlier (section 1.2vii; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci; 1994) emphasises the significant influence that the child's family and home have on their development. This immediate environment/microsystem is likely to influence values and beliefs, but there is also the potential for other influences

working at mesosystemic/macrosystemic levels to influence these core principles. For example, a child may be encouraged to pursue certain ambitions by their parents, but may have different aspirations inspired by their time at school. When surrounded by school staff and in the school building, the child may feel more open about discussing these aspirations, and more reticent when surrounded by their family at home. The result may therefore be that my participants were more likely to express views in line with those of their family.

3.7 Interviews

3.7 i) Design

The interviews were designed with the purpose of eliciting participant views regarding their experiences of education, values, goals for the future and ways that education could be better. As utilised by Gould (2017), theoretical propositions formed the basis of the questions listed in the interview schedule (see Table 1 and section 3.8i).

Issue/topic	Possible questions	Prompts and probes	Potential Resources
Recent experiences of school	• *What's your school like?* (If attending school) • *What do you learn about at home?* (If not attending school) • *What does a typical day look like?*	• *Can you please tell me more about…?* • *How do you feel about…?* • *What do you mean by…?* • *Can you just explain… to me?* • *Sorry if this seems like a silly question, but…?* • *Why do you think…?*	• School prompt cards • 'My School Day' sheet
Historical experiences of school	• *What was school like when you were in year…?* • *Have you always felt the same way about school?*		• Timeline • The Bear Feelings Cards (for younger participants)
Self-concept and values	• *What do you like doing in your free time?* • *Who is important to you?* • *What does being from a Traveller family/community mean to you?* (Establish preferred term for 'Traveller' and replace accordingly)		• Self Image Profile (Butler, 2001) • Drawing the Ideal Self (Moran, 2001)
Ambitions and hopes for the future	• *What would you like to be good/better at?* • *What do you want to do when you grow up?* • *What are your hopes/dreams for the future?*		• Goal setting worksheets
Ideal education system	• *How could school help you to be good/better at…?* (Refer to points discussed in previous question) • *How could school help to prepare you for what you want to do when you grow up?* • *What would the perfect school be like? Why?*		• Drawing the Ideal School (Williams and Hanke, 2007)
Changes to current education system	• *What things would you change about your school? Why?* • *What things would you keep the same? Why?*		• 'Making School Better' picture sorting task with some blank squares

Table 2: Table to illustrate questions, prompts and resources designed to facilitate the semi-structured interview.

3.7 ii) Supports for Depth and Authenticity of Participant Engagement

Evidence suggested that many young people from Gypsy and Traveller communities may have poorly developed literacy skills and/or oral communication skills and limited experiences to engage in a research interview (Cromarty, 2017). Harker (2002) suggests that visual materials can be used to support semi-structured interviews, providing the interviewer with a variety of tools in addition to their research questions to support the child to focus. Communication during the interview was therefore facilitated through the use of additional visual resources, such as prompt cards, timetables, timelines, and goal setting worksheets. These were used where necessary to facilitate conversation (see Appendix B).

3.7 iii) Procedure

Data collection involved visiting the families in their home environment, accompanied/supported by a member of the TET. The interviews were recorded using an encrypted iPad loaned by the local authority.

The first interview was carried out as a pilot study. A rapport-building visit accompanied by a member of the TET preceded the interview. The data gathered during the interview were sufficient for inclusion in the study findings. Inclusion of the pilot study can be justified by the epistemological stance I have taken. Interpretivism allows for flexibility, providing a rationale permissive of small adjustments in subsequent interviews rather than rigid replication. When considering changes that needed to be made to ensure high quality data was gathered in future interviews, the primary consideration involved the nature of the rapport-building visit.

The TET work primarily with parents to ensure they are able to secure education for their children. A typical visit may involve supporting parental completion of change of school application forms, speaking to school staff on behalf of parents, and/or general advocacy and support. Following the TET's usual working practices resulted in our initial joint visit focusing on speaking to parents, rather than the child (i.e. the potential participant). Upon reflection I judged that, although some time was spent in conversation with the child, sufficient for him to gain a clear understanding of the research aims and procedures, familiarity had not been as fully established as expected. I therefore decided that future interviews would involve longer/several rapport-building visits with time to speak to both parents and children, together and individually.

Another consideration brought to light by the pilot study related to the use of support materials throughout the interview. These were designed with the purpose of supporting the elicitation of views and structuring the conversation. Whilst these were, on occasion, helpful during the pilot study, they also sometimes served to break the flow of conversation and add a level of formality that was not conducive to encouraging the participant to share more of their views. Indeed, many of the questions proposed through the school day, person-centred planning and ideal school worksheets were offered by the participant independently. I therefore decided that the worksheets and tools would be optional, and made available at natural points throughout the conversation.

3.8 Semi-structured Interviews

3.8 i) Rationale

Semi-structured interviews were used for data collection, alongside a combination of other supports to elicit views. This reflected methods used in previous research (Deuchar & Bhopal, 2013; Levinson, 2015; Myers, McGhee & Bhopal, 2010). Interviews also included some elements of narrative enquiry and life story work to explore previous school experience, personal construct psychology to explore values and hopes for the future and 'The Ideal School' to explore what was wanted from education.

Rather than having a rigorous set of questions that needed to be answered, the semi-structured interview allowed flexibility and for me to explore any new ideas brought up throughout the interview process (Robson, 2011). I used a framework of themes that provided me with three core areas;

1. Recent and historical experiences of school
2. Self-concept, values and ambitions
3. The ideal education system/changes to the current education system.

Sub categories and opening questions were listed, as well as appropriate prompts and probes that might be used to promote elaboration/further discussion.

The interview was designed to take 30-60 minutes, allowing for variation in the length of time spent answering different questions and the introduction of new ideas where appropriate. The length of time was limited to roughly 60 minutes, as it was considered that participants would need to break after such intensity. A plan was put in place to allow for further visits to continue interviews that were not finished

after one hour, but this did not need to be implemented. Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) suggest that the ideal semi-structured interview schedule consists of between 6 and 10 open-ended questions. 6 key areas/topics were therefore identified, each with between 2 and 3 potential questions that could be used as appropriate. For example, to open conversation and explore the first topic, recent experiences of school, I planned to ask 'What's your school like?', 'What do you learn about at home?' or 'What does a typical day look like?' depending on whether the participant was accessing an educational setting, home school or some other provision.

3.8 ii) Alternative Methods

In line with the theoretical stance taken for the purpose of this study, depth, richness and quality of response was valued over and above breadth and quantity. Whilst questionnaires are a useful tool for gathering a large amount of data from multiple sources, they are limited in that they do not promote the in depth discussion and exploration of views that a face-to-face rapport building and interaction would allow. Both qualitative and quantitative questionnaires were therefore considered not fit for purpose, as time and efforts made to answer the research questions would be better directed through other methods.

Another approach often used to elicit participant views is to use focus groups. Doing this would also have potentially facilitated data gathering from more participants, as I may have been able to interview all the siblings in some families or children from several families at once. However, one of the limitations to this approach is that participants' responses may be influenced by group dynamics, and it may have made speaking about personal experiences increasingly anxiety provoking.

Another consideration was to carry out interviews with the whole family. However, it was considered that conducting family interviews would open up the potential for influence over views, and a consensus may be agreed upon due to a dominant family member. It is often considered that, due to the typical power relations within a family unit, parents may serve to influence, police or silence their children's voices (Harden, et al. 2010; Holland et al., 1996). As the primary aim of this study was to elicit the views of the children and young people, not to gain the views of parents or explore family practices and culture, it was deemed more suitable to interview participants individually.

I also considered whether to visit participants in school to carry out interviews. However, this was discounted due to some participants not being in school, and where possible I wanted there to be consistency across my approach to interviewing participants. It therefore made sense to carry out both the rapport building visits and interviews in the home. This had the added benefit of ensuring not only consistency of setting across participants, but also consistency of settings for the rapport building visits and interviews, increasing familiarity for the interview process. Being in the home environment also improved participant comfort and sense of security.

Visual recording was also considered and discounted. Whilst video recordings would allow for an in depth analysis of body language, facial expression, hesitation and other physical cues that indicate a person's internal emotional state, it was also reflected upon that the presence of a video recorder/awareness that the interview was being filmed might impact upon participants' comfort, openness and willingness to share personal experiences. When the potential benefits of both audio and visual recording were weighed and compared, audio recording was the preferred option.

3.9 Thematic Analysis

3.9 i) Rationale

Thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) was used to interpret the data following consideration of alternative methods of qualitative data analysis. Thematic analysis has been used by psychologists and researchers in other fields for several decades, and has been undergone a number of transformations during this time. With this in mind, Braun & Clarke (2006) outlined 'clear and concise guidelines' to avoid 'the "anything goes" critique of qualitative research (Antaki et al., 2002)' (p.78) in their six-phase model. They argue that thematic analysis, when used correctly, is 'an accessible and theoretically flexible approach to analysing qualitative data' (p.77).

Other methods of analysis considered included Grounded Theory (GT) and Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). These methodologies are frequently used by educational psychologists for qualitative data analysis. Both of these approaches are designed to explore using open questions. However, there are differences in that data collection for GT typically takes place over a longer period of time, whereas interviews for IPA can be carried out in a day- the changes over time are measured by supporting participants to reflect back and report narratives. This reflects the difference in epistemological stance; GT comes from social constructivism whereas IPA is based on critical realism.

GT 'is derived by data and illustrated by characteristic examples of data' (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; p.5). It takes a deductive approach, developing theories based on the data. It is a flexible design (Robson, 2011). Hardy & Majors (2017) describe the purpose of grounded theory as to 'discover the world through the participants' eyes' (p.17). This is done through multiple interviews and immersion in

the participants' world over a long period of time, and is enhanced through three layers of in depth coding and analysis. Whilst there are advantages to GT, such as its flexibility and thorough exploration of participants' experiences, there were a number of reasons not to use this approach. The main barrier to using GT was that multiple interviews and immersion in participants' worlds over a long period of time would not have been feasible given time constraints.

During IPA, the researcher is immersed in the research approach and engages in constant reflection regarding their personal experiences and subjective approach. The aim is to access the interviewee's personal experience through 'intersubjective meaning-making' (Larkin and Thompson, 2011). This involves a thoroughly in-depth analysis of the interview, including interpretations of body language, hesitations, facial expressions and other non-verbal communications. Whilst this is a helpful method of data analysis when the aim of research is to develop a rich picture of participants' lived experiences, this method of data analysis is less suitable when the aim involves looking for patterns amongst the data/common themes raised by several participants. For example, a single case study might use IPA to portray the experiences of the individual being interviewed, looking at the intricacies of the interacting factors they have experienced. However, a study interviewing several participants with a shared experience, may be looking to draw out common themes.

When considering other methods of qualitative data analysis, Braun and Clarke (2006) highlight a number of limitations to alternative methods of data analysis. They describe how conversation analysis and IPA have a fixed method with limited flexibility. GT, discourse analysis and narrative analysis have different versions of the same method, which can become confusing. They therefore argue that there are a number of advantages to thematic analysis over these alternative

approaches. It is flexible, and can be used in combination with a variety of philosophical approaches as well as only having 'guidelines' as opposed to a set of rigid instructions. It is also accessible, meaning that it is easier and less time consuming to learn and apply than other methods of qualitative analysis. As well as being more accessible to the researcher, thematic analysis also provides accessible results that are easier for the reader to interpret, making it particularly useful for research that attempts to involve/collaborate with participants. It is also able to summarise key features of a large body of data (highlighting both commonalities and differences), and can generate unanticipated insights as well as supporting anticipated ones, supporting both inductive and deductive approaches to data analysis. Braun & Clarke (2006) also go so far as to argue that there are cases where discourse analysis and conversation analysis have been cited as the method of analysis, but that the method was truly closer to thematic analysis.

As well as these advantages, there are other reasons why thematic analysis was a better fit for my research over other methods. Discourse analysis, decomposition analysis, IPA and GT also seek to describe patterns in qualitative data sets. However, they operate with different research aims. The purpose of IPA is to develop an understanding of the phenomenon in question through analysis of data that provides a rich picture of peoples' everyday experience of reality, their lived experiences. GT aims to generate a plausible theory of the phenomena. Discourse analysis operates specifically within a social constructivist paradigm, looking for themes that are socially produced. Decomposition analysis is a form of discourse analysis that focuses specifically on the social meaning of language. All are sound approaches when the research questions can be answered by this form of analysis, but both are also are narrow approaches and could not be applied to address the current

research aims. These methods search for patterns across an entire data set, rather than within a data item. Narrative analysis seeks to identify the story from one individual data item (e.g. using a case-study design), and as I sought to identify common themes, this was also not appropriate. Whilst some patterns within data items were sought, this was secondary to the identification of overarching themes within the data set.

3.9 ii) Procedure

One of the most salient messages from Braun & Clarke (2006) is that the researcher needs to be open about decisions that they have made, stating why they have made them and describing the resulting impact on the research. This section therefore aims to outline options I considered and justify the decisions made.

Inductive themes are strongly linked to the data themselves. The themes identified through an inductive approach are not driven by the researcher's theoretical interests, but by what is presented by the data. Inductive data coding should therefore aim not to fit into a pre-existing coding frame. Although the process strives to be data-driven, those that take this approach acknowledge that this can never truly be achieved in an epistemological vacuum. Deductive themes are driven by the researcher's theoretical/analytical interest in the area. For the current research, a combination of inductive and deductive approaches were used. Themes that had not been known to have been identified in existing research were sought as well as themes that had been previously noted. For example, 'disorderliness' (see section 4.2iv) was not raised as in previous research related to this area of interest but was found to be relevant for the current data set (inductive), but Levinson (2015) found that Gypsy and Traveller parents feared cultural assimilation, and I searched for

instances where this was raised by participants (deductive). The view was taken that engagement with the literature can enhance analysis by prepping the researcher with ideas about what would be helpful to look for (Tuckett, 2005). That is why overall, my analysis is more deductive.

Boyatzis (1998) describes how themes can be identified at both the semantic and latent levels. At the semantic level the researcher does not look for anything beyond a simple interpretation of what has been said. The latent level seeks to indentify underlying ideas, assumptions and conceptualisations. Both semantic and latent identification took place in the current study. Where semantic identification took place, analytic claims sought to go beyond the 'surface' of the data. Extracts were used to support analysis that went beyond their specific content.

Attride-Stirling (2001) describes how it is important that researchers provide an account of how they did their analysis in their reporting of the research. In line with Braun & Clarke's (2006) approach, 'thematic analysis involved the searching across a data set… to find repeated patterns of meaning' (p.86) and followed their six-phase guide, using their fifteen point checklist to ensure the process was followed correctly. As well as Braun and Clarke's (2006) guidelines, published examples of research using thematic analysis were also used to inform my interpretative analysis (Dann, 2011; Nicholas and Feeney, 2015). Below is a description of how each phase was followed.

1. Familiarizing yourself with your data

I, the researcher, conducted interviews with participants and collected the data. I therefore came to the analysis with 'some prior knowledge of the data', as well as 'some initial analytic interests [and] thoughts' (p.87). However, it was still necessary

to immerse myself in the data in order to fully familiarise myself with its content. This involved repeatedly listening to audio files, transcribing the data and reading through the transcripts multiple times (Bird, 2005; Riessman, 1993). The transcription aimed to provide 'a "verbatim" account of all verbal… utterances' (p.88). Use and placement of punctuation aimed to provide as true as possible account of meaning. At this stage, notes of potential codes were being made throughout.

2. Generating initial codes

Once I had familiarised myself with the data, I went on to create some initial codes based on my list of ideas related to the content of the data. These codes aimed to identify interesting features of the data, 'organising the data into meaningful groups (Tuckett, 2005)' (p.88). The data was then manually coded. Each data item (participant interview) was given equal attention and each comment made by participants within data items was given equal attention and considered for its relevance to the research questions and my areas of interest. Comments particularly relevant or interesting were highlighted. Some codes sought for were recognised during the familiarisation as being similar to the findings of other researchers, e.g. Levinson (2015), others were recognised as having occurred in previous transcripts. An example of a coded data extract can be found in Appendix C. Data extracts were coded and then brought together through copying and pasting onto individual files for each code. At this stage, surrounding data was kept in order to provide context to the extracts (Bryman, 2001).

3. Searching for themes

The coding process provided a long list of codes with supporting extracts. Searching for themes involved the organisation of these codes into 'meaningful groups' (Tuckett, 2005). These groups could be considered as potential themes, as

they operated at a broader level than the codes. At this stage a ‘miscellaneous’ theme was created for those codes that did not initially fit into the main themes. No codes or extracts were abandoned at this stage. Some initial codes eventually became themes or subthemes. For example, the initial code of ‘homework difficulties’ eventually became a subtheme of the overarching theme ‘difficulties in school’. Some codes were merged to create an overarching theme. For example, the theme of ‘friendships’ initially had a number of codes (‘making friends’, ‘maintaining friendships’ and ‘arguments’).

4. Reviewing themes

The potential or ‘candidate’ themes developed through phase three were then analysed for legitimacy. Those themes that did not have enough evidence or depended upon overly diverse data were discarded. Other themes were merged and separated according to the content of the relevant data extracts. For example, the candidate theme of ‘connection’ was eventually merged with ‘lack of connection’, although the two were reported separately for ease of reading (see section 4.2i). It was also through this process that some items were removed from the initial theme of ‘prejudice’ to form a subtheme titled ‘a lack of understanding’.

Internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity (Patton, 1990) were also considered here. Data extracts supporting each theme were scrutinised for coherence, and distinctions between supporting data extracts of different themes were sought. This phase involved both reviewing at level one- checking that the coded data extracts matched the themes, and reviewing at level two- checking that the developed themes accurately represent the data set by rereading the data set and producing additional codes. The super-ordinate theme of ‘being a Traveller’ was identified through

additional codes and subthemes generated from level two coding during this phase. Revisiting and recoding stopped when a satisfactory thematic map had been created.

5. Defining and naming themes

The themes presented for analysis were refined and defined through a reflective process. Names were changed to provide a best-fit descriptor for what the data extracts/evidence had in common, to best capture their essence. For instance, 'relationships with professionals' became 'connection'. A detailed analysis was then provided for each individual theme/sub-theme. Themes were considered themselves (in the findings), and then in further depth and in relation to one another (in the discussion). Sub-themes helped to demonstrate 'the hierarchy of meaning within the data' (p.92).

6. Producing the report

Extracts that most captured the essence of each theme were selected to support an account of the themes, the findings of this research. Themes were introduced individually, and further analysis of the relationships between themes followed in the discussion alongside links and comparisons to previous research and in the context of the research questions.

3.10 Dissemination of Findings

In line with the recommendations provided by Pawson and Tilley (1997), the researcher should check-in with participants after they have developed theories. This is to ensure that participants agree that the researcher's interpretation successfully portrays their views. At the end of each interview, participants were given an

immediate debrief and summary of the views they shared. This involved an opportunity to look through the worksheets we had filled in and any notes I had made. Feedback at this early stage allowed participants to ask questions and seek further information about the study. Participants also received personalised letters thanking them for their contributions to the research. In the letter that participants received, a short summary of their data was also provided, making reference to individual quotations where appropriate. The TET also received a written summary report of the findings, for the benefit of their work.

3.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided a rationale for the use of a qualitative, multiple case study design. This design is appropriate for answering the research questions alighted upon, which resulted from an in depth search of the current literature and are outlined at the start of this chapter. The design also derived from analysis of existing research in this field, as did processes used for the recruitment and interviews. A rationale for the use of semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis are also provided, both of which are consistent with the epistemological stance taken.

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Chapter Overview

The following chapter outlines the findings of the current study. Firstly, the participants are introduced separately to give an indication of their individual experiences and identities. This will help the reader in interpreting the data extracts provided to support the themes, which are reported following the participant introductions. Two sets of themes were identified- those related to experiences of education and those related to being a Traveller. Thematic maps are provided to illustrate the relationship between themes. Subthemes are then described in further detail with supporting evidence from the data, organised according to overarching themes.

As all participants most commonly referred to themselves as 'Travellers', this term is used henceforth as opposed to 'Gypsies and Travellers'. Some reference is made to 'Gypsies' when participants or researchers have used this term.

4.2 The Participants

This section comprises short descriptions of each participant and a brief overview of what was known about their educational history. Information was obtained from the TET, parents and the participants themselves. Quotations from interviews relevant to participants' perceptions of Traveller life are provided to illustrate what being a Traveller meant for them. Statements that indicate underlying values and future aspirations are also included here in order to signal each

participant's unique identity and character. Their varying responses, particularly regarding what it means to be a Traveller, serve to demonstrate the great diversity present amongst Travellers. These introductory synopses aim to render the following account of themes abstracted from the six research interviews more meaningful.

4.2 i) Billy, 12

Billy was from a family of Irish Travellers. He lived with his parents and sister in a council home, where they had resided for a number of years. They had previously lived in other parts of the country, on Traveller sites and in stationary homes. I first met Billy and his mother during the summer holidays, between Year Seven and Year Eight. By the time the interview took place, he had just started Year Eight. His mother told me that he had recently experienced some difficulties in school, and had received a number of fixed term exclusions following disagreements with peers and teachers. She was unhappy with how this had been dealt with, and was considering taking Billy out of school.

Billy agreed that being a Traveller was 'an important part' of who he was and said that he had 'good contacts' with other Travellers. He regularly spoke about other people, and his transcript suggested that he highly valued his social interactions. When asked to consider which subjects he did and did not like, Billy's responses were also heavily linked to the people associated with each lesson. His image of an ideal school also involved positive interactions with others. His aspirations were to do 'construction working', but he struggled to think how school might prepare him to be a construction worker when he was older, and repeated that he did not want to go to school (see 4.2i). Quotes to demonstrate these views can be found in Figure 1.

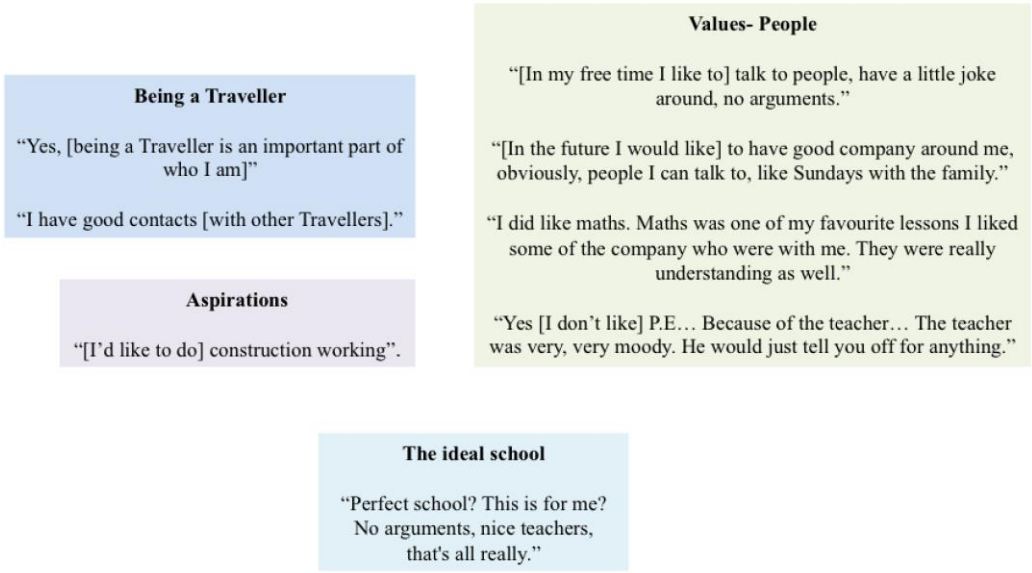

Figure 1: Data extracts illustrating Billy's views.

4.2 ii) Elle, 16

Elle was from a family of Irish Travellers and English Gypsies. She lived with her parents and siblings in a council home, and had also previously lived on Traveller sites. The family had remained local to Greenshire, and had experience of attending a number of schools in the area. Elle had been to one primary school in the north of the county before moving to another in the east. She had then been to a secondary school in the south of the county before moving to one in the east. At the time of my interviews, Elle would have been in Year Eleven, but had not attended school for over a year and did not intend to return. Two of her younger siblings were still in school, but she and her other six siblings had left before turning eighteen.

Elle spoke favourably about many aspects of her Traveller community, but also highlighted some limitations. Elle's perceived strengths were linked to her

experiences of Traveller family life, as were her aspirations- her family valued marriage and hoped that she would be married. Quotes to demonstrate these views can be found in Figure 2.

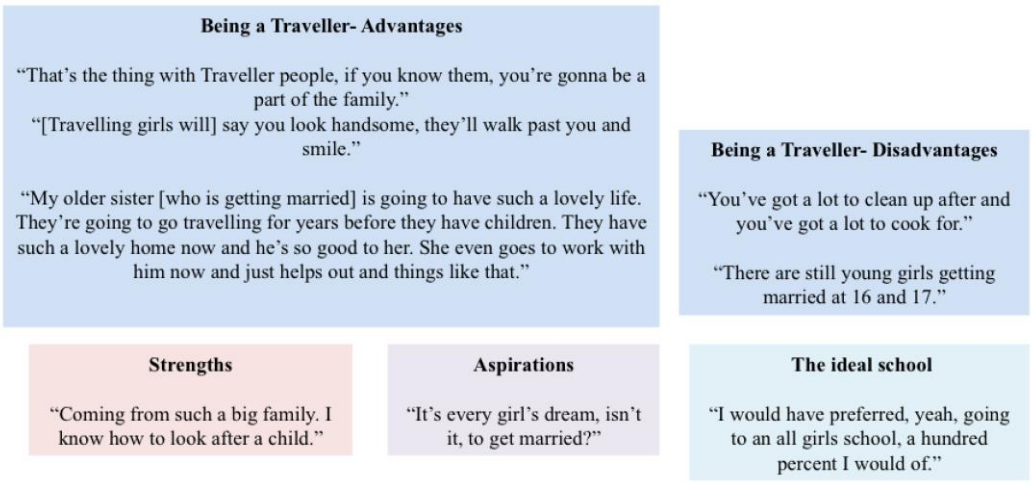

Figure 2: Data extracts illustrating Elle's views.

4.2 iii) Sydney, 16

Sydney was Elle's older sister. She also lived at home and had been to the same schools. She would have been in Year Twelve at the time of the interviews, but had also not attended school for over a year.

Sydney spoke about the traditions of her culture, and how she saw these as a barrier to some of her aspirations. She also regularly referred to her desire for greater independence. Again, her perceived strengths were linked to her experience of Traveller family life, and she spoke about how training for school staff might help

them to better understand Traveller pupils. Quotes to demonstrate these views can be found in Figure 3.

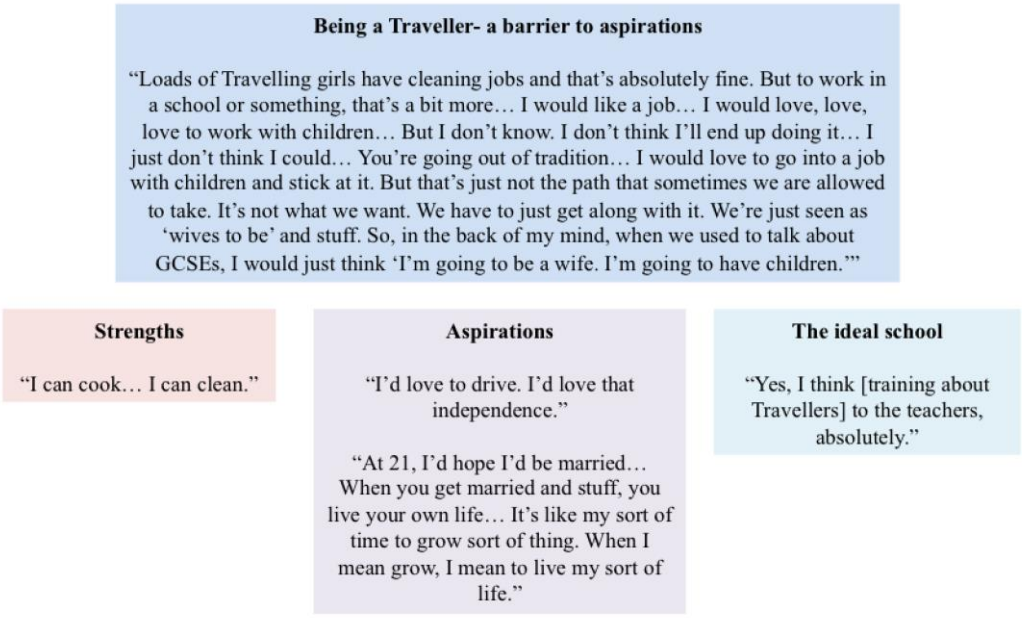

Figure 3: Data extracts illustrating Sydney's views.

4.2 iv) Grace, 16

Grace was from a family of Irish Travellers who had, within the month prior to my first meeting them, moved from a Traveller site into their own council home. Grace lived with her mother and sister. Her mother reported that they had experienced a number of difficulties with other families on the site, partly due to her being a single parent and how others in the community perceived this. They had had to stay on site for over a year after requesting council accommodation, and were moved around temporary homes for a number of months before being given a council home. Grace was in Year Twelve at the time of our interview, and had started at a new sixth form

college. She had missed several months of Year Eleven due to being moved around temporary homes, so was unable to take all of her GCSEs. She was studying to take some of them in Year Twelve alongside another course.

Grace, having experienced a number of hardships when living on a Traveller site, explained some of what she perceived the negative side to being a Traveller. She wished that her school could have helped her more at this time. Despite these experiences, she also spoke nostalgically about some of the positive sides of Traveller life. Grace referred to her aspirations on a regular basis without cues, suggesting that these were at the forefront of her thoughts and highly motivating for her. Although not directly linked to her Traveller culture, they reflected her experiences of living in a Traveller community. She actively did not want to do what other Travellers she knew expected of her, because she saw limitations to that way of life. Quotes to demonstrate these views can be found in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Data extracts illustrating Grace's views.

4.2 v) Bryn, 11

Bryn lived on a houseboat with his parents and three siblings. Bryn would have been in Year Six but was being educated at home. He had attended a number of different schools as well as having spent some time in elective home education. The family used the canal network to move around the country, but had been in

Greenshire for over a year. The family identified themselves as Bargee Gypsies, and contacted the TET independently to seek their support in accessing education for their children.

Bryn spoke very favourably about living with his Traveller family. His lived experience of being on a houseboat appeared to have inspired a love of nature, and he regularly spoke about his outdoor pursuits and adventures. His aspirations also linked to his love of outdoor pursuits, and he had a plan to do parkour professionally. He added that he'd 'like to be better at drawing' and 'carving'- two activities that he partook in regularly as part of his home education programme. Quotes to demonstrate these views can be found in Figure 5.

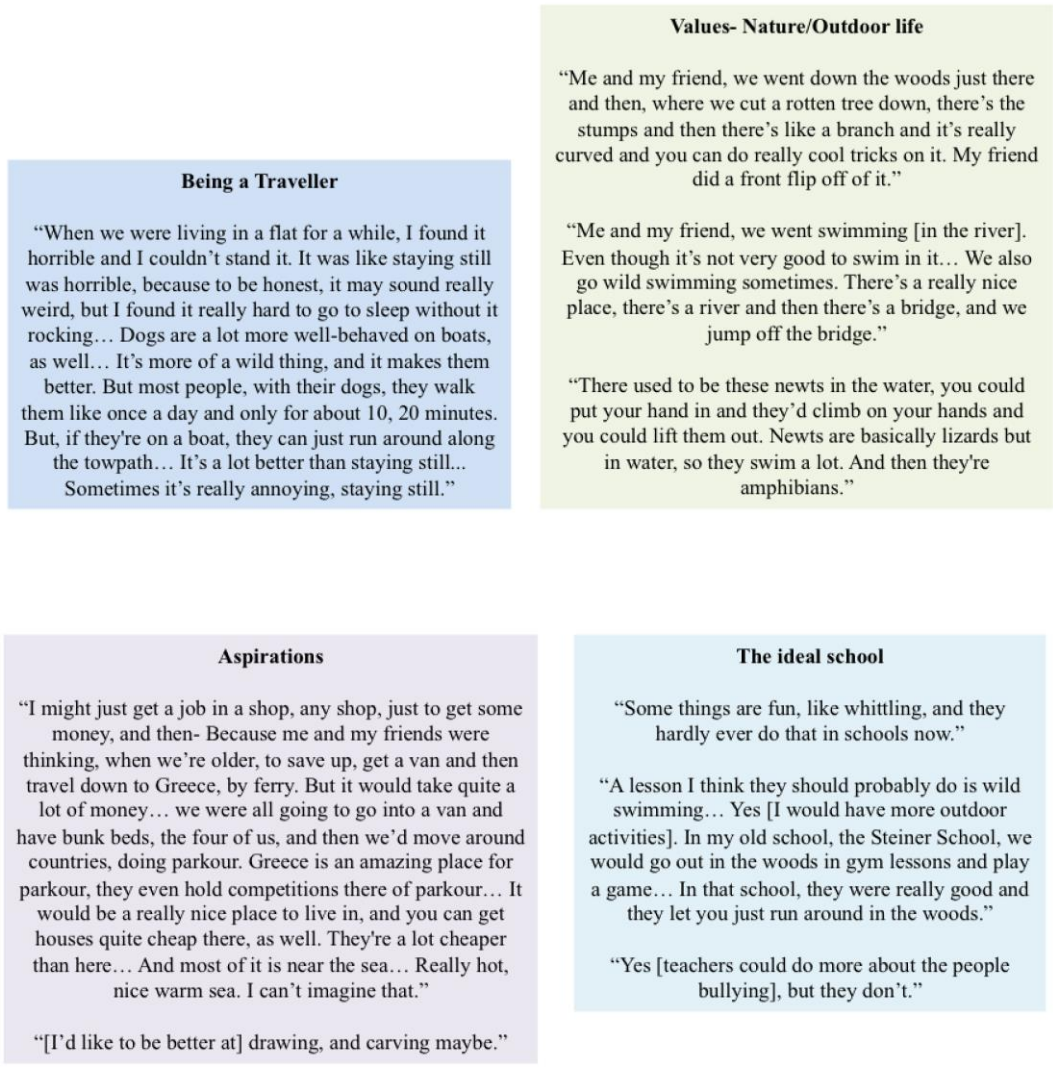

Figure 5: Data extracts illustrating Bryn's views.

4.2 vi) Oliver, 15

Oliver was Bryn's older brother. Oliver was in Year Eleven and attending a local secondary school. He had also attended a number of different schools and spent some time in elective home education.

Like his brother, Oliver also described positive aspects to his family's Traveller lifestyle. He felt his strengths lay predominantly in the physical side of computing, and he enjoyed taking computers apart and putting them back together again. Like Grace, he had a number of future aspirations and spoke about them often. Being disappointed by the curriculum (see 4.2iv) and having had a number of other negative experiences in school meant that he had a number of ideas as to how schooling could be improved. Quotes to demonstrate these views can be found in Figure 6.

Being a Traveller

"Imagine sitting on a log, a tree stump with a bonfire. You'd have to get used to the smoke. Imagine being able to be trusted with splitting kindling and lighting a fire. Being able to light a fire is… Most adults don't know how to do that, but I think I could at 7… Being able to survive in the wilderness sort of thing. If you got stuck in a forest somewhere you wouldn't root for the gamer, the criminal or the person who works in an office, you'd root for the guy who grew up with sharp tools… Knows what berries are poisonous and knows how to climb a tree."

Aspirations

"I was thinking of doing graphic designing for videogames and stuff. I like editing videogames… Yes [I would like to make games consoles], maybe building people custom computers as well. I heard people can do that… I'd like to work for maybe Nintendo, who made those, designing new things… I used to want to have a job in Lego and build Lego for a living… I think if the opportunity arose, I'd probably take it. I'm good at building things."

"I might like to do woodwork or something, but I need to get a lot stronger if I do that."

"I don't want to live on a boat because it's a bit small. I think if I lived in a van, then I could drive it around for a bit. If I could live in the back of a van and learn to drive."

Strengths

"I might get a really old game from Gameboys and stuff. Then I'd go on my computer and download the ROM. I'd edit it a bit and then I'd change the plot, change some of the sprites… I think I watched a couple of YouTube videos and I taught myself mostly… I had a broken laptop, the screen was broken. I actually had two of them, one of them was really, really broken on the screen and the other one was also broken on the screen. The older one I wanted the hard drive from, so I took the hard drive out and put it in the newer one. I completely ripped off the top screen, not literally ripped it off. I've got it my room set up with a desktop monitor and a little extendable mouse. Literally, I've got a computer except it hasn't got the giant box."

The ideal school

"The thing is, I think you need to tackle it really early on with teasing. You have to get it right from childhood, 'No, we don't do that. That's bad.'"

"More outside space. Some schools have loads of outside space, but some of them don't. I'd make it essential to have an outside space that you're able to go to any break time you need to that has grass in it."

"I'd take away detentions completely, I'd get rid of detentions. Detentions, although it makes sense to punish someone for doing something bad or something, I don't really support people punishment, I support karma instead. If you never did your homework, you'd fail a test, that sort of thing."

"They completely banned phones in the school… I think there should be a place where you can go to make phone calls."

"I'd remove a lot more tests. I'd get a lot less tests. At state schools now every week or so you get a test for each lesson, pretty much, so much based around exams… I find it really stressful… In RE I knew pretty much everything I needed to know. In RE I failed pretty much because you have to write in a particular way. You have to go, 'This statement is claiming…' Then you have to start this next sentence with… Then it must be ended with this. Then you must have a paragraph about this. Then you must end it off with a conclusion about this."

"Rather than having a time, I'd have different times for different people. On tests they have the same time for everyone, but someone might be really, really dyslexic and then be doing a RE test, why should they get less when they know just as much because they write slower."

"I'd also have more government funding. You get school trips and stuff, you have to pay for them and they're loads of money. I still need to find out if I can afford, for drama the teachers say, 'It's essential, you must go on these trips,' but we can't pay for them."

Figure 6: Data extracts illustrating Oliver's views.

4.3 Themes: Experiences of Education

Each participant's individual characteristics were respected throughout the research process. Their pseudonyms are therefore provided alongside quotations and these can be interpreted with the reader's understanding obtained from the participant introductions (see section 4.1). Although there was great diversity between participants, common themes could also be identified, which are outlined below. A thematic map to illustrate these themes is also presented as Figure 7.

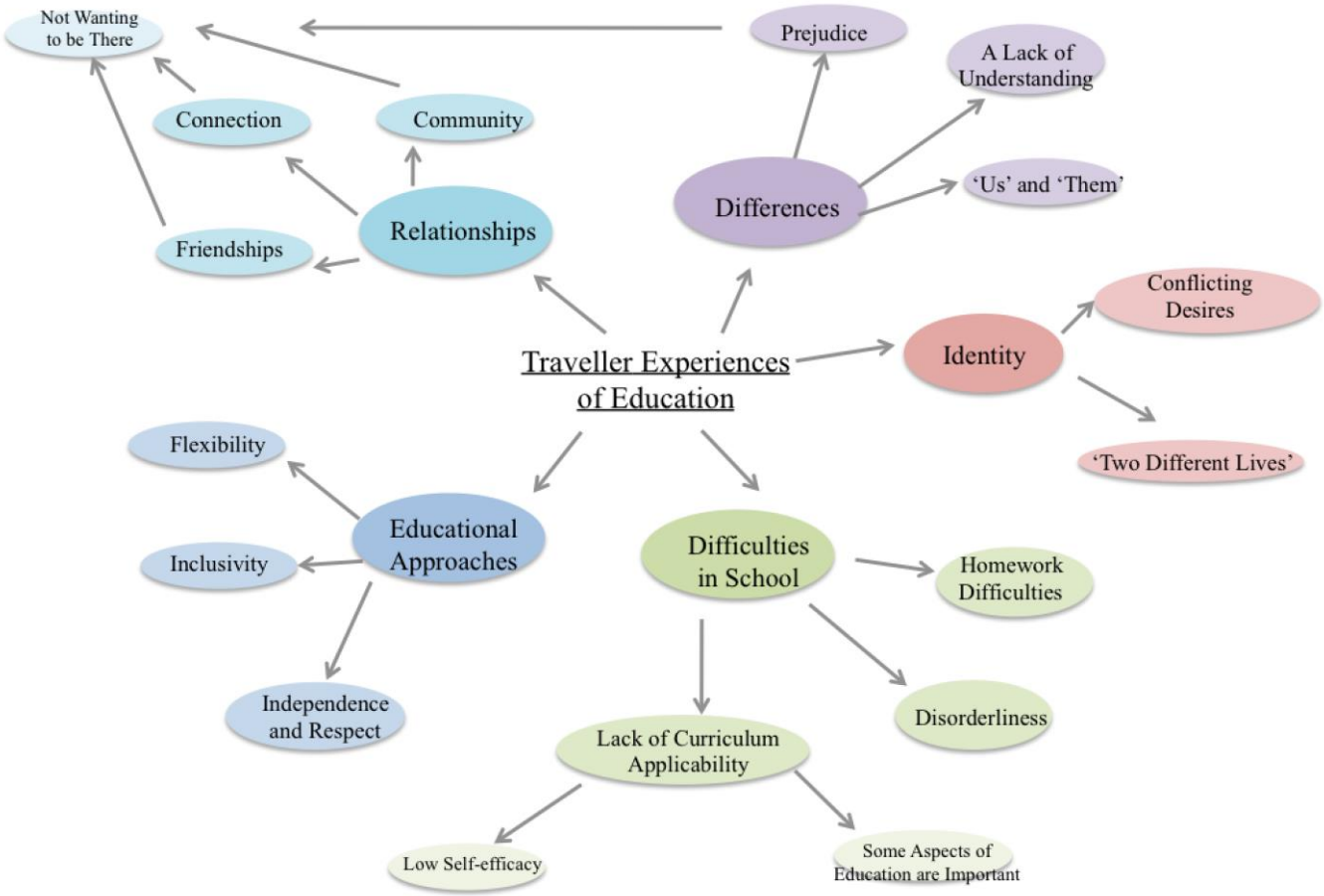

Figure 7: Thematic Map to Illustrate Participant Experiences of Education

4.3 i) Relationships

Connection

Many of the participants spoke favourably about teachers and professionals they had encountered. A common theme was feeling a sense of connection, which was most often achieved through teachers being relatable or 'like a friend' (Sydney). Teachers who told participants about their own families (e.g. Sydney's teacher bringing her daughter into school) and discussed their hobbies with pupils (e.g. Oliver's teacher telling him about the videogames he likes to play) built a trusting relationship with their pupils. It also helped when teachers knew about their Traveller background and took an interest in it. This helped them to be more understanding. In Grace's case, it was important that her teacher knew her well. Being attuned to her emotional state meant that she was able to ask when something was wrong, leading to an important disclosure. Grace also spoke about how helpful the TET had been in supporting her studies.

> "She knew when to put the class back in order, but she was also like your friend." (Sydney)
>
> "You could talk to her about anything. It was like a friendship more than like a- She wasn't a teacher, but, yes, it was more of a friendship with my tutor teacher." (Sydney)
>
> "She's a very, very good teacher… She's kind, she gets to know you, she talks to people… She'll come over, she'll help you with art and then she'll chat with you while she's doing it." (Oliver)
>
> "She was going to bring her little girl in… we had a double lesson… she was so lovely… it was my favourite lesson." (Sydney)
>
> "He seemed genuinely upset I was leaving. He had a very different approach to everyone else… He was just a bit more like a child at heart. He liked some Batman and he likes lots of stuff that kids nowadays like, the same with the English teacher there. I was really surprised to find out that a teacher actually played videogames." (Oliver)

> “The teachers all knew that we were Travellers… They were really, really nice… They were really understanding.” (Sydney)
>
> “The art teacher I told you about, she’s really interested and she asks me quite a bit about [being a Traveller].” (Oliver)
>
> “The first time my teacher noticed, because before I was really bubbly. I’d be really loud. I was really quiet after a while, and I wouldn’t really talk. I’d just keep my head down. She noticed it, and I broke down telling her everything.” (Grace)
>
> “I’ve just got to try and catch up now. That’s about it. [The Traveller Education Team] have been really good about that.” (Grace)

Perhaps unsurprisingly, a sense of disconnection was a common theme amongst those reports of negative experiences with professionals. Being ignored by teachers led Billy to feel ‘angry’, Elle reported thinking ‘I can’t wait to be pulled out’ of school due to having teachers who were not ‘understanding’ and ‘never had the time of day’, Sydney spoke about feeling belittled when told off, Grace said she felt ‘hurt’ when the council didn’t listen, being reprimanded led Bryn to describe them as ‘arsey’ and Oliver described teachers that ‘didn’t care’. Another point raised was that teachers ‘just don’t get Travellers’ (Elle), and have not ‘had the training’ (Sydney) to understand.

> “Teachers saying, ‘It doesn't matter’ and stuff like that [when other pupils called me ‘pikey’], just ignore which got me even more angry because then they kept on doing it and kept on doing it… They just told me to ignore it, kept me inside, exclusions and isolations… It's not fair that they would just take his side to begin with without even seeing the cameras… They wouldn't listen.” (Billy)
>
> “And they’re not very like, I know you can’t do certain things with your student, like to be too close, but you know to be like ‘Sit down, do this’ and actually be understanding… it would have been a lot better, and it would have helped me, and I just thought like, gosh, I can’t wait to be pulled out, I can’t wait to be pulled out.” (Elle)
>
> “It’s like if somebody didn’t have their ingredients, they [would tell you off]. It’s very belittling… They didn’t know whether that child’s mam and dad could afford [ingredients] that time… you just don’t know the story that that child has gone through. You don’t know the morning that child has had.” (Sydney)

"What hurt me the most is the council never listened… You try telling the council, and what these people did, the cameras, the turn them up so nothing can be seen, or they smash them and turn them off. What I can't understand is, how the council can turn a blind eye to us, if you know what I mean?... The council, they let them do it. We tried telling them a million and one times, but they would never answer the phone. Or whenever we'd call the police about the abuse that 'never happened'. They came, and the crime reference number isn't… When we gave it to the councilman, he didn't do anything… The council did nothing. Now, the council is supposed to evict. I think… They never did though. They never listened to us." (Grace)

"I think the main thing was she really didn't care about us and she actually said it to the class… She actually said loads of times to us that she didn't care about the results, the GCSE results of the students because she gets paid the same." (Oliver)

"Some of the teachers were a bit mean… they'd shout at us for some things that weren't even a big deal. Like, we'd flip a bottle, then they'd shout at us… They'd keep us in break because we were talking in the lesson… Most of the teachers were a bit arsey." (Bryn)

"I didn't ever really get to know my tutor teacher, to be honest." (Sydney)

"Loads of teachers are like, 'Right, get on with this work.' They might not even remember your name, some teachers." (Oliver)

"Teachers, they just don't get Travellers, they just think, they're not going to stay so no… I just don't think the teachers are generally educated that we are very different." (Elle)

"I knew they knew we were Travellers, because it says on the computer...I guess because they've never had to deal with a Travelling person, a child, it's like… So, it isn't their fault, I guess. They haven't had the training… But, yes, it would've helped if the teachers understood." (Sydney)

A Sense of Community

The importance of a sense of community is revealed through participant comparisons of primary versus secondary school. Nearly all participants described positive aspects of primary school. It was smaller and they got to know everyone, including their teachers, better, promoting a greater sense of community. As Billy put it- 'you just know who you're around', but in secondary school 'there are so many more people'. Oliver suggests it's not just that primary schools are smaller, but that

the style of teaching in primary school encourages a more positive learning environment. Participants also provided helpful suggestions as what helps in secondary schools, i.e. fewer pupils and smaller classes.

> "Primary school wasn't a bother… It's a lot easier… Because you just know who you're around. In high school it's a whole new thing. There are so many more people… It's a whole new- it's like starting all over again." (Billy)
>
> "You can't tell people you're a Traveller, especially in big school." (Elle)
>
> "In the classroom with your friends, you'd look over and someone was left out, it wasn't like that in small school." (Elle)
>
> "In primary, it's a lot different. But in high school, you do not want to be singled out." (Sydney)
>
> "He's a very cool maths teacher, he's very primary school. When you go into his lesson it's like at primary school the way everyone gets on and the way he acts." (Oliver)
>
> "There are only like 15 of us in the lessons, so it's really nice and small." (Grace)
>
> "I'd keep it one class per year. I wouldn't have like we've got in our school where there are four different forms… I think it's better to get to know people." (Oliver)

Friendships

Participants regularly spoke about difficulties with friendships that related to being a Traveller. Some reported not feeling able to tell their friends about their cultural heritage due to the suspected stereotypes held by peers and their parents. Elle and Sydney also spoke about the barriers to maintaining friendships when they were not allowed to do certain things, such as joining in with activities outside of school. Oliver and Bryn commented on how moving around on such a regular basis made it difficult to sustain friendships, and having to try and make new friends on a regular basis.

"How can you sit down to your friends and be like, 'Oh, I'm a Traveller'?... Cause everyone would scatter… You couldn't tell any of your friends that you were Travellers, nobody knew I was." (Elle)

"No children asked me. Nobody knew that I was a Traveller." (Sydney)

"No [no one knows I'm a Traveller and I'm not going to tell anyone]… My last school, everyone knew who I was [a Traveller]… I only had one friend." (Grace)

"If your friends went to a festival or a party, they'd come back and talk about it, you feel so alone and distant." (Elle)

"We wouldn't be allowed to go and hang around with [school friends] outside of school… We would never have people to stay over or anything like that, because school and [home] just don't mix." (Sydney)

"No [I haven't stayed in touch with friends from my old school]. There is someone, but he's moved… And then we left, and we kept on moving." (Bryn)

All participants interviewed had attended a number of different schools, and many of them had spent time out of school. This meant that collectively, they had many experiences of starting at new schools and could reflect on which strategies best helped them to feel welcome and settle in. Nearly all participants spoke about this in the context of making friends. Grace described how a helpful teacher had recognised that she was nervous and sat her at a table with people she was able to make friends with. Oliver spoke about a lunchtime club where people could play games, and a peer buddy system for new pupils. Participants also described approaches that had been less helpful. Oliver described how, at his current school, he had struggled to make friends after being there for over a year. Upon starting at the school, he had been able to follow another pupil's timetable for a week, but they had been a reluctant volunteer and the two had not remained friends.

"On the first day I was really, really nervous. I thought, 'I've got no one to talk to. No one knows me here.' I was sitting at the Reception, and my tutor, he brought me in, and everyone got to know each other. That's when I met my friends. He put us

all on the same table. We made friends after an hour. Then we've been hanging out ever since." (Grace)

"We had a little club where people would come around with these DSs and we'd play Mario Kart sometimes." (Oliver)

"We'd always be there right near the beginning to introduce ourselves and help them round… We had a thing at that school where when you joined you'd get someone to show you the works." (Oliver)

"I'm getting on quite well with someone, but I'm not going to say anything because I might jinx it… I've sort of not really got to know anyone. No one has actually come over to me and helped." (Oliver)

Not Wanting to be There

In recounting their experiences of school, many participants reported disliking it and not wanting to be there. This was particularly salient for Billy, who did not want to go back. Bryn also described not wanting to go to school due to experiencing difficulties with the people there. Whilst not consistently explicit about the fact that their relationships with others might be the cause of their unhappiness in school, both boys referred to negative experiences with teachers and peers throughout their transcripts. Their accounts of experiences of racism and prejudice almost certainly contributed to their dislike of school (see p.19-20).

"I just hate it. I don't want to go back." (Billy)

"The only place where I could go is jumping over the gates, which I've done… I just walked out through the school, got to the gate. One of the office teachers was following me… Then I jumped out over the school gates and I ran." (Billy)

"I think that sometimes I really don't want to go to school, like in my time I've skived quite a lot… Sometimes I just get really annoyed at all the people there, it makes me really stressed, I hate them… Sometimes I really don't want to go into school and I've pretended to be ill, so that I don't have to go into school, just because, if I go into school, then I'll punch someone in the face." (Bryn)

4.3 ii) Differences

'Us' and 'Them'

When discussing their encounters with others, participants regularly referred to 'the Travellers' and 'the non-Travellers' (Elle, Sydney and Oliver). Participants' perceived differences between Travellers and non-Travellers were suggested and comparisons were made. Elle, Grace and Oliver all describe a sense of hostility generated through this divide.

> "It's very hard because the non-Travellers, they're very… especially in big school, they're very awkward, very quiet… Non-Travellers was a bit scared of them to be honest because we're very loud people!" (Elle)
>
> "The Travelling children were a lot naughtier than the non-Travelling children." (Sydney)
>
> "I'd always want to give [the non-Traveller girls] a compliment but they'd never ever say anything to me, so I was like 'Okay, I've got to be horrible to these girls'." (Elle)
>
> "They all thought I was different, 'cause I wasn't saying certain things and I wasn't dressing… My skirt wasn't half way up, and my bag was different, or how I spoke." (Elle)
>
> "We have a slight accent and certain things that we're not allowed to be in. Like certain lessons." (Sydney)
>
> "Say if you were one of my college friends, and I was walking around town with you, 'She's hanging out with country girls'." (Grace)
>
> "We went to the school and they had pretty much two gangs, the Traveller people, the non-Traveller people and they were at each other's throats the whole time." (Oliver)

A Lack of Understanding

Participants also spoke about feeling misunderstood, where peers and teachers either did not know that they were Travellers or did not fully understand what it might

mean to be a Traveller. In the context of having to excuse themselves from certain lessons due to their family values and beliefs, Elle and Sydney both spoke about others questioning them when leaving. Their accounts suggest that this made them feel embarrassed and uncomfortable, and that they perceived other to be insensitive-staring and asking questions.

> "They don't actually understand, like, you don't do that sort of thing, where we're from, here… They kinda look at you like 'What you on about?'." (Elle)
>
> "Nobody has the time of day to understand. They don't want to know because they're like, 'I'm not going to see those people again'." (Elle)
>
> "Children would be like, 'What are you doing?'." (Syd)

Prejudice

Participants also spoke about exposure to prejudice. Billy reports on his experiences of being harassed and excluded as a result of peoples' stereotyping of Gypsies and Travellers. Elle, Grace and Bryn also reported encountering negative stereotypes about Gypsies and Travellers. Grace also reflects on the impact this has on many Travellers, suggesting that people feel they 'may as well' behave the way others expect them to.

> "A lot of arguments with a lot of other students in the school… The arguments were mostly every day…People calling me pikey, and other names about Travellers that are really not nice… There was a group of boys came up to me, this was probably in October or something. They were asking for a fight because I'm a pikey, to see what I've got." (Billy)
>
> "They weren't allowed to speak to me because of their family saying, 'He's a pikey. He'll do bad stuff to you. He'll make you have a bad life. You shouldn't talk to him. You're not allowed to talk to him,' stuff like that. There was one time when I had a really close friend in the school but then the exact same thing, he wasn't allowed to talk to me. Then he started arguing with me. I got really frustrated." (Billy)

"I remember being in Year 7 and I walked past these girls and this one was like 'Oh, what is a Gypsy?' and one was like 'Oh, they just steal stuff'." (Elle)

"[The man from the council] actually asked us, 'Could we get some of our relatives to go down and attack them?' That's basically encouraging violence, isn't it?" (Grace)

"I've had quite a lot of prejudice in my school… He said to me, after I told him I live in a boat, he said 'you live in a trash can'… He kept on saying, 'Oh, I hate Gypsies,' until I told him we're kind of a Gypsy, and he was like, 'Oh.' And then he said about how his mum got tripped over by some Gypsies and they stole her wallet and I was like, 'How do you know it was Gypsies?' 'Oh, because of the clothes they wear'." (Bryn)

"I reckon quite a few of [the teachers] were prejudiced. A lot of them were really nice to all the people that lived normally, in houses." (Bryn)

"I think for some people, they think, 'We've already got that reputation anyway, so may as well do it'." (Grace)

4.3 iii) Identity

Conflicting Desires

Strong and consistent narratives from young people illustrated the experience of conflicting desires. Throughout their transcripts, both Sydney and Grace demonstrated that they felt torn between the cultures of their community and modern, fast moving society. Sydney's comments reflect how aspirations that had been encouraged by school were not consistently supported by her family and community. Grace's comments demonstrate confusion around her identity and frustration with the Traveller community.

"I wouldn't want to be disobedient to my mam and dad. But I would love a job." (Sydney)

"Certain Travelling people, they just don't think school is very important. School is important." (Sydney)

"If I could leave the [Traveller] community I would… I think Travellers need to realise that the world is changing... *and later:* I don't regret it. It is who I am." (Grace)

Sydney also described how being an adolescent striving to navigate two conflicting cultures led to her experiencing difficulties in school.

> "I was just so rebellious. I was living a double life and the teachers, they didn't understand that… I'd mess about. I got in the wrong crowd." (Sydney)

Whilst many of the young people interviewed spoke favourably about aspects of Traveller life (see section 4.1), they also described difficulties relating to being a Traveller. Again, this illustrates the conflicting desires associated with navigating two conflicting cultures. Section 4.4ii highlights how both Oliver and Bryn found it difficult to access the UK education system whilst travelling. Oliver then goes on to indicate that he would like a successful career and apply for competitive positions, but felt as though he would not be qualified enough to do so. Oliver's comments suggest that he felt as though he was trying hard but still struggling, possibly as a result of his disrupted schooling. Bryn also made comments to suggest he had low self-esteem, and was developing an awareness of the link between his inconsistent experiences of education and his developing abilities.

> "I'd like to work for maybe Nintendo, who made those, designing new things. I think it would be a bit of a longshot because it's a huge company... I used to want to have a job in Lego and build Lego for a living... I think it's 1 in 20 people who apply for a job there actually get it. It's going to be quite a difficult job to get." (Oliver)
>
> "Loads of people try really hard on GCSEs and get really, really bad results... you go to a job, you're going to look at their GCSEs and you don't know which one worked harder. There could be someone with an F in English and someone with an A in English. The one with an F could have worked their arse off, pardon my French." (Oliver)
>
> "I'm not exactly good at those things... I'm not that good at many things...
>
> All my friends are really good at it, but I'm not that good." (Bryn)

Grace also spoke about how, despite wanting to go to school (section 4.1) difficulties related to living on a Traveller site impacted upon her attendance.

> "I haven't been in school since February. But, I was going through a lot of issues on the old site. One of my issues, I was getting bullied and harassed... You know that site, yes? It used to have that many people driving in, with slashers, with balaclavas coming in and smashing up the bottom side." (Grace)

'Two Different Lives'

The difference between participants' experiences of home and school were so significant many reported feeling as though they were living 'two different lives' (Elle). Elle, Sydney and Grace spoke about wanting to fit in with their peers, and how this meant being a different person to who they were when they were at home, with their families. Elle spoke about how 'coming home was a misery' and Sydney reported being 'so rebellious' as a result of trying to cope with these conflicting identities. Elle also spoke about feeling as though she 'lost' herself in school, and Grace said that she felt 'freer' away from the Travelling community.

> "When I go home, it's a whole other life… It's just two different lives… Two different lives. I was living two different lives, 100% I was… [I was thinking] 'What do I do? Do I be…?'" (Elle)
>
> "When I was at school, I lived a completely different life. I was like two people. I'd do my work, I'd be a 14 year old girl. Then I'd come home and I'd be like a woman… School for me was, 'Okay, I've been to school and I'll leave school there now. School is done, and now it's my other life, sort of thing. I'm home at 3 o'clock.'… You could never mix school and family." (Sydney)
>
> "I was a rebellious teen at school. At home, I was like I didn't say a peep. I just did everything. Because I knew my boundaries. I knew my dad. I knew my mam. It's

very ‘what’s said goes’. Whereas with teachers- I’m so ashamed of it now. But I just saw them as… Oh, that’s so horrible. Non-Travellers, I just didn’t see them as important… No, I never ever valued them.” (Sydney)

“I wanted to be a lot like [the non-Traveller students] in school, and coming home was a misery… Cause in my head I wanted to be like the people at school, not them. It was a division between me and me mam and me dad. I used to come home and keep meself to meself… I lost myself in school, a hundred percent I did, honestly. I came back, and I feel so much better now… I feel like you do lose yourself in that way, and you’ve got to come back to a Travelling home and it’s so different. You don’t come home and get to like, just sit down and do your homework.” (Elle)

“You just want to be like other girls. So, if that means not going out of a lesson because they’re not going out of a lesson, you’ll do it. Which is sad, but it’s the truth, isn’t it?” (Sydney)

“Yes, you don’t want to be the odd one out… You just want to fit in. You just want to be like the other girls… When I was in school, I didn’t want to be a Traveller. I just want to be like the rest. I just want to be like the rest… You do not want to be singled out. You just want to be like the rest.” (Sydney)

“It’s like I’m two different people. As soon as I get to the door, I have a completely different voice. It’s just different. I prefer the person that I am in the day than what I am now, because you are freer. In a Travelling community you are trapped.” (Grace)

4.3 iv) Educational Approaches

Flexibility

Participants also reported problems with the curriculum. Some of these were linked to a sense of disappointment that what was being taught was not helping them to develop the skills necessary to do what they wanted to in the future. For example, Oliver chose to do computing because he ‘thought it would be the physical side… taking apart computers… soldering and stuff’, but found that ‘they just do programming pretty much’. Sydney described following the curriculum as ‘downgrading’ (e.g. being told that there was only one way to peel an onion). Other difficulties related to the content being taught. Elle described feeling uncomfortable

when, in child development, the teacher showed her a video of a woman giving birth. Elle reported feeling she was ‘going to get in trouble for it’ because her parents ‘don’t allow it’. Sydney reflected on how the school’s approach led to her parents feeling as though their parental authority was being challenged, antagonising the situation. Overall, the prevalent theme throughout these accounts is the lack of flexibility in the curriculum. In some cases, small adjustments would have made a difference to these young peoples’ enjoyment of their subjects.

> “When I chose computing I thought it would be the physical side of computing. I thought you’d get a bit of taking apart computers and that sort of thing, soldering and stuff because I’m really interested in that… they just do programming pretty much.” (Oliver)
>
> “With school, it’s very ‘following the curriculum’ and peeling an onion a certain way… It was very downgrading at school. Because when you used to be in cooking lessons, they’d come over, ‘No, absolutely wrong. Do it all again’.” (Sydney)
>
> “We watched a video, and like, personally, I don’t want to see that… The woman was having a child but it was really disgusting. I didn’t want to see that, and I kept turning my head and she was like ‘face the board’ and I was like ‘I don’t really want to see that Miss’… She was like ‘Can you watch please?’ because we had to do a little report of what we’d seen… There was no warning really… I was just thinking in my head, because, you know like, when you do something, and you think like, this is wrong, because you know you’re going to get in trouble for it… How do you go to your mam and say like, ‘Mam, I saw this in school…’? It’s very awkward isn’t it?... It literally put me off so much. I didn’t want to know that. What I saw, I was about to be sick, honestly. Honestly, I was about to spew. The things they show, it’s like they’re trying to put you off of it… We just need them to understand that their mams and dads don’t allow it.” (Elle)
>
> “I think they just went about it the complete wrong way in school. The complete wrong way. Just, ‘We can take her out when we want.’ Of course, that just rings alarm bells, doesn’t it? It’s like, ‘No, you don’t have the authority over my child. She’s mine.” (Sydney)

Inclusivity

Despite some of the difficulties encountered with school, participants were able to identify a number of approaches and interventions that they felt had helped.

Elle described a celebration day at one of her primary schools where they had been given an opportunity to showcase Gypsy and Traveller culture to other pupils and parents at the school. She spoke of it fondly, saying ‘that was always good’. Sydney spoke about how schools had found ways to accommodate their absence from lessons deemed inappropriate by their parents, with one understanding head teacher who had regular contact with their parents and cards printed allowing them to leave and go to the library, no questions asked. On the other hand, both Elle and Sydney reported feeling ‘awkward’ at having to explain themselves, finding it ‘embarrassing’ to have to interrupt the lesson and ask to leave if they were about to be taught content their parents did not approve of in schools where these needs were not accommodated. The theme here is that of inclusivity, achieved through flexibility, open-mindedness and out-of-the-box thinking. Professionals perhaps perceive constraints preventing them from helping, or possibly do not see the significance that small changes would make, but where they have made adjustments these have paid off.

> “[There was a celebration of different cultures at my last school]. We used to put obviously the wagons and the trailers and how we are, how we live. That was always good.” (Elle)
>
> “With Mam saying that we’re not allowed to be in certain lessons, he would ring her up and tell her, ‘I’m going to take them out,’ and we’d just go in the library.” (Sydney)
>
> “[We had] these cards, and they said I had permission to go. Literally, we didn’t even have to ask. We just had to show the card and they wouldn’t even ask… Just go straight to the library.” (Sydney)

Independence and Respect

Participants consistently referred to increased independence and being respected in a positive light. Both Oliver (see section 4.1vi) and Grace reported that

being able to go out at lunch and being given a phone/allowed to use it helped. Elle and Sydney reported being embarrassed when told off, and Bryn and Billy made negative comments about teachers who reprimanded them on a regular basis.

> "You get a lot of freedom. They treat you as an adult, not like a child. What I really like about my college is, you know how girls sometimes get treated unfairly, they'll let girls wear what they want, like what they feel comfortable in. That's what I really like. I don't have to get up and worry about what I have to wear. 'Oh, I can't wear that. It shows. I can't wear that.' But, like they are very understanding, and they are very lenient on things. They'll let you go off the property to go and get food or whatever. You are allowed to work with who you want." (Grace)
>
> "I think it's more casual like that [calling teachers by their first names]. You feel more at ease with it." (Grace)
>
> "I went to a college, which was, in my opinion, the best school I've ever been to and it wasn't even a school... You didn't have full days. There was a course there for home-educated children. You'd go there and you'd spend half the day doing a couple of subjects you needed for GCSEs, then you'd go home and you'd do home ed with your parents… I found it easier there than anywhere else as well. The teachers were really, really nice… They wouldn't never tell you off, but they wouldn't need to tell you off. They'd respect you." (Oliver)

4.3 v) Difficulties

Homework

Many participants spoke about homework difficulties. Elle reported wanting to do homework, but added that, at home, she did not have a computer and didn't 'have time'. Sydney reiterated this sentiment, repeatedly saying 'I do not have time to do it'. Sydney added that teachers appeared not to understand why she experienced difficulty completing her homework, reflecting a lack of understanding that links to the sense of disconnection described earlier (see section 4.2i). Oliver also spoke about overreliance on computers, and how often homework is set with an expectation that pupils have access to the internet at home. His description of what will happen to a

pupil that does not complete their homework highlights the anxiety he felt about this. He added that being able to use the library at break and lunch time was helpful, as this was his best opportunity to do homework, but his school had recently closed the library due to not having enough staff.

> "In Year 8, I had to go to the library all the time, and that was fun, 'cause I got actually to do my homework! So I kept up on my homework then 'cause I could use the printer and stuff." (Elle)
>
> "I'd have notes for not doing my homework because I don't have a computer here and I don't have time." (Elle)
>
> "Just didn't do my homework. It was like they didn't understand with homework, I don't have time. I do not have time to do it." (Sydney)
>
> "You get homework from different lessons. You're being thrown around to all these different teachers and you're getting homework but you don't even know what you're doing. Then you don't have time and then it's just like, 'Why haven't you done your homework?' It's like, 'I haven't had time'." (Sydney)
>
> "Of course, to a teacher it's like, 'You do have time. You're 14. What time don't you have?'" (Sydney)
>
> "I'd be less reliant on the computers in schools. In schools they rely almost 100% on computers. Every other lesson, maybe every five lessons or four lessons you have a computer that you need to do and they set the homework on a computer. Here it's supposed to be essential to have internet at home, but it's not provided for by the government, so why should it be a thing for school? … I don't think you should rely on it because what if someone's in a place with really bad signal, if they can't afford Wi-Fi, they can't afford a good enough computer." (Oliver)

The Applicability of the Curriculum

Participants also spoke about how what they were learning was not necessarily applicable to what they wanted to do in the future. Billy wanted to do construction, Sydney enjoyed cooking and learning about child development, Bryn liked doing woodwork and Oliver wanted to build computers. Participants' preferences were generally orientated towards the future they perceived for themselves. Grace, the only participant who reported currently enjoying school, was doing a business course that

did support her aspiration to have a career and earn her own money after leaving school. The fact that both Billy and Elle did not report many curriculum preferences demonstrates how their experience of education was not one that helped prepare them for their desired futures. Billy wanted to do construction working, and Elle spoke about getting married, cooking, cleaning and looking after children.

> "I enjoyed child development. Because I was passionate about it. I loved learning about it… It was the only actual lesson that I liked." (Sydney)
>
> "Cooking was fun. I did cooking at school." (Sydney)
>
> "We learn about things like whittling, like carving. I have a little wooden boat somewhere near here, that I made… I learnt how to chop wood when I was about two, with my dad." (Bryn)
>
> "I love doing Business." (Grace)

Low Self-efficacy

Participants also demonstrated a lack of confidence in their abilities. When asked, participants struggled to independently think of things they were good at without prompts and encouragement. They also regularly referred to not being good at things, many of which were related to the curriculum.

> "I don't think I could [drive]. I don't think I'd be safe." (Sydney)
>
> "[The maths worksheets] are checked if they're right, and I don't usually get that many, because I'm not that good… I'm not the best at reading, I think, I'm a tiny bit dyslexic, which is a bit annoying... I'm not that good at many things." (Bryn)
>
> "I'm really bad at languages… I'm not very good at tests, so I'd get really bad results." (Oliver)

Disorderliness

Another theme was that of disorderliness, with participants reporting negative experiences of chaotic schools. Elle spoke about swearing and nothing getting 'resolved', Sydney described having 'a different head teacher nearly every week', Bryn reported pupils 'in the playground smoking' and Oliver added that there were 'people who bunk off lessons, hide in the toilet rooms and do drugs' and 'a teacher looking completely the other direction'.

> "I don't like swearing, I don't, I don't really like it meself, and to just be around it constantly…" (Elle)
>
> "Nothing got resolved in there." (Elle)
>
> "We had a different head teacher nearly every week." (Sydney)
>
> "I didn't ever really get to know my tutor teacher, to be honest. Because when I started, she wasn't having a baby and then a couple of months after she had her baby. She was having a baby and then she went on maternity leave. We had a supply then as well." (Sydney)
>
> "In the school that my sister is at, a lot of kids are in the playground smoking and they're just really young. And the teachers don't notice." (Bryn)
>
> "People who bunk off of lessons, hide in the toilet rooms and do drugs…
>
> There'd be a huddle of children with a giant smoke cloud coming out in the playground and then a teacher looking completely the other direction." (Oliver)

The Important Aspects of Education

Whilst participants referred to not wanting to go to school and finding that the curriculum was not always satisfactory, many also spoke about the importance of certain aspects of education. Both Elle and Sydney referred to the need to read and write, and Bryn provided a balanced viewpoint about needing 'maths, reading, writing'.

> "I still do read and write because I've got my Bible. I study and I always write and stuff like that, I never lost that. I'm so happy I can read and write… It's so handy to learn how to read and write, it really is. It comes in so handy learning about money… My dad can't read and write and I see it affect him so much." (Elle)
>
> "School is important. It is really important to learn to read and write. In this day and age, you need it. You can't not." (Sydney)
>
> "I guess I do learn things… Yes [I do want to go back to school]… Some things that I really hate are needed in life, like maths, reading, writing." (Bryn)

4.4 Themes: Being a Traveller

Although I sought to avoid making generalisations about Travellers, some common themes could be identified amongst participant descriptions of what it meant to 'be a Traveller'. These are presented with a degree of caution; it is important to be clear that these themes relate specifically to the Traveller participants interviewed for this research project, and that not all Travellers would necessarily recognise the same aspects of Traveller life. These themes are illustrated in a second thematic map below.

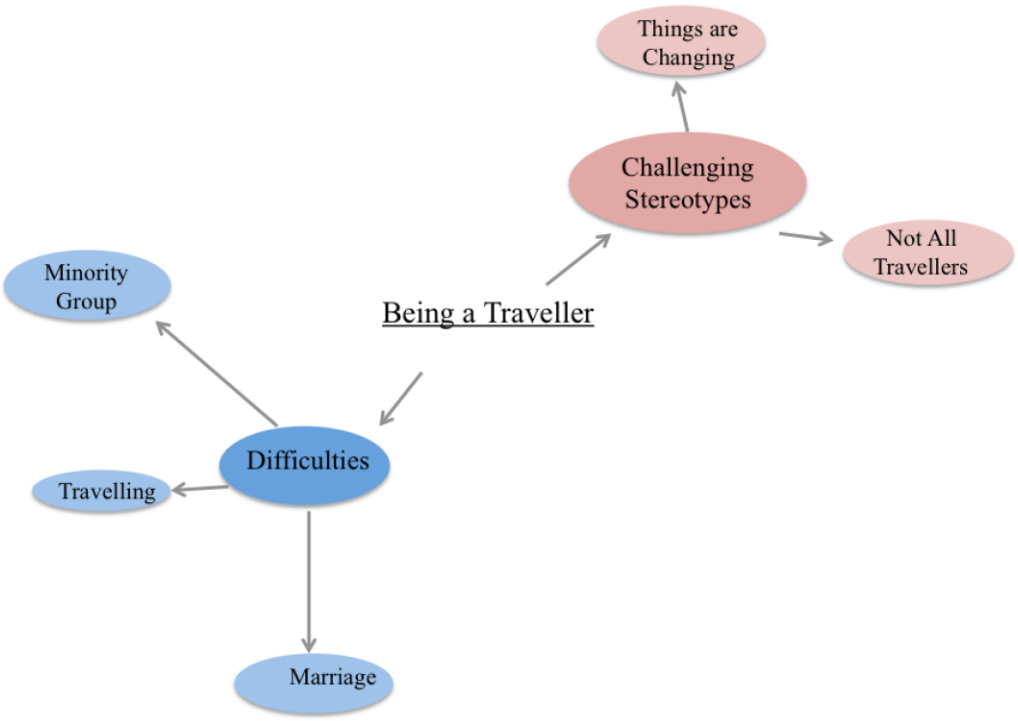

Figure 8: Thematic Map to Illustrate Participant Experiences of Being a Traveller

4.4 i) Challenging Stereotypes

Things are Changing

Both Elle and Sydney were keen to explain that they understood the Traveller community to be changing, suggesting that the stereotypes that some people have are outdated.

> "If you want children, have the children, but it's so different now, not everyone stays home, cooks and cleans for their husband, that's it. It's a lot different now. If you don't want to get married at the age of 20 you don't have to… Young girls getting married at 16 and 17… That's how it was, I'm not going to lie." (Elle)

> "For Travelling girls, it's a lot more common now to drive. But before, it wasn't. Travelling girls didn't drive… A lot of things have changed. Like the driving thing. It's changed. Lots of young girls are waiting until they're like 20 to get married and stuff, and that's a big thing. Things are changing. Like jobs. Travelling girls are allowed jobs and to drive now." (Sydney)

Not All Travellers

Whether explicitly or implicitly, all participants referred to prejudices and stereotypes of Gypsies and Travellers. Elle and Grace both made comments in order to challenge these views.

> "Like, so there's a lot of [Traveller] people in prison, but we're not all robbing stuff." (Elle)
>
> "I'm not saying all Travellers are like that… I've never stolen in my life." (Grace)

4.4 ii) Hardships

Minority Group

Sydney described how being part of the majority group in primary school made her feel 'part of it', and Elle also spoke favourably about being in the majority. As Sydney reports, being in the minority could be a scary experience.

> "My primary school- there were so many Travellers in there. It was more Travellers than non-Travellers sort of thing. The teachers, they just dealt with us like normal children. We were a part of it." (Sydney)
>
> "It was a very, very good school, honestly, it was- they were so understanding of Travellers, they've got swarms of Travellers, there's more Travellers than non-Travellers!... Everyone was so understanding there." (Elle)
>
> "If there's a pack of you, it's like you're more comfortable to say. But I guess if there's just one, it just makes it a little bit scarier to say something." (Sydney)

Travelling

Whilst both Billy and Oliver spoke favourably about their Traveller lifestyle (see sections 4.1v and 4.1vi), they also spoke about how travelling created difficulties for them.

> "I've been to a few schools (three, or maybe five?)… Whenever I'd settle down, we needed to move… First, it would be really bad and I'd hate it and I was like, 'I want to leave,' and then finally I'd get good at it and like it, and then we'd leave… I find quite a lot of [History] really interesting but, when I was getting into history in my school, then we left, so…" (Billy)
>
> "If I could have stayed in one school, if it was a good school then I'd love to stay there for the whole time. It's really disruptive moving again and again to different schools. You make friends, which takes a long time for me because I'm not very good at making friends… I learnt about mythology, twice. In my second or third school, I learnt about mythology, then I left." (Oliver)

Marriage

Whilst not reported by all participants, and certainly not a view shared by all Travellers, all female participants spoke about there being an expectation that they would get married at a young age. Sydney spoke about how this presented a barrier preventing her from aspiring to a career in childcare (see section 4.1iii). Elle and Grace both spoke about girls they knew getting married at sixteen.

> "There are still young girls getting married at 16 and 17." (Elle)
>
> "All my friends at 16 and a half, I'm the only one that isn't married. But there is nothing there for me… You'd stay in a trailer for the first two or three years of your life… That's the only reason they marry Traveller women, you know… They want a maid, and they want a mother of their children. They don't believe in falling in love… Some of my friends got married after two weeks. It's ridiculous. They don't even know each other." (Grace)

4.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the findings as themes identified through the process of thematic analysis. Themes relating specifically to experiences of education were initially identified as being relevant to the purpose of the research, and these are organised according to four overarching themes; relationships, differences, educational approaches and difficulties in school. There were also a number of common themes identified relating to what it meant to participants to be a Traveller. These are presented according to two overarching themes; stereotypes and difficulties.

Findings specific to individual participants have also been presented, in order to give the reader some indication as to their varying characters and identities. This helps to develop an understanding of their different responses to similar topics, and will support the further interpretation to come in the discussion.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Chapter Overview

Following the participant introductions and presentation of themes, this chapter discusses the findings in greater depth. Themes relating to experiences of education and being a Traveller are interpreted and summarised, and the research questions are addressed.

5.2 Experiences of Education

5.2 i) Relationships

One of the most salient and recurrent themes was that of relationships, and how they influence participants' experiences of education. Participants spoke about this often when asked to describe their educational setting, choosing to focus on their interactions with teachers, peers and the school's community. The subtheme of 'connection' refers to participants' accounts of positive experiences which teachers, all of which sought to explain that the best teachers spent the time getting to know their pupils. This involved taking an interest in pupils' lives beyond information relating to their academic skills and abilities. Participants spoke favourably about those occasions where teachers had known that they were Travellers, and about when teachers had shown an interest in their way of life. This suggests that, in order to feel a true sense of connection, participants wanted their teachers to know about their Traveller heritage, and to show a level of understanding, respect for and interest in this.

Friendships were also often referred to. One of the most important aspects of friendships appeared to be that of an honest or open friendship where participants felt they could tell others who they really were. More specifically, participants often mentioned not being able to tell others that they were from a Traveller family, perhaps due to the stereotypes they suspected others held. They also spoke about the negative impact of being misunderstood as Travellers. Again, this demonstrates the important role that cultural acceptance and understanding plays in relationships. The fact that participants remembered and chose to speak about helpful and unhelpful interventions that supported them in making friends again highlights the important role that friendships play in experiences of educational settings.

The need for educational settings to promote a sense of community was made most salient in their comparisons of primary and secondary school, where primary school was favoured due to its' relatively smaller size and the sense that everyone knew each other. Participants also spoke about how it was easier to tell others about their cultural heritage in a smaller setting. Whilst some explained that this was due to having an increased number of Travellers in the setting (i.e. it was being in the majority that made this easier), it was also suggested that there were other barriers to telling people that they were Travellers in a bigger school. It could be that the 'friendly' atmosphere of primary schools has relevance here. However, it could also be that, in a larger institution, there is a higher likelihood that some people hold prejudices. The potential views and stereotypes held by others are therefore a source of fear and anxiety, making it more difficult for individuals to outwardly identify themselves as belonging to a minority ethnic group.

In cases where positive relationships had not been formed, participants described not wanting to attend the educational setting. For the participants

interviewed, leaving school and opting for elective home education was a very real possibility. This serves to highlight the importance of schools helping to foster a sense of community, for teachers to connect with their pupils and for support to be put in place to help Traveller children to make and maintain friendships. This relates to the cultural-ecological theory of school performance (Ogbu & Simons, 1998), which suggests that attendance at school for minority groups is often involuntary. Some Traveller children interviewed in this study reported not wanting to attend school and were aware of belonging to a minority group. This highlights a need for schools to focus on increasing voluntary involvement in school. Many of the strategies to support increased voluntary school involvement put forward by Ogbu & Simons reflect findings of the current study (building trusting relationships, accommodating cultures, addressing opposition, providing role models, demonstrating high expectations and involving the community).

It is acknowledged that the importance of relationships is not specific to Traveller children and young people, but it was interesting to see how often participants raised its importance. This would suggest that relationships were particularly important. It may be that certain elements of the Traveller lifestyle that were common to all participants (moving around a lot, feeling different and having an awareness of stereotypes and prejudice directed at their culture) increased their need for connection. The importance of relationships, inclusion and community is highlighted in the study carried out Bhopal & Myers (2009), and it is also suggested here that these factors play a particularly salient role in the educational experiences of Gypsy and Traveller children specifically.

5.2 ii) Differences

Participants regularly spoke about feeling different to others in the educational settings they had attended or were currently attending. This was apparent through their description of 'us' and 'them', and their comparisons of Travellers and 'non-Travellers'. Participants raised this topic independently, suggesting that they felt the distinctions important. Whilst these differences alone did not always lead to problems, there were occasions where hostility resulted from the perceived divide between groups.

Further difficulties resulted when participants were exposed to a lack of understanding from others. This subtheme suggests that the differences themselves are not necessarily the cause of problems such as hostility or feelings of discomfort, and that a lack of cultural understanding and sensitivity is responsible. This reflects the findings of Deuchar & Bhopal (2013), who concluded that a lack of understanding was a primary contributing factor towards Gypsy and Traveller children's negative experiences of education. This theme also links to the findings related to relationships, where participants indicated that they wanted others to accept their Traveller heritage. Benner & Graham (2013) found that a heightened sense of racial/ethnic awareness often results from societal discrimination. This has relevance here; participants experience of discrimination through others' poor cultural understanding related to their regular references to 'us' and 'them'.

Participants also spoke about their experiences of prejudice. These accounts shine a harsh light on the reality of the racist bullying that victimises many Gypsy and Traveller children, and suggests that the findings of Deuchar & Bhopal (2013) are still highly relevant. References are also made to professionals holding prejudices,

reflecting the conclusions made in Thomson's (2013) research. The findings of Benner & Graham (2013) would suggest that this is impacting upon participants' mental health and academic performance.

5.2 iii) Identity

Many participants reported feeling as though they needed to hide their differences in order to avoid hostility and feelings of discomfort arising from others' lack of understanding. Some participants explicitly raised the sense of living 'two different lives' when attending school. A new layer of meaning is attributed to this phenomenon when viewed through the lens of critical race theory (Gilborn, 2008): institutional racism is present through a lack of understanding. This also has links to theories of conformity and normative social influence (Asch, 1951); the need to conform to the social norms of the majority group led participants to feel as though they had to change themselves and be different people in school. The majority has the power to award and punish through approval and disapproval, thus we have compliance (Moscovici, 1976).

This sense of living two lives led to a significant level of discomfort for participants. Elle articulated this discomfort through her description of her Child Development lessons, where she felt guilty about what she was learning about because of what her parents would think. No one she was with understood why she felt that sense of guilt, or even knew she felt it. Unsurprisingly, this discomfort led to conflicting desires, with some participants demonstrating a level of confusion about what they wanted (i.e. to be like the other people at school, or to be a Traveller). This suggests that participants' experiences at school were leading to the development of

cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957). One participant described how this had led her to become ‘rebellious’- trying to fit in with her peers against the wishes of her teachers and parents.

One of the factors contributing to the experience of cognitive dissonance was that families did not always fully accept their children as school students, particularly when attending secondary school. Sydney made comments about just wanting ‘to fit in’ and Grace said that she preferred ‘the person that I am [in school]’. This highlights why some Traveller parents and families are fearful of schools, because attendance may lead their children might reject their Traveller heritage (Levinson, 2015). This therefore illustrates the importance of schools, peers and staff, embracing and supporting cultures. It also suggests a need for a high level of communication between home and school, a point reflected in participants’ preference for primary schools. Perhaps further opportunities for parents and families to feel ‘a part of it’ (Sydney) would have helped to build a greater sense of community and reduce fears that parental autonomy was being reduced, or that children would be ‘lost’ (Elle) to the wider society through cultural assimilation.

5.2 iv) Educational Approaches

Elle and Sydney both spoke about the difficulties they experienced when choosing to take Child Development but finding that there was content being taught that their parents would not have approved of. They had, in other schools, been allowed to excuse themselves from certain lessons involving sex education. This reflects the importance of flexibility in schools, as surmised by Gould (2017; see section 2.4i). Schools had varied in their level of accommodation, with some going as

far as to phone home to come up with a joint plan with parents, others who expected that pupils excuse themselves when necessary (by showing cards), and others not making adaptations at all. For Elle and Sydney, this issue was a contributing factor towards their being 'pulled out' of school. Schools choosing not to communicate with parents, give warnings as to the content being taught and provide alternative lesson arrangements meant that parents felt their autonomy was being challenged.

The choice not to be flexible and make some small accommodations for these young people was not an inclusive one. This has political implications; the wider society's macroculture (Bronfenbrenner, 1989) appears to be so committed to social inclusion (in this case promoting understanding and acceptance of sex education in school and ensuring that 'everyone' took part in the lesson) that the consequence is, ironically, social exclusion and isolation for those pupils who's parents protest and take them out of school. The consequence of inflexibility in the pursuit of social inclusion was, in this case, to erode educational participation.

There were accounts of inclusive practices as well, including a celebration day of Traveller culture. Considering the importance participants placed on cultural acceptance and understanding, approaches such as this could be particularly helpful in supporting Traveller children to feel welcomed in school settings.

Participants also recounted positive experiences where educational professionals had treated them with respect and allowed them their independence. This supports the findings of Myers et al. (2010) regarding 'early onset adulthood' and consequent feelings of frustration generated as a result of not being given enough independence in the school setting. The need for independence highlighted by the current study could therefore suggest that participants were being treated similarly to

adults in the home, and therefore expected the same response from others in school. This also has links to the theme of connection, where participants wanted a friendly relationship with their teachers. Teachers who were able to speak to pupils at their level were better able to form these relationships, thus promoting a sense of connection with these pupils and helping them to enjoy school.

5.2 v) Difficulties

Whilst not included as part of the interview schedule, many participants chose to speak about homework, including participants who had since left school. This illustrates the important role that they thought homework played in school, and that the anxiety they had experienced as a result of not being able to do their homework had been significant enough to recall even after leaving school. The barriers that prevented them from doing their homework (not having a computer or the time to do it at home, the school library being closed) could have been mitigated for by school by simply providing and promoting a homework club. The consequences of not doing homework (being reprimanded in front of the class, being given detention) served to heighten participants' anxiety but did not solve the problems preventing them to do their homework. This lack of understanding from schools and staff affected Sydney's self-image; she described herself as 'rebellious', in part not for doing her homework. Evidence suggests that personal constructs influence behaviours that, in turn, serve to further affirm the original constructs (Kelly, 1955). In other words, Sydney was told off for not doing her homework repeatedly, she began to perceive herself as someone who rebels, she began to behave in a rebellious way in school, she was told off more often and eventually she was even more certain that she was a 'rebellious' person.

Many participants spoke about not wanting to go to school, and Sydney provided some helpful insights into why this might be- for her, school did was not helping to prepare her for the adult life she saw for herself. It was difficult for participants to see the point of school, when the curriculum did not apply to them and their aspirations for the future. The fact that Billy struggled to consider how school might prepare him to be a construction worker illustrates how far the school experience is from what he, as a Traveller, wanted to learn. He couldn't even see learning construction work in school as a possibility.

The school curriculum varies between schools and has changed over time, but most mainstream secondary schools currently have a limited focus on developing literacy and numeracy skills and 'core subjects'. Whilst participants reported that they saw the importance of learning to read, write, and use money, many did not have academic aspirations beyond functional literacy and numeracy skills. This did not mean, however, that they did not want to develop life skills and more specific skills that would help to prepare them for the adult life they wanted to lead. Billy, Elle, Sydney, Bryn and Oliver suggested that they were disappointed by the school curriculum.

Another subtheme identified was that of low self-efficacy (Akhtar, 2008), with many participants reporting that they were not good at things. For Bryn, experiences of failure had had an impact of his self-concept, with him saying that he was 'not good at many things' (see section 4.2iv). This may link to participants' difficulties with the curriculum- if subjects being taught do not link to their previous learning through life experience, they will struggle. If parents do not value the subjects being taught, they will not provide additional supports at home. If participants do not value the subjects themselves, they will lack motivation. All of these factors serve to

exacerbate academic difficulties in school, and have the affect of lowering children's self-efficacy. In turn, having a low self-efficacy can lead children to struggle further with motivation and perseverance, having a further impact on attainment. This cycle can lead to significant difficulties in school (Pajares and Schunk, 2001), and may partly explain some of the data regarding Gypsy and Traveller children's low attainment in school (Cromarty, 2017).

Disorderliness was another theme identified through participant accounts of school. Factors contributing to this sense of disorder (e.g. staff changes) will have limited schools' capacity to fully support pupils, and significantly impacted upon participants' sense of security in the school setting.

Participants also spoke about certain aspects of school being particularly important. This predominantly included lessons focused on developing those skills that participants perceived necessary for adult life (reading, writing and dealing with money). This links with comments made about the curriculum and participants' personal aspirations, where the theme of curriculum applicability was identified. Participants were clear that they thought school was important, but only where they saw the relevance of what was being taught. The implication here is that participants may have benefitted from teachers further motivating and engaging pupils by clearly outlining the purposes of their subjects and the potential applicability to later life.

5.3 Being a Traveller

5.3 i) Stereotypes

Participants also shared insights into the fact that they perceived things to be changing for the Traveller community. Both Elle and Sydney reported that Travelling girls no longer 'have to' get married, and that many of them are driving now, and may even have 'a little job' (Elle). They understood that, until recently, these things would not have been possible in their community. They were also aware that many people stereotype the Traveller community, and were keen to challenge this. As well as pointing out that things had changed, Elle and Grace also highlighted diversity within the community (i.e. 'not all Travellers').

5.3 ii) Hardships

Participants also spoke about how it felt to belong to a minority group. Sydney reflected on how it felt being in the majority at primary school. She reported feeling 'a part of it', and Elle spoke about not being able to identify herself as a Traveller 'in big school', when she was in the minority. This has links to the theme of 'differences', where participants felt like they had to change themselves and be a different person in order to fit in with the majority norms. Participants' use of language (people in houses live 'normally', Bryn; there are the Travellers and then there are the 'normal children', Sydney) demonstrates how being part of a minority group has influenced self-perception- they and their families are thereby not 'normal' or living 'normally'.

As well as belonging to a minority group, participants also spoke about difficulties they encountered as a result of factors related specifically to being a Traveller. This included both the act of travelling and the pressure to marry, sometimes at a young age. It is important that educational professionals are aware that Traveller pupils they are working with may be struggling with these issues, demonstrating a level of understanding and acting to support where possible.

5.4 Answering the Research Questions

5.4 i) Research Question 1: What are the educational experiences of Traveller children and young people?

Participants recounted a wide variety of educational experiences. These ranged from professionals supporting continued access to education to some participants reporting that they hated school due to the difficulties they had encountered there. These educational experiences are outlined in sections 5.2 and 5.3.

To summarise, participants had both positive and negative experiences of relationships with other in the school setting. This included staff and pupils, as well as the whole school community. It helped when others had shown interest and built a sense of connection with them. Where a lack of understanding was shown, this served to exacerbate the sense of 'us' and 'them'. There were also incidences of discrimination, which led to participants no longer wanting to attend school. A number of educational approaches facilitated positive experiences of school. As well as inclusive efforts towards flexibility in order to promote continued school engagement and attendance, giving pupils their independence was also important,

particularly for older participants. Homework difficulties and the school curriculum also played important roles in participants' school experiences, leading participants to question the utility of school and their motivation to continue with institutional education.

A number of factors specifically related to being a Traveller influenced school experiences. Participants demonstrated an awareness that they belonged to a minority group, and expressed a number of hardships related to being a Traveller. Through participants' desire to challenging stereotypes and emphasise that things are changing within Traveller communities, and through their explanations of what could be difficult for Traveller children and young people (travelling whilst attending school, the pressure to marry, belonging to a minority group), they demonstrated a hope for others to have an improved understanding of Traveller culture and what it is like to be a Traveller child.

5.4 ii) Research Question 2: What does it mean to participants to be a Traveller? How does being a Traveller influence self-concepts, perceived strengths and future aspirations?

All participants had different things to say about Traveller culture, highlighting the diversity and variation between different Travelling families and communities.

Billy spoke a lot about having ' good contacts' and aspired to be part of a community of people who get along well together, suggesting that he prioritised the relationships in his life. Although not specific to Traveller culture, his experience of

being a part of a Traveller community, having spent some time living on a Traveller site, had involved being surrounded by others who shared similar values and traditions. His desire to have this again in the future indicates that he liked this aspect of Traveller life, and he reported that his Traveller heritage was important to him.

Elle referred to many positive aspects of what she knew to be Traveller life, such as everyone being ‘a part of the family’. She also spoke favourably about getting married, and how her newlywed sister was going to have ‘such a wonderful life’. She spoke about marriage often and indicated that this was an important part of being a Traveller.

Sydney also spoke about marriage, and how this was something that was expected of her. She reported that this was something she would like to do, when she was a bit older. She highlighted that whilst traditionally Traveller girls from her community would get married at a very young age, things had changed and it would be acceptable or even advisable that she wait until she was in her twenties. Sydney also spoke about how there were things she would have liked to do, such as getting a job and working with children, but because her Traveller family would not have accepted this, she had ruled it out as an option.

Grace had clear goals and ambitions for the future that she felt were not accepted by her Traveller community, but were accepted by her family. In contrast to Sydney, who felt unable to pursue her dream of working with children due to a lack of tolerance from her family and community, Grace, although not supported by her community, felt able to pursue a career in business/accountancy because her mother and sister supported this. This reflects the findings of Myers (2010), where parents are generally either more traditional or more progressive- some accepting basic literacy

and numeracy as enough and others wanting more comprehensive education. Whilst Grace spoke about her views not reflecting those of other Travellers in her community, she also spoke about her mothers' support in her pursuit of education and a career. Elle and Sydney were also aware that the community had expectations for them to become wives, cook, clean and look after children, and because their parents were more traditional, they were not pursuing education and careers.

Oliver and Bryn most frequently reported experiencing difficulties related to travelling a lot. Their reports reflect the findings of Deuchar & Bhopal (2013), where children reported that travelling during the summer months limited their access to opportunities in school. Both boys also often referred to nature in the context of Traveller lifestyle. The importance of being outside and engaging in outdoor activities came through in both their descriptions of an 'ideal school', suggesting that elements of their Traveller family life had influenced what was important to them.

Although not always a direct result of their Traveller culture, participants' self-perceptions, values and aspirations were all heavily linked to their experiences of growing up in a Traveller family. Whether their aspirations were to do as what was expected of them by their Traveller community (e.g. Elle), or they had reacted against what was expected of them (e.g. Grace), participants demonstrated a continued reference to the Traveller way of life when speaking about what was important to them and their future lives. This further highlights the importance of professionals getting to know and understand what being a Traveller means for Traveller children and young people, and how this might influence their access to education.

5.4 iii) Research Question 3: How could the inclusion and education of Traveller children and young people be better supported?

A key factor in participants' experiences of education was the relationships with others in the educational setting. This therefore deserves recognition and action. More specifically, the findings of the current study suggest that teachers spending time to get to know their pupils and develop a mutual sense of connection would be a worthwhile pursuit. This is also true of investing in support systems that help Traveller children to make and maintain friendships; this could involve initial interventions to help new pupils in making friends and the provision of activities in school that would help to facilitate the consolidation of these friendships (e.g. shared responsibilities or projects, clubs, games etc.). Where possible schools should foster a sense of shared community by welcoming parents and families, as Traveller children are likely to benefit from the increased sense of belonging that this facilitates (Goodenow and Grady, 1993).

As well as ensuring positive relationships are fostered, educational settings should invest time in understanding Traveller culture, ensuring that it is recognised, celebrated and accepted in school alongside other cultures. This may involve speaking to pupils and their parents about their community when they start at the school, and it could be facilitated by supporting professionals who are already familiar with the family, such as a member of the local TES/T. Where appropriate and agreed to by families, training for staff and events celebrating Traveller culture would also be beneficial for pupils. For Traveller children specifically, the school's regular communication with parents will be integral to their wellbeing through preventing a sense of conflicting identities; no child should feel they have to hide their family and culture from school due to fear of exposure to prejudice. One participant indicated

that he felt school did not deal with incidences of racism effectively. Where cases of racism do occur, action must be taken.

Whilst some might argue that there are problems with children being allowed to leave lessons, and that all content being taught is beneficial to the pupils, it is also important to consider the relationship dynamics between the school, pupil and parent. Pupils being told one thing by school and another by their parents are at risk of cognitive dissonance, and are potentially likely to rebel as a result of living 'two different lives'. Schools insisting that children participate in activities against the will of parents are risking developing a hostile relationship that may lead to that child being taken out of school. Individually tailored adaptations to meet the needs of children and their families are therefore necessary.

Planning and provision should also be put in place when tailoring the curriculum to the needs of these children. Where possible, schools should allow children to pursue the subjects they perceive to be most relevant to their lives after school. Practical skills such as cooking, looking after children, construction, accountancy/managing money and building computers were all cited by participants as subjects that they would like to learn more about. It is also important that, for those lessons where it is not immediately apparent, teachers explain to pupils why the topic is relevant and helpful in preparing them for adult life. It is helpful for all pupils to understand the purpose of what they are learning as this aids motivation. However, it may be particularly important for Traveller children, who may see leaving school and electing for home education as a viable option, to understand the benefits of staying in school.

Participants also suggested a lack of confidence in their academic abilities. As well as ensuring supports are in place to build their self-efficacy (e.g. Person-centred Planning; Mount, 1992), schools should ensure that pupils have the opportunity to showcase their strengths. For example, Bryn would have benefitted from chances to show others how much he knew about nature and the environment, and this may have helped to build his confidence in his academic abilities.

Another individually tailored adaptation could involve time protected in school for children to do their homework, with access to a computer. This could be a supervised break or lunchtime, or even time out of tutor time or a lesson, or supervised after school/morning clubs. Ideally, this would involve discussion and planning with pupils as to when, how and whether they will be able to complete their homework.

Finally, it is important to highlight that professionals should understand and be sensitive two the difficulties and hardships often endured by Traveller children. This is likely to include belonging to a minority group that is the subject of frequent stereotyping and prejudice, but may also include difficulties associated with travelling and, in some cases, a pressure to marry at a young age. As well as being alert to these particular needs, education professionals should ensure that they are aware of steps to take to promote anti-oppressive practice, and employ safeguarding procedures where appropriate.

5.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter has further interpreted the themes identified through thematic analysis. Potential explanations of participants' focus on relationships, perceived differences, educational approaches and difficulties in school have been given and implications resulting from participants' experiences of education were considered. Common themes related to being a Traveller were also discussed, before summaries of information answering the research questions are given.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Chapter Overview

This final chapter concludes the current study. Implications for practice are outlined alongside barriers and facilitators to Traveller children's positive experiences of education. The limitations of the study are also recognised, and used to inform directions for future research. The specific contributions of the current study are clarified. The final summary concludes the research, synthesising the research aims, purposes, findings and implications.

6.2 Implications for Practice

6.2 i) Summary of Barriers, Facilitators and Implications

The thematic analysis helped to identify a number of barriers that prevented participants from having a positive experience of education. Through positive accounts, participants also mentioned a number of facilitators. In the interest of promoting positive experiences of education for Traveller children, a number of implications were outlined in response to research question 3 (see section 5.4iii). These barriers, facilitators and implications are summarised in Table 2.

Barriers	Facilitators	Implications
Professionals not investing in their relationships with Traveller pupils.	Professionals getting to know their pupils, building a relationship and connecting with them by showing an interest in their Traveller heritage and being relatable.	Teachers should spend time getting to know Traveller pupils and develop a mutual sense of connection.
Traveller pupils not being supported to build friendships when new to a school.	Support to build friendships, particularly when new to an educational setting.	Educational settings should develop systems to support Traveller children to make and maintain friendships.
Schools not building a sense of shared community by involving families.	Building a sense of shared community by including families, ensuring that they have a regular point of contact with the school to ensure they feel 'part of it' (Sydney).	Educational settings should ensure a sense of shared community and welcome Traveller families to be involved in their children's education.
A lack of training/professionals who understand Traveller culture. People not attempting to understand cultural differences, and showing a lack of sensitivity.	Anti-oppressive practice and ensuring reports of racism are not ignored. Training for staff to promote better understanding of Traveller communities connected to the school.	Educational setting should celebrate Traveller cultures, developing awareness and ensuring cultural sensitivity.

Prejudice, stereotyping and racism.	Holding a celebration of Traveller culture where there are Traveller pupils at the school who would like others to know more about their heritage.	
	Having a TES/T that know families well and can share their expertise with other educational practitioners.	The local authority should ensure that a team of trained professionals can work specifically with Traveller families to build relationships and support continued access to education by advocating for Traveller children (i.e. a TES/T).
Inflexibility- schools and local authorities not making adaptations that would make education better for Traveller pupils.	Schools aiming to be inclusive by being flexible. This may involve allowing pupils to leave lessons when agreed with parents, finding out what pupils' strengths are and celebrating these even if they are not on the school curriculum and coming up with a homework plan e.g. time to use the library.	Educational settings should make individually tailored adaptations to suit the needs of Traveller children and their families, promoting continued engagement in school. Educational settings should employ a strengths-based approach to curriculum design, ensuring that Traveller children have opportunities to succeed and pursue learning related to their future aspirations.

Table 3: Table to illustrate the barriers, facilitators and implications related to Traveller children's positive experiences of education.

6.2 ii) Links to Multi-level Psychological Frameworks

Implications for professionals can be linked to Bronfenbrenner & Ceci's bioecological model (1994). This presents particular implications for Educational Psychologists (EPs) who work across a variety of systemic levels, from direct work with children through assessment and intervention to influencing policy development through training and research. The Every Child Matters initiative (2004) highlights the importance of working to support the multiple systems within which children live, including home, school and their wider community and society. Squires et al.'s (2007) research demonstrates EPs' important contribution to the Every Child Matters Agenda (2004), as reported by parents.

EPs could play a particularly important role in ensuring that Traveller children are given a sense of agency regarding decisions about their lives. As highlighted earlier (section 2.4iii), the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child's 'paramountcy' principle sets out that parents and professionals supporting children have a legal duty to ensure that the children's voices are heard regarding decisions about their upbringing.

The table below illustrates how recommendations can be implemented at different systemic levels, and highlights the role of the EP in doing so.

Systemic Level	Recommendations
Individual (i.e. the child)	It is important that pupils and their teachers have time together to develop a mutual sense of connection, getting to know one another. Traveller children would benefit from support to explain about their cultural history and values, so that members of staff understand. The findings of the current study suggest that eliciting pupil and parent voice could be the most helpful approach when evaluating inclusion of Traveller pupils. This would also help parents to feel included and a part of the school community, and pupils observing their own and their parents' views being put into practice would help to promote a sense of collaboration with the school, rather than serving to exacerbate a sense of 'us' and 'them'.
Microsystem (i.e. the family)	Traveller children should have opportunities to develop friendships with their peers at school to enhance their sense of belonging and acceptance in the setting. It would therefore be helpful for education professionals (e.g. school staff, the TES/T, EPs) to support families by explaining why this is important and encouraging Traveller families to allow for their children to see their friends outside of school (e.g. at birthday parties). Families should be encouraged to work with schools to become actively involved in planning their child's educational provision (e.g. through attendance at parents' evenings and Individual Education Plan reviews). This will help to consolidate their sense of control and autonomy over their child's school experience. They should also be encouraged to explain their culture and beliefs to school staff to support them in their understanding, and where possible, consider promoting celebration of their culture to spread awareness and understanding from the school community (e.g. at school fairs and assemblies).
Mesosystem (i.e. the school)	Educational settings should make individually tailored adaptations to suit the needs of Traveller children and their families, promoting continued engagement in school. Educational settings should employ a strengths-based approach to curriculum design, ensuring that Traveller children have opportunities to succeed and pursue learning related to their future aspirations.

Exosystem (i.e. multi-agency working)	As highlighted by the theme of 'conflicting desires', there is a role for EPs/the TET to act as a mediator between home and school in ensuring Traveller children's aspirations known to both, explaining to families the advantages of pursuing less traditional career options. As mentioned under the list of 'facilitators', ways forward include promoting anti-oppressive practice through training to ensure staff and professionals working with Travellers are equipped with the necessary skills and understanding to show sensitivity and interest. Training should not aim to teach 'this is how Travellers live and this is what works for them', as Travellers live differently to one another there is great diversity of need. The purposes of the training should therefore be to challenge stereotypes, highlight some difficulties that Travellers may have (e.g. with homework and not being able to attend certain lessons) and equip professionals with the skills and confidence to get to know Traveller children and their families, in order to develop individualised supports. This could be delivered by members of the TES/T or EPs in collaboration with Traveller families from the school community. There are a number of ways in which schools could ensure good practice when working with Traveller children. An evaluation form could be used to measure good practice using the outcomes outlined by Myers & Bhopal (2009). Another way this could be achieved is through assessment by the TES/T or other external professionals (e.g. EPs) with specialist knowledge in this area.
Macrosystem (i.e. policy)	The local authority should ensure that a team of trained professionals can work specifically with Traveller families to build relationships and support continued access to education by advocating for Traveller children (i.e. a TES/T). Local authorities previously received funding specifically to employ experts to support the education of Traveller children in the form of TES/Ts, but they are now optional and subject to the financial cuts to local government funding. Data from this study suggests that the Greenshire TET plays an important role in promoting Traveller children's access to education. Given that statistics from the recent government briefing paper on Gypsies and Travellers (Cromarty, 2017) demonstrate that Gypsy and Traveller children have lower attendance and attainment than other minority groups, it would be appropriate to consider allotting funding specifically for this purpose. There are many risk factors posed to Traveller children and young people; economic disadvantage, illiteracy amongst adults and social exclusion to name a few. Travelling may disrupt learning, families are not always supportive of academic pursuits and statistical evidence demonstrates that attainment is below average. In addition, performing less well than their peers will have a daily impact self-efficacy, and this will lead to children resenting learning and school. The current study

	shows how Traveller children and young people can have low self-efficacy, as many participants spoke about not being good at things. Low achievement therefore adds to the wealth of reasons why children from this cohort have such low attendance. However, if better achievement can be supported at an earlier stage, lack of motivation and perseverance should no longer be an additional reason for these children and young people to not attend school. EPs and other education professionals could therefore play a role in informing policy as to how best to guide early intervention for Gypsy and Traveller children and young people.

Table 4: Table to illustrate recommendations at different systemic levels, highlighting the role of EPs.

6.3 Limitations

Only those children known to the Greenshire TET used were asked to take part in the study. This, combined with the small sample size used, means that the findings are lacking in ecological validity. A degree of purposive sampling also took place, as members of the TET initially approached those families they thought most likely to take part. This meant that only those children who had a history of working with and accepting help from professionals took part.

Whilst using a pilot study was helpful in informing the research process, and it made sense to use the data from the pilot study as the data collected could be seen to potentially contribute to the findings, there were a number of discrepancies in the procedures used and approach taken for the initial interview (Billy), and this impacted upon the amount of data retrieved for this participant. When going on the rapport-building visit for Billy, the conversation I had was mostly with his mother, while he was not present. This meant that when I came to carry out the interview, he was hesitant and the conversation we had was shorter. For the following participants, I made sure to engage in lengthier rapport building sessions and this is reflected in the findings.

Another addition that would have improved the quality of the findings would be to have had someone to check the thematic analysis, reducing the subjectivity of the findings. This could have involved another researcher identifying their own themes and jointly triangulating our findings. Those themes that were identified by both researchers would therefore be validated.

6.4 Contributions of the Current Study

6.4 i) Adding to a Limited Body of Evidence

Whilst researchers have previously interviewed Traveller children about their experiences of education (Bloomer & Hamilton, 2014; Derrington, 2005; 2007; Deuchar & Bhopal, 2013; Levinson, 2015; Lloyd & Stead, 2001), the evidence base is still relatively limited. Small samples have been used in previous research, and similar limitations apply regarding sampling across specific geographical regions. The findings of the current study therefore contribute to the evidence base, providing information about Travellers from Greenshire where research of this nature has not been conducted before.

6.4ii) The Psychological Perspective

Another contribution of the research is the psychological perspective offered. Previous researchers in this field have typically been experts in education and/or social science, but few psychologists have conducted research into the needs of Traveller children. This has been particularly helpful in offering a fresh interpretation of findings. For example, theories of social psychology (Asch, 1951; Moscovici, 1975) have helped to explain some of the subthemes related to ‘differences’ (5.2ii). These theories are also helpful in suggesting why participants experienced difficulties as a result of these differences, and why they may have a pronounced need for positive relationships in school to build on their sense of connection and belonging.

6.4iii) The Participants' Experiences

Many of the themes that emerged from interviews were not necessarily specific to Travellers. However, all participants had moved around and attended a number of schools, enabling them to make comparisons between settings and comment on the most helpful, and most hindering, factors. One of the contributions of the research is therefore the source of information; participants who had experience of a number of educational settings, including home schooling, and were therefore well-placed to make recommendations about what did and what did not help to meet their needs.

6.4iv) Highlighting the Diversity within the Community

One of the aims of the current study was to illustrate the great diversity within the Gypsy and Traveller population, partly to challenge stereotypes but also to ensure that personalised approaches are taken. This was supported through the individual descriptions of each participant (4.2, 5.4ii). Inclusion of these descriptions served to reduce risks of homogenisation of responses and the promotion of stereotypes through commitment to participant voice and agency.

As the study has shown, many people who identify as Travellers live very differently and describe their ethnicity in different ways. This meant that they had different needs. Whilst some common themes were identified, these are simply to provide a guide for professionals working with Traveller children as to what may be relevant in terms of need. For example, whilst the findings of the current research suggest that it may be helpful for professionals working with Traveller children to show an interest in Traveller culture, this should involve asking the pupil and families

specifically, and not seeking information from an alternative source (e.g. researching 'Travellers' on the internet) and making assumptions.

6.5 Directions for Future Research

Many of the themes identified using an inductive approach were not expected, and therefore were not specifically covered by the interview schedule. For example, many participants demonstrated a lack of confidence in their academic abilities and skills, and the theme of low self-efficacy was identified. It would be interesting to look at this further, measuring participants' self-efficacy and potentially comparing Traveller and non-Traveller children. This could help to clarify whether Traveller children are experiencing more difficulties in developing their academic confidence than children with other ethnic and cultural backgrounds, paving the way for further exploration as to why this might be. Theories generated may be helpful in supporting Traveller children to build their self-efficacy.

Whilst audio recording was the preferred method for this research, it may be that a study using video recording would bring to light new insights. Being able to record participants' facial expressions and body language and other physical cues would have supported an additional layer of interpretation. Additionally, on reflection, and in line with VERP (Video Enhanced Reflective Practice; Strathie, Strathie and Kennedy, 2011) principles, it may have been helpful to record the pilot study to assess how my body language, physical cues and facial expressions were influencing the interviewee, and adjust my approach accordingly. Future research could therefore utilise video recording to further interpret the views of Traveller children.

As well as a lack of connection and lack of understanding, there are also cases of negligence where professionals have ignored participants' reports. This could be linked to underlying prejudice (Thomson, 2013), but would need to be explored further. Research would therefore need to focus on investigating whether professional's held prejudices and stereotypes are affecting the level of support offered to Traveller children and their families.

As well as interviewing Traveller children, researchers have previously conducted interviews with parents (Bhopal, 2004; Myers, McGhee & Bhopal, 2010) and D'Arcy (2014) used family interviews. However, what has not been looked at in-depth is the interaction between the views of parents and the views of children. The findings of the D'Arcy (2014) suggest that participants' and parents values and aspirations were relatively aligned. The findings of the current study demonstrates that, where participants began to demonstrate behaviours indicating some departure from the family norms, participants experienced significant levels of discomfort and cognitive dissonance. Combined with Levinson's (2015) findings that Traveller parents feared their children's cultural assimilation to the wider society through attendance at mainstream schools, this suggests that an important aspect of some Traveller family dynamics is this influence that parents are having on their children's views and aspirations. Therefore, exploring the interaction between parent and child views would help to further emphasise the need for schools to take an active role in welcoming and involving the whole family in their child's education.

Deuchar & Bhopal (2013) made sure to consider the local context in which the research took place. For example, the authors commented that those schools selected in London were in areas where many families supported the British National Party. It may be that their findings regarding children's sense of social acceptance were

influenced by the attitudes of some members of the community. To further investigate Deuchar & Bhopal (2013)'s hypothesis, future research could consider the attitudes and views of local communities and how these impact upon the experiences of participants. This could involve taking a holistic approach by eliciting the views of different people from the community and looking at the interactions between eco-systemic levels, informed by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1989).

6.6 Final Summary

Traveller children are a highly vulnerable population, with consistently low attainment and attendance (Cromarty, 2017). There are a number of factors influencing their experiences of education, including insufficient support put in place by schools and supporting educational services (Deuchar & Bhopal, 2013; Myers, McGhee & Bhopal, 2010; Thomson, 2013). There is currently a limited body of evidence researching the educational needs of Traveller children. The current study therefore aimed to add to the literature through provision of additional perspectives and interpretation of themes supported by psychological theories.

The findings of the study should help to inform educational practice. Overall, participants reported that the aspects of education that most determined the positivity of their experiences were the relationships they had in the setting, the cultural understanding and sensitivity demonstrated by others, the flexibility and inclusivity of approaches used and the availability of individually tailored adaptations.

A number of implications result from these findings. Schools and educational settings should make efforts to ensure positive relationships are formed between

Traveller pupils, their teachers and their peers. Links between home and school, facilitated by a TES/T, will help to foster a sense of shared community and ensure Traveller children feel involved in the school. Anti-oppressive practice also plays an important role in ensuring that professionals working with Travellers avoid discrimination and demonstrate cultural sensitivity and understanding. Other accommodations (e.g. homework plans) also initiate positive experiences of education. By providing the right avenues of support, education professionals can make school a better place to be, thus promoting improved attainment and attendance for Traveller children and young people.

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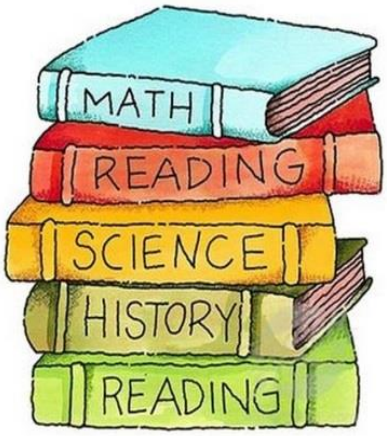
Appendix A: Information Sheets and Consent Forms

Hello!

My name is Chloe and I am training to be an educational psychologist. I work with lots of different children and young people in Warwickshire, in schools and at their homes.



I am hoping to interview children and young people from Gypsy and Traveller families about their experiences of education and their goals for the future. I work with lots of other educational professionals, and it will be helpful for us to know what your views are.

If you think you would like to take part in the project, I can meet you to tell you more and answer any questions you have. Just let your parent or [INSERT NAME OF TET MEMBER] know.

Thank you for reading this!

Hello,

My name is Chloe and I am training to be an educational psychologist. I work with lots of different children and young people in schools, home and other settings to help them do well in life. I am hoping to interview children and young people from Gypsy and Traveller families about school and education, and I would be interested in learning about your experiences.

If you do decide to take part…

- We will meet once or twice for 1-2 hours each time (depending on how long the interview takes and how much you want to say).

- I will need to use an audio recorder to record our time together. I need to do this so that I can remember everything you say and I am the only one who will hear it.

- Any hand-written notes I make during our conversation will be saved on my computer. Paper copies will be shredded and disposed of.

- You can stop answering the questions at any time and you can stop taking part in the project at any time.

- Your answers will be used in a report but your name will not appear anywhere. Only the researcher (me) will see your name.

If you do decide to take part then please sign the form on the next page.

Consent Form

My name is: _____

My school is: _____

Please circle your answers

I would like to take part in the project

Yes No

I understand that I can stop taking part in the project at any time

Yes No

I understand that my answers will be in a report and that my name will not be on the report

Yes No

I understand that I will be audio recorded during our meetings and that only the researcher (Chloe) will hear this

Yes No

I know that if the researcher (Chloe) becomes concerned that I am at risk of significant harm she will need to let someone else know (in line with Warwickshire's safeguarding policy https://www.safeguardingwarwickshire.co.uk/).

Yes No

Dear Parent(s),

My name is Chloe Phillips, and I am a trainee educational psychologist currently on placement in Warwickshire. I work with children and young people, their families and school staff to promote positive experiences of education. During my time in Warwickshire I am hoping to interview children and young people from Gypsy and Traveller families. I want to find out about their personal experiences of school/home schooling and I want to explore their ideas about what an ideal education would be.

Your child may want to take part in this project and this letter is requesting your consent for them to do so. It is also important to mention that even if you and your child agree to be involved in the project, they can withdraw from it or be withdrawn by you from it at any time. You or your child can ask to withdraw data until a week after the interview has taken place.

If your child takes part they will be asked to meet with me to talk about their experiences of school. This may take between one and two hours and may be done during one to two visits depending on the length of time the interview takes. Interviews can be held at a convenient time for you and your child, and can take place in your home, near your home, in a local library/children's centre or in your child's school, whatever is best for you.

This project will form part of my doctoral thesis and will therefore be written as a formal report. All participants will be anonymised within the report and confidentiality maintained. I will only need to pass on information if I become concerned that someone is at risk of significant harm, in line with Warwickshire's safeguarding policy (https://www.safeguardingwarwickshire.co.uk/).

If your child takes part in the project you will be given the option of whether you would like to receive a short report detailing a summary of the findings.

If you are willing to allow your child to take part please sign the attached form. During my discussion with your child about their experiences I will need to use an audio recorder to ensure that I have gained all of their views. The recording will be kept confidential and will be for the researchers use only. Any written notes I make will be saved securely on my computer, and the paper copies will be shredded and disposed of within a couple of hours of the interview.

Finally, I would like to say that there are only a few potential participants across Warwickshire who will be approached to take part in this project, and your child's contributions would be extremely valued.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Yours Sincerely,

Chloe Phillips

Trainee Educational Psychologist

University of Birmingham

Consent Form

Parent name (please print): _____

Child's name (please print): _____

Please sign below to give consent for your child to participate in the project.

I have read the attached letter and additional information sheet, and I give consent for my child to be involved.

Signed (parent signature) _____

Please sign below to give consent for audio recording to be used with your child.

I acknowledge that audio recording will be used with my child and that the recordings are confidential and for the use of the researcher only. I give my consent for audio recording to be used.

Signed (parent signature) _____

Finally, in the unlikely event that the researcher needs to contact you regarding your child please provide a telephone number that you can be contacted on and consent to being contacted.

Phone number: _____

I consent to being contacted by the researcher should they need to speak to me regarding my child.

Signed (parent signature) _____

Appendix B: Visual Resources Used to Support the Semi-structured Interview

School Prompt Cards

Teachers 	Pupils 	Lessons 
Building 	Food 	Homework 
Activities 	Holidays 	Timetable 

My School Day

I get to school at…	
The first thing I do when I get to school is…	
After that it's time for…	
At break I…	
Then it's time for…	

At lunch I…	
After lunch I…	
At the end of the school day…	

School Timeline

Nursery		Y1		Y3		Y5		Y7		Y9		Y11
	Reception		Y2		Y4		Y6		Y8		Y10	

Goal Setting

Things I'm good at	Things I'd like to be good/better at	What I want to do when I grow up *Work, home, family*	Goals *Dreams and hopes for the future*
			

Making School Better

Things I would change	Things I would keep the same

Teachers 	Pupils 	Lessons 
Building 	Food 	Homework 
Activities 	Holidays 	Timetable 
?	?	?

Appendix C: Phase 2- Generating Initial Codes

(Coded Data Extract and List of Initial Codes)

Sydney: They were really understanding. Don't get me wrong, there were some that were very… They knew that we were Travellers, but they just couldn't get their heads around us. They knew that we were different. We all knew that we were different. But with the children, they didn't care. I was never ever asked. Obviously, because we have a slight accent and certain things that we're not allowed to be in. Like certain lessons. Absolutely fine.

Comment: School staff, understanding

Comment: School staff, lack of understanding

Comment: Being different

Comment: 'Us' and 'them', being different

Comment: Being different

Chloe: So, they let you pull out of some lessons?

Sydney: Yes, we had a pack- It was these two cards and it said- we had a lady in Year 7, she was like our… not our form tutor, but she was the head of house, sort of thing. We got on really, really well. Yes, I had a really good relationship with her and she printed this- for me and my sister- these cards, and they said I had permission to go. Literally, we didn't even have to ask. We just had to show the card and they wouldn't even ask. Just go straight to the library. Of course, children would be like, 'What are you doing?' But anyway, I remember this one lesson, this was when I moved to Year 9 I think it was, and our head of year was- I cannot remember his name. He was so lovely.

He knew that I had a lesson coming up, so he just sent a teacher in and just said, 'Can I have Sydney?' so the children just thought I was going to his office, thinking I was being in trouble. But then he would just send me straight to the library. He was so lovely. Yes, so, that was really nice. But then in my next school, we had these little- You know like if you get a visitor badge it just says your name or something?

Comment: Helpful intervention

Comment: School staff, helpful approach

Comment: Helpful intervention, understanding

Comment: Lack of understanding

Comment: School staff

Comment: Helpful intervention

Chloe: Yes, I get them when I go into schools.

Sydney: They were just in our- Is that a planner?

Chloe: Yes.

Sydney: Yes, a planner. But it was more awkward. Where before you literally could just go up and just-

Comment: Unhelpful intervention

Chloe: Yes, give them a pass.

Sydney: They wouldn't even care. They know that you can't forge that. Where in my next school, it was very… Don't get me wrong, when we first went a man said to our teacher about how we're not going into certain lessons. She was so fine about it. I wouldn't say that they weren't. They were really understanding. 'Yes, we'll do that for the girls.' They gave us the slips and the little things in our planner, but-

Chloe: Yes, but it's a bit more awkward having that in your planner.

Sydney: Yes, whereas before we could just have them in our blazer pockets. Stuff like that. So, that was quite good.

Chloe: That's less obvious.

Sydney: It's a bit… Do you know what I mean?

Chloe: Yes. So, what made it awkward at the second school?

Sydney: Oh, just, it was so awkward. Yes, it's just very like… The teachers wouldn't- I think it's such a big classroom- They had a load of children in Year 9 and there was a lot going on. I can imagine how overwhelming that is for a teacher. You're Year 9, you think you know everything, but you don't. Let's be honest. But when the teacher is trying to learn and she has got all these different people, then she's got me trying to go out of a classroom, it's just- Do you know what I mean?

Comment: Lack of order

Chloe: Yes, but at the same time, it's overwhelming for a Year 9 student as well.

Sydney: Absolutely.

Chloe: Especially if you're new to the school. Do you think it made it more awkward because you were a new student?

Sydney: Oh, completely, yes. Before, I started my first school in Year 7, so it sort of grew there. Then coming to my second school, it was just very- They already had our reports and stuff from our last school. So, they went off what they knew. But it could've been- Yes, it probably was because we were new to the school

Comment: There are disadvantages to the Traveller lifestyle

and you're trying to get everyone to like you, then to wave a card up in the air and be like, 'Miss, I need to go out of the classroom,' you'd rather just sit there and bear it. Because it's so embarrassing. All your friends are staying in, so you want to stay in. It's really awkward.

Comment: There are disadvantages to the Traveller lifestyle, lack of understanding

Chloe: Yes, it sounds it. Because, like you said, you're trying to make a good impression, aren't you?

Sydney: Yes, you don't want to be the odd one out. It's horrible. Now I'm 16, if you want to… But when you're 13 or 14, you just want to fit in. You just want to be like the other girls. So, if that means not going out of a lesson because they're not going out of a lesson, you'll do it. Which is sad, but it's the truth, isn't it? So, yes.

Comment: Being different, friendships

Comment: Being different, friendships

Chloe: One of the things we were talking about earlier was the difficulty with home and school. So, you were just mentioning that in school you were trying to fit in with your mates. Do you think that caused any difficulty?

Sydney: With school, it's like- This might sound really, really random. When I was at school, I lived a completely different life. I was like two people. I'd do my work, I'd be a 14 year old girl. Then I'd come home and I'd be like a woman. It's so crazy. In our culture, where girls grow up and boys grow up really, really quickly… So, for me, being 14, I had responsibilities. I can't sit at a table and do homework when I've got to cook, I've got to help my mam. Mam, she'll work as much- But I've got things to do.

Comment: Conflict between home and school, gender differences, early onset adulthood

Comment: Early onset adulthood, conflict between home and school, 'us' and 'them', there are disadvantages to the Traveller lifestyle

School for me was, 'Okay, I've been to school and I'll leave school there now. School is done, and now it's my other life, sort of thing. I'm home at 3 o'clock.' With friendship groups and stuff, we're brought up very differently. We wouldn't be allowed to go and hang around with them outside of school. My dad sees it as school's school. That's it. When you're at home- But I don't know.

Comment: Conflict between home and school

Comment: Friendships, 'us' and 'them', being different

Comment: Conflict between home and school

Chloe: So, you sort of coped with it by separating the two in your head?

Sydney: Oh, absolutely. You could never mix school and family. Where other people do, it's just natural. Do you know what I mean? It's just… School is not looked at as it is for us now. But with certain Travelling people, they just don't think school is very important. School is important. It is really important to learn to read and write. In this day and age, you need it. You can't not. But school is a lot more than reading and writing. You grow up there. You're 13, you're trying to figure yourself out and all of this.

Comment: Conflict between home and school

Comment: Being different, 'us' and 'them'

Comment: Travellers don't want to go to school

Comment: The importance of education

Don't get me wrong, it can be… I just think to be 12 and 13, that age you're just experiencing everything. Then to be thrown into high school and you've got all these friendship groups… Girls can be really mean. Do you know what I mean? Thankfully, I don't talk to any of the girls that I used to go to school with. We're just on different paths. Completely different paths. I do see a few of them and we say hi, but that's about it.

Comment: Changes between primary and secondary

Comment: Friendships

Comment: 'Us' and 'them', being different

Friendship groups, we would never have people to stay over or anything like that, because school and that just don't mix. It's hard. It's hard at the time, but now it doesn't bother me and it was just school. I look at school as it was just school. I didn't

Comment: Friendships, conflict between home and school

really gain anything from school. A lot of people take a lot away from school. Don't get me wrong, I'm sure if I stayed in school for the whole way… Did the whole entire thing, I could've done my GCSEs and everything now.

Comment: The importance of education, conflicted desires

But now I look at it and I would love to go into a job with children and stick at it. But that's just not the path that sometimes we're allowed to take. It's not what we want. We have to just get along with it. We're just seen as wives to be and stuff. So, in the back of my mind, when we used to talk about GCSEs, I would just think 'I'm going to be a wife. I'm going to have children'. It was just never… Now, I can look back and think 'Sydney, you should've really paid attention and listened'.

Comment: Conflicted desires

Comment: Early onset adulthood, marriage, gender differences

But in the back of my mind, it was just, 'I'm going to be a wife. I'm not going to use a triangle for anything.'

Comment: Curriculum, early onset adulthood

Initial Codes

1. Homework
2. Curriculum
3. School staff
4. Understanding
5. Helpful approaches/interventions
6. Unhelpful interventions
7. 'Us' and 'them'
8. Lack of understanding
9. Conflict between home and school
10. Early onset adulthood
11. Making friends
12. Maintaining friends
13. Other minority groups
14. Not all Travellers
15. Being different
16. Bullied for being different
17. Arguments
18. Lack of order
19. Change between primary and secondary
20. Gender differences
21. Travellers are more supportive
22. Celebrating Traveller culture
23. Travellers don't want to go to school
24. Things are changing for the Traveller community
25. Not wanting to be there
26. Getting to know everyone helps
27. Lack of community/sense of inclusion
28. 'The Traveller way'
29. 'The Traveller way' has its advantages
30. Marriage
31. There are disadvantages to the Traveller lifestyle too
32. The importance of education
33. Conflicted desires
34. Minority group
35. Lack of confidence
36. Being stereotyped
37. Outdoor life
38. Steiner schools

Appendix D: Phases 3-5- Searching for Themes, Reviewing Themes, Defining and Naming the Themes

Placing the Initial Codes into Meaningful Groups

Being a Traveller

- 'Us' and 'them'
- Lack of understanding
- 'Two different lives'
- Conflicted desires
- Making friends
- Maintaining friends
- Arguments
- Racism and bullying
- Being stereotyped
- Things are changing for the Traveller community
- Advantages to being a Traveller
- Disadvantages to being a Traveller
- Not all Travellers
- Minority group

Education

- Difficulty with homework
- Curriculum
- Curriculum problems
- Helpful approaches/interventions
- Unhelpful interventions
- Lack of order
- Change between primary and secondary school
- Not wanting to be there
- The importance of education

Staff and Professionals

- Positive experiences
- Negative experiences

Miscellaneous

- Traveller traditions
- Lack of confidence

Examples of Meaningful Groups with Supporting Data Extracts

Problems with the curriculum

Elle: We watched a video, and like, personally, I don't want to see that… The woman was having a child but it was really disgusting. I didn't want to see that, and I kept turning my head and she was like 'face the board' and I was like 'I don't really want to see that Miss'… She was like 'Can you watch please?' because we had to do a little report of what we'd seen… There was no warning really… I was just thinking in my head, because, you know like, when you do something, and you think like, this is wrong, because you know you're going to get in trouble for it… How do you go to your mam and say like, 'Mam, I saw this in school…'? It's very awkward isn't it?... It literally put me off so much. I didn't want to know that. What I saw, I was about to be sick, honestly. Honestly, I was about to spew. The things they show, it's like they're trying to put you off of it… We just need them to understand that their mams and dads don't allow it.

Syd: With school, it's very 'following the curriculum' and peeling an onion a certain way… It was very downgrading at school. Because when you used to be in cooking lessons, they'd come over, 'No, absolutely wrong. Do it all again'.

Oliver: When I chose computing I thought it would be the physical side of computing. I thought you'd get a bit of taking apart computers and that sort of thing, soldering and stuff because I'm really interested in that… they just do programming pretty much.

Not wanting to be there

Billy: I just hate it. I don't want to go back.

The only place where I could go is jumping over the gates, which I've done… I just walked out through the school, got to the gate. One of the office teachers was following me… Then I jumped out over the school gates and I ran.

Elle: The school could literally have, like, a picture house, video games, phones they give you, and Travellers just don't wanna do it

Syd: With certain Travelling people, they just don't think school is very important.

Six hours at school is a lot of hours, isn't it?

In the back of my mind, it was just, 'I'm going to be a wife. I'm not going to use a triangle for anything.' So, it was sort of there and that's why I don't think I ever really looked at school importantly… None of my family have got GCSEs… [My friend, who is also a Traveller] did school the whole way through and she did her GCSEs and all that. She hasn't done anything with it.

Bryn: I think that sometimes I really don't want to go to school, like in my time I've skived quite a lot… Sometimes I just get really annoyed at all the people there, it makes me really stressed, I hate them… Sometimes I really don't want to go into school and I've pretended to be ill, so that I don't have to go into school, just because, if I go into school, then I'll punch someone in the face.

Traveller traditions

Elle: The men wanna go out with the men, they have their own business… [Traveller women] kind of don't want to [go to work]. It's kind of… not shameful, but the men would feel very dishonoured, like 'I can provide for you, I wanna buy you nice things, why wouldn't you let me do that?'… It affects the man because the man is 'the man' in the relationship. The authority of a man as well… He makes the big decisions. If the man wants to move to Wales, if that's what he needs for work because he needs the money and he needs the work, go for it.

With men, they treasure them because that's their wife, that's their girlfriend, that's theirs. When you get married, yes, he's yours, but you're his. If he buys nice things and he genuinely loves you, that's enough. You want to show that, 'Look where I'm living now. Look how happy I am.'

Syd: In our culture, where girls grow up and boys grow up really, really quickly… So, for me, being 14, I had responsibilities. I can't sit at a table and do homework when I've got to cook, I've got to help my mam.

Grace: If you walked into a travelling woman's home, you'll never see dirt… You'd have to plastic everything. You know like it was a catalogue home?

Developing the Themes

Initial Candidate Themes

Themes	Subthemes
Being a Traveller	• 'Us' and 'them' • Lack of understanding • 'Two different lives' • Conflicted desires • Making friends • Maintaining friends • Arguments • Racism and bullying • Being stereotyped • Things are changing for the Traveller community • Advantages to being a Traveller • Disadvantages to being a Traveller • Not all Travellers • Minority group
School 'in general'	• Difficulty with homework • Curriculum • Curriculum problems • Helpful approaches/interventions • Unhelpful interventions • Lack of order • Change between primary and secondary school • Not wanting to be there • The importance of education
School staff	• Positive experiences • Negative experiences
	• Low self-esteem
	• Traveller traditions

Candidate Themes- Review Cycle 1

Category	Themes	Subthemes
School	Difficulties	• Difficulty with homework • Curriculum • Curriculum problems • Lack of order • Not wanting to be there
	Approaches	• Helpful approaches/interventions • Unhelpful interventions
Being a Traveller in school	Prejudice	• Racism and bullying • Being stereotyped
	Other people	• Connection with professionals • Lack of connection with professionals • Making friends • Maintaining friends • Arguments
	Change between primary and secondary school	
	Feeling different	• 'Us' and 'them' • Lack of understanding • 'Two different lives' • Conflicted desires
Being a Traveller	Things are changing for the Traveller community	• The importance of education
	Hardships	• Not all Travellers • Minority group
Specific to individual participants	• The Traveller way of life • Values • Aspirations • The ideal school	

Candidate Themes- Review Cycle 2

Category	Themes	Subthemes
Education	Relationships	• Connection • Community • Friendships • Not wanting to be there
	Feeling different	• Prejudice • A lack of understanding • 'Us' and 'them' • 'Two different lives' • Conflicting desires
	Difficulties in school	• Homework difficulties • Disorderliness • Lack of curriculum applicability • Low self-efficacy • Some aspects of education are important
	Educational approaches	• Flexibility • Inclusivity • Independence and respect
Being a Traveller	Challenging stereotypes	• Things are changing • Not all Travellers
	Hardships	• Minority group • Travelling • Marriage
Specific to individual participants	• The Traveller way of life • Values • Aspirations • The ideal school	

Defining and Naming Themes- Final Themes

Category	Themes	Subthemes
Traveller Experiences of Education	Relationships	• Connection • Community • Friendships • Not wanting to be there
	Differences	• Prejudice • A lack of understanding • 'Us' and 'them' • 'Two different lives' • Conflicting desires
	Difficulties in school	• Homework difficulties • Disorderliness • Lack of curriculum applicability • Low self-efficacy • Some aspects of education are important
	Educational approaches	• Flexibility • Inclusivity • Independence and respect
Being a Traveller	Challenging stereotypes	• Things are changing • Not all Travellers
	Difficulties	• Minority group • Travelling • Marriage

Participant introductions were created at this stage to represent those data extracts supporting the values, strengths, ambitions, ideal school and views on Traveller life that were individual to each participant (see section 4.2).

Final Themes (Additional Review Following Corrections)

Category	Themes	Subthemes
Traveller Experiences of Education	Relationships	• Connection • Community • Friendships • Not wanting to be there
	Differences	• Prejudice • A lack of understanding • 'Us' and 'them'
	Identity	• Conflicting desires • 'Two different lives'
	Difficulties in school	• Homework difficulties • Disorderliness • Lack of curriculum applicability • Low self-efficacy • Some aspects of education are important
	Educational approaches	• Flexibility • Inclusivity • Independence and respect
Being a Traveller	Challenging stereotypes	• Things are changing • Not all Travellers
	Difficulties	• Minority group • Travelling • Marriage