

**REINTEGRATION INTO MAINSTREAM
SECONDARY SCHOOL FOLLOWING PERMANENT
EXCLUSION: EXPERIENCES AND
OPPORTUNITIES**

A thesis submitted to the University of Manchester for the degree
of Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology
in the Faculty of Humanities

2010

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ABSTRACT

Permanent exclusion is a serious disciplinary measure and the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF, 2008) advises that in most cases it is to be the last resort after a range of measures have been tried to improve a pupil's behaviour. Following permanent exclusion the local authority (LA) takes responsibility for a pupil's education and for most cases seeks to reintegrate the pupil into a new school. However the process of reintegration of permanently excluded pupils into mainstream school is regarded as difficult and research has shown that second permanent exclusions frequently occur fairly soon after entering a new school. In the last four years a 'Hard To Place Pupil Protocol' (HTPPP) has been published in all LAs as a statutory document. This seeks to encourage all schools to admit a fair share of excluded pupils in a timely manner. There has been no published research on this protocol to date. This study adopts a qualitative case study methodology, influenced by a social constructionist epistemological stance. The participants and methods utilised include interviews with reintegrating pupils, their parents and school staff supporting them, LA reintegration officers and headteachers. Additional methods included a focus group with members of the educational psychology team, a survey to secondary school staff, documentary evidence from pupil files and LA documents, educational psychologist (EP) case work evaluation and a reflexive research diary. This study includes analysis of the findings and presents pertinent themes emerging from the data. The results section indicates that the HTPPP has been effective in increasing the number of pupils being reintegrated. However there are some areas identified as being problematic. These include: decision making, perceived fairness of the protocol, the role of parents and the relationship between the protocol and permanent exclusion. The findings indicate that there are a number of factors that can facilitate or hinder a reintegration. These include: school support, communication, individual pupil attributes, sense of belonging, familial and societal factors and the impact of previous events including the original exclusion. The research findings indicate that EPs recognise their role in supporting the reintegration process through the application of psychological theory and knowledge, supporting complex cases, helping to change perspectives of the 'problem', working school staff and obtaining and championing the voice of the child. School staff consider the role of the EP as providing consultation around advice and strategies, it is also about providing a current assessment of a pupil's educational needs, offering individual therapeutic work with the pupil, supporting home-school relations and enabling a third party perspective. The discussion relates the themes to previous literature and identifies some variation in terms of the factors that facilitate or hinder reintegration, and concluded by questioning the feasibility of establishing such factors. The evidence collected to determine effectiveness of the HTPPP is helpful to establish the way in which it might be adapted to operate in the future. By considering the role of an EP in supporting the process, it is anticipated that the research will contribute to evidence based practice in this area.

Key words: Pupils, Exclusion, Reintegration, Case Study, Thematic Analysis

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BPS	British Psychological Society
BST	Behaviour Support Team
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families
EBD	Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties
ECM	Every Child Matters
EP	Educational Psychologist
EPT	Educational Psychology Team
EWO	Education Welfare Officer
HTPPP	Hard to Place Pupil Protocol
HT	Headteacher
IEP	Individual Education Plan
IBP	Individual Behaviour Plan
IRC	Inclusion Resource Centre
LA	Local Authority
LAs	Local Authorities
LSU	Learning Support Unit
PSP	Pastoral Support Programme
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
RQ	Research Question
SEAL	Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SFBT	Solution Focused Brief Therapy
TEP	Trainee Educational Psychologist

THE AUTHOR

After graduating with a first class honours in Psychology in 2003 I worked for a year in a pupil referral unit, supporting pupils who had been excluded from school. Following this I worked for two years co-ordinating education for pupils out of school for medical reasons or those excluded from school. I then worked for one year as an assistant educational psychologist prior to enrolling on the Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology at the University of Manchester in 2007. At this point I was studying for a Master of Research (MRes) in Education and Society, which is currently on hold whilst I complete the doctoral training.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It is a pleasure to thank those who made this thesis possible. Thanks to the tutor team for all of their support and expertise throughout the course. Particular thanks to Kath and Kevin for their inspiration, encouragement and availability; it really is very much appreciated. Thanks to my fellow trainees for their friendship and reassurance. This thesis would not have been possible without the participants who allowed me to parachute into their lives; a special thanks to them, in particular the young people and their families.

My deepest gratitude goes to my family for their support in many ways; this is dedicated to them. This thesis would not have been possible without their endless encouragement. You give me the confidence to face any challenge, and for that I am very grateful. Special thanks go to Owen, for your reassurance and patience throughout (and the endless cups of tea!), Mum and Dad for your championing and constant confidence in me to do anything in life, Vic and Jen for the joy and laughter you both bring, Mark for your interest in my work and grammatical expertise and my Grandparents and all of the Hill clan, for being the wonderful family to me that you are.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale

The process of reintegration into school, in the form that it is researched in this study, occurs following a pupil's permanent exclusion from school. In order to understand and theorise around the process of reintegration, it is important to first understand the process and factors in relation to permanent exclusion from school. Recent government guidance described the process of permanent exclusion:

'Where the Headteacher, in line with the statutory procedures, sends a pupil home from their school permanently following a serious breach of the school's behaviour policy'.

(Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), 2008, p. 12)

Permanent exclusion is therefore a severe disciplinary measure, and the DCSF (2008) advise that in most cases it is to be the last resort after a range of measures have been tried to improve the pupil's behaviour.

School exclusion appears to be disproportionately experienced by certain groups of pupils. Government statistics indicate that in 2007/08 boys represented seventy eight per cent of the total number of permanent exclusions (DCSF, 2009a). The rate of permanent exclusion was highest for gypsy/roma pupil groups, travellers of Irish heritage and black Caribbean ethnic groups (DCSF, 2009a). Research indicates that school exclusion appears to be disproportionately experienced by certain groups of pupils, including black children (Dunn, 2005; Parsons, 2005; Gordon, 2001), traveller children (Dunn, 2005; Gordon, 2001) and looked after children (Dunn, 2005; Parsons, Hayden, Godfrey, Howlett and Martin, 2001; Gordon, 2001; Munn and Lloyd, 2005). Whilst Watling

(2004) proposes that pupils with special educational needs are four times more likely to be excluded than their peers.

Although not qualified by national statistics, some researchers report that excluded pupils are likely to have come from 'broken homes' (Parsons et al, 2001) and are school-aged mothers (Gordon, 2001). At the same time some researchers suggest that pupils who have experienced abuse and neglect, as well as domestic violence are more likely to be excluded (Parsons et al, 2001; Munn and Lloyd, 2005) along with pupils whose parents are addicted to drugs (Munn and Lloyd, 2005). Rendall and Stuart (2005) explored the effect of the family on pupils who are permanently excluded and found those pupils who are excluded are more likely to have experienced overall more risk factors than those of comparison children. This was particularly the case for those children who had experienced early separation from their mother, and serious illness of a parent. Children who are eligible for free school meals are around three times more likely to receive either a permanent or fixed period exclusion than children who are not eligible for free school meals (DCSF, 2009a). It is evident therefore that pupils who are permanently excluded could be considered vulnerable for a number of reasons.

Berridge, Brodie, Pitts, Porteous and Tarling (2001), in investigating the effect of permanent exclusion on criminal activity, found through tracking the outcomes for pupils who were previously permanently excluded that:

'Permanent exclusion tended to trigger a complex chain of events which served to loosen the young person's affiliation and commitment to a conventional way of life' (p. vi).

Research indicates as well as an increased likelihood of anti-social behavior (Munn and Lloyd, 2005), exclusion and educational underachievement are often inextricably linked (Charlton, Panting and Willis, 2004).

One way to address some of the potential aforementioned negative outcomes for pupils who are permanently excluded is to reintegrate them into a new mainstream school. Following a permanent exclusion a LA takes responsibility for pupils and the DCSF (2008) suggest that pupils who have been permanently excluded need to be placed in a new school as quickly as possible for their full education to continue. Secondary schools, for the purposes of definition for this study, educate pupils aged 11 to 16 in key stages three and four. Secondary schools are mainstream provision and cater for a range of pupils with varied backgrounds and cognitive abilities. A number of subjects are taught, within the National Curriculum framework.

However the process of reintegration of permanently excluded pupils into mainstream school is regarded as difficult, and research has shown that second permanent exclusions tend to occur fairly soon after entering a new school. Daniels, Cole, Sellman, Sutton, Visser and Bedward (2003) report that reintegration into mainstream schools often fails and that it is only possible where schools are highly inclusive or where a young person is determined to make a success of the new placement.

Since the publication of the aforementioned research, there has been further government guidance on the management of pupils being reintegrated into school. In November 2004 the DCSF circulated guidance on tackling the issue of 'hard to place pupils', which includes pupils who have been permanently excluded. The guidance is based on the recognition that some schools, especially secondary schools, are required to admit a disproportionate number of hard to place pupils, as they have spaces available, whereas other schools are not expected to admit these pupils as they are oversubscribed. In 2006 a 'Hard to Place Pupil Protocol' (HTPPP) was published in all local authorities as a statutory document; this seeks to encourage all schools to admit a fair share of excluded pupils in a timely manner. There has been no published research on this protocol to date.

1.2 Context of the research

This research was conducted in a LA undergoing a large amount of restructuring as a result of local government review. As a result of this restructuring, there were opportunities for the EP team to consider new ways in which they might deliver their service to schools and the LA. Each member of the EP team was given in their allocation to schools and the LA, time to support 'vulnerable children'. The way in which this was realised differed for each individual EP, however the principal EP was keen for the team to continue and strengthen this work through locally evidence based practice and research.

As part of the 'vulnerable children' time allocation members of the EP team were asked to contribute to a termly meeting to discuss the reintegration of pupils into school following permanent exclusion, and were occasionally asked to support individual pupils as a result of this. This multi-agency meeting is a forum to discuss children who are currently out of school for a number of reasons, mainly through school exclusion. The researcher was asked to attend and contribute to this meeting in the first year of practice in the LA, and it is from this meeting that her personal interest in this area grew.

Through discussions about the commencement and planning of the research it became evident that LA education practitioners were concerned about the resistance of some schools to admit pupils as part of the HTPPP and felt that further investigation of this was required. Yearly exclusion and reintegration statistics were collected and these revealed a decrease in the percentage of those pupils who were permanently excluded being reintegrated into secondary schools. As there had been no formal evaluation of the HTPPP since its launch, it was deemed useful to investigate this further.

The views of stakeholders involved in the reintegration of pupils had never been sought within the local context. It was anticipated that

eliciting the views and experiences of the various stakeholders, including the pupils themselves about the process of reintegration, might offer some insights and ways forward into the way in which this phenomenon exists in the LA.

1.3 Overview and aims of the study

This research aims to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of reintegration into school following permanent exclusion in the local context. The specific aims of the study are three-fold:

- Firstly the intention is to consider the extent to which the HTPPP, in its current operationalised form, exists and contributes to the effective reintegration of pupils into mainstream school following permanent exclusion.
- Secondly the views of stakeholders, including pupils and their parents, school staff and LA staff, have not been previously gathered, and it is anticipated that this will establish the factors that facilitate or hinder reintegration into school following permanent exclusion within the local context.
- Lastly by considering the role of the EP in the process of reintegration will enable the EP team to support this group of pupils in more effectively targeted and appropriate ways.

This study adopts a qualitative case study methodology, influenced by a social constructionist epistemological stance. Multiple methods with different groups of participants were utilised to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomena in its different form. The methods used included interviews, focus groups and a survey. The research was completed with participants considered to be critical in the process of

reintegration in the LA and included reintegrating pupils themselves, their parents, school staff (including headteachers) and LA staff.

1.4 Research questions

The phenomenon of reintegration following permanent exclusion within the LA was explored through the following research questions.

Research question one:

To what extent is the hard to place pupil protocol effective in facilitating reintegration into school following permanent exclusion?

Research question two:

What factors do stakeholders¹ consider facilitate or hinder reintegration into school following permanent exclusion?

Research question three:

What is the role of the educational psychologist in supporting pupil reintegration following permanent exclusion?

¹ Stakeholders are permanently excluded pupils, their parents / carers, school staff and LA officers

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The literature review will provide an overview of research and guidance on reintegration into school following permanent exclusion. The term reintegration into school following permanent exclusion from school relates to those pupils who have been permanently excluded from their school and subsequently reintegrated into another mainstream school. In recent years, there has been an increasing amount of literature on pupil exclusion from schools. However there has been limited research on the subsequent reintegration of these pupils into mainstream school.

2.2 Approach taken to the literature review

Hart (1998) proposes that the purpose of a literature review within the research process is to place the research in the historical context, to distinguish what has been done and what needs to be done and to discover important variables that are relevant to the topic. The literature review aims to synthesise and gain a new perspective on the phenomenon of reintegration into mainstream school following permanent exclusion. Relationships between ideas and practice will be examined and the main methodologies and research techniques that have been used in previous research will be critically evaluated.

Whilst systematic literature reviews can be situated within positivist approaches to research (Torgerson, 2003), which is not compatible to the approach taken within this research, there was a need to conduct the literature review in a consistent and clear manner. Torgerson (2003) provides guidance on the completion of systematic literature reviews, a summary of this approach, and the way in which this influenced and guided the literature review in this research can be found in appendix 1.

Wallace and Wray (2006) advocate critical reading when completing a literature review, the purpose being to develop a sense of what constitutes robust research, to identify a gap in existing research and to develop researcher skills as a critical writer. The process of reviewing literature in the area of school exclusion and subsequent reintegration into school provides a platform to which this current research aims to contribute. The researcher has summarised and critically evaluated each piece of literature, in terms of aims, methodology and findings onto a summary document; a copy of the recording form can be found in appendix 2. This was informed by the guidance provided by Torgerson (2003). The consistency in record keeping has enabled comparisons between documents to be made more clearly.

The review of the literature was facilitated by the use of a number of databases. A summary of the systematic literature search can be found in appendix 3; this includes the databases searched and the definitions used. As a result of limited research in the area of reintegration into school following permanent exclusion, a number of associated terms were researched. The literature review provides a summary of the areas that have informed the current research.

The literature review will be presented in the following order:

- School exclusion
 - The socio-legislative context of permanent exclusion
 - The reasons for permanent exclusion from school
 - Pupils experiencing permanent exclusion
 - Research on outcomes for pupils who are permanently excluded
 - Education placement following permanent exclusion and prior to reintegration

- Reintegration into a new school following permanent exclusion

- Barriers to reintegration
- The Hard to Place Pupil Protocol
- Research on reintegration of pupils following permanent exclusion
- School transition
- Implications for practice from previous research
- The voice of stakeholders
 - The views of permanently excluded pupils
 - Obtaining parental views on school exclusion
- The role of EP within the process of reintegration

2.3 School exclusion

2.3.1 The socio-legislative context of permanent exclusion

The process of reintegration into school occurs following a pupil's permanent exclusion from school. In order to theorise around the process of reintegration, it is important to first understand the process and factors in relation to permanent exclusion from school. Government guidance describes the process of permanent exclusion:

'Where the Headteacher, in line with the statutory procedures, sends a pupil home from their school permanently following a serious breach of the school's behaviour policy' (Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), 2008, p. 12)

Permanent exclusion is a serious disciplinary measure, and the DCSF (2008) advise that in most cases it is to be the last resort after a range of other measures have been tried to improve the pupil's behaviour. Berridge et al (2001) describe exclusion as complex and something that

is not easy to define, suggesting that in some cases 'exclusion' may actually begin many months prior to the official permanent exclusion, in the sense of the pupil's gradual detachment from the school.

The term school exclusion was first introduced in the Education Act (1986), which made provision for three types of exclusion: permanent, fixed period and indefinite. In the Education Act (1993) the term indefinite was abolished and in the Education Act School Standards and Framework Act (1998) the period of fixed period exclusion was extended to total forty-five days across the school year (DCSF, 2008).

2.3.2 The reasons for permanent exclusion from school

There are a number of reasons why a headteacher may permanently exclude a pupil. The latest statistics to be published by the DCSF, for the academic year 2007/08, indicate the most common reason for exclusion, for both permanent and fixed period, was persistent disruptive behaviour and physical assault against an adult (DCSF, 2009a). Some 30.9 per cent of permanent exclusions and 23.2 per cent of fixed period exclusions were due to persistent disruptive behaviour, which indicates that exclusions occur following a long line of incidents, and on the whole are not for 'one-off' isolated incidents. The next most common reason for exclusion, physical assault against an adult, accounted for 11.6 per cent of permanent exclusions and 4.7 per cent of fixed period exclusions.

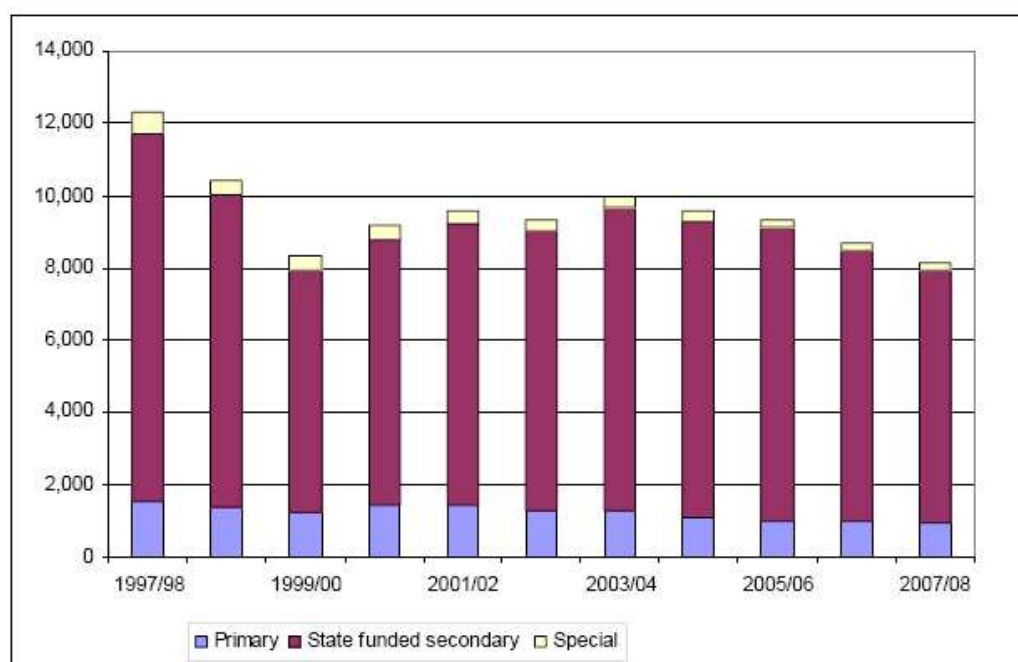
These statistics represent the published reasons for exclusion, however the more qualitative and contextual reasons for exclusion are omitted. These are speculated within the research literature and include a range of factors perceived to contribute to a pupil's permanent exclusion. Charlton et al (2004) cite 'inadequate' home backgrounds as being a contributory factor in causing the exclusion. Thomson and Russell (2009) agree, in describing how for some pupils there are:

'Peer, family and community pressures and needs that contribute to the kinds of school behaviours that lead to exclusion' (p. 425).

Additionally school related issues have been noted as contributing to exclusion from school. Charlton et al (2004) indicate that school pressures to raise academic and attendance profiles may increase the likelihood of pupil exclusion. Similarly Webb and Vulliamy (2003) describe how school related weaknesses could overlook, create or exacerbate pupils' personal academic and social needs.

The DCSF (2009a) statistics reveal that the number of pupils that are permanently excluded nationally is gradually decreasing; figure 1.1 represents this. The chart details the number of pupils nationally who have been permanently excluded from primary, secondary and special school between academic years 1997/98 to 2007/08. The figure represents the most recent data set available from the DCSF at this time.

Figure 2.1 Number of permanent exclusions from school 1997/98 – 2007/08 (DCSF, 2009a)



1. From 2000/01 includes data for CTCs and Academies.

There were 8,130 permanent exclusions from primary, secondary and special schools in 2007/08, which represents 0.11 per cent of the total number of school-aged pupils and equates to eleven pupils in every 10,000. Compared with the previous year the number of permanent exclusions has decreased by 6.4 per cent.

The decrease is clearly demonstrated in figure 1.1. This could be indicative of a number of factors. It may represent pressure on headteachers and LAs to reduce the number of permanent exclusions through maintaining pupils in schools rather than excluding. This may be particularly so as LAs are required to publish school exclusion statistics, are encouraged to question headteachers decisions to exclude and to influence schools to reduce exclusion (DCSF, 2008).

It could also indicate that the necessity to exclude is lessening, and that generally behaviour within schools is improving. This may be a result of increased targeted work with pupils in an attempt avoid exclusion. This

priority has been developed from government funding enabling local authorities to create teams, such as behaviour improvement teams that aim to address and improve behaviour within schools.

Following the recent exclusion statistics release, the then government children's minister, Dawn Primarolo said that programmes such as Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL), which help young people to understand the consequences of their actions and are taught how to respond to situations responsibly, has had a positive impact on discipline. The children's minister clearly outlined the government stance on behaviour in schools, in light of the exclusion statistics by suggesting:

"We can always do more and that is why we have strengthened home-school agreements to make sure the worst behaved children have clear expectations of behaviour and schools can force parents to take action if they do not live up to these expectations."²

Government guidance (DCSF, 2008) on the prevention of exclusions provides a summary of a number of additional measures that can be taken in an attempt to avoid permanent exclusion; these have remained consistent with previous guidance on the avoidance of permanent exclusion. These include school engagement with parents, a change of teaching class, temporary placement in the school's learning support unit (LSU) and curriculum alternatives at key stage four.

Further measures recommended in government guidance (DCSF, 2008) include consultation with the school special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) for possible interventions within the school, assessment of special educational needs, and allocation of key worker or referral to a specific support service. However the extent to which government exclusion guidance is constructive and helpful is contested

² <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/8176140.stm>

in the literature; Parsons (2005) declares that government guidance on exclusions is:

‘Controlling and oppositional...diverting the unwanted behaviour and not about meeting unmet needs’ (p. 188).

In addition to Parson’s (2005) criticism of government guidance for an overemphasis on ‘within child’ reasons for exclusion, Munn and Lloyd (2005) note that the focus of research regarding disaffection and behavioural problems is about ‘fixing’ the child. One of the limitations of these criticisms is that the authors, whilst recognising the restrictions of the guidance, do not provide alternative solutions.

Recently issued government guidance (DCSF, 2008) places an emphasis on reviewing pupils’ learning needs, particularly literacy skills that may be impacting on pupil behaviour. The guidance also advises schools to review any social, emotional or behavioural needs the pupil may have that could be affecting their behaviour and provide a programme to develop these skills as appropriate. Again this reinforces the within-child notion of behavioural difficulties.

However the guidance does also consider the contextual factors of pupil behaviour, and suggests considering the professional development needs of staff, to ensure they are given guidance, advice and professional development opportunities in relation to meeting the range of needs of children and young people at risk of exclusion. This approach considers management of pupil behaviour not just at a pupil level, but highlights a whole school approach.

The decrease in exclusions may also indicate an increase in alternative means to exclusion. Some researchers (Charlton et al, 2004; Thomson and Russell, 2009; Webb and Vulliamy, 2003) argue that official exclusion statistics are skewed, unreliable and invalid. Specifically it has been suggested that official exclusion figures underestimate the

magnitude of the problem for reasons including pupils moving schools under a 'managed move'. This involves a pupil moving schools instead of receiving an official permanent exclusion. Charlton et al (2004) note that this procedure transfers a 'problem' pupil to an under-subscribed school, thereby avoiding formal exclusion procedures. The DCSF (2008) guidance advocates the use of managed moves to 'enable the pupil to have a fresh start in a new school' (p. 10). However the extent to which this is recorded or regulated is absent in guidance and the research literature.

Recent media coverage of published exclusions statistics indicates that there is a perception that the statistics are not representative of the reality of permanent exclusions. On the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) news website, the following was recently quoted:

'Liberal Democrat spokesman David Laws said: "Although permanent exclusions are down, there is a strong suspicion that the government is fiddling the figures by not declaring the transfer from one school to another of children who have effectively been excluded"'³.

This indicates that there is a perception that the exclusion statistics are inaccurate and that whilst managed moves are noted within the guidance as being a strategy for pupils at risk of exclusion, they are in essence exclusion and should possibly be considered as such.

Similarly Thomson and Russell (2009) note the use of 'cooling off' days and unofficial exclusions, which are omitted from the national statistics. Whilst Webb and Vulliamy (2003) describe the avoidance of exclusion by providing an alternative curriculum through work experience, further educational enrolments and dual registration at a pupil referral unit whilst remaining on school roll. The purpose of highlighting this research is to

³ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/8176140.stm>

emphasise that the trend of exclusions is disordered and that attempts to gain a complete picture, in relation to excluded pupils, may be a challenging task. It also serves to illustrate the large amount of resources and approaches available to schools to encourage the prevention of permanent exclusion. This would indicate that the pupils who are permanently excluded have exhausted the support systems within a school, to the extent that they are no longer able to maintain their school place.

Some theorists argue that there is an element of situational bias in determining which pupils are permanently excluded. Vulliamy and Webb (2000) suggest exclusion figures, as a whole should be rejected, as they are socially constructed, as different professionals attach different meanings to different events. This therefore implies that a pupil may behave in the same way in one school and will be permanently excluded, but in another school may not be subsequently excluded. Vulliamy and Webb (2000) describe how a pupil may find him or herself in a social 'game', in which others are constructing reality for that pupil. The headteacher of the school ultimately makes the decision whether to exclude or not, and so it is their interpretation of an event or a series of events which determines that decision.

Osler and Vincent (2003) provided summaries of the views of pupil referral unit (PRU) staff in relation to permanent exclusion. PRUs provide education for pupils excluded from school and will be further examined in section 2.3.5. On the whole the staff believed that the practice of exclusion often reflected mainstream teacher stress and a lack of alternative strategies. The 'blame' for the exclusion was placed with the mainstream school staff and not on individual pupil behaviour. This view is most accurately demonstrated through the following quotation from a teacher at a PRU:

'I've got a theory about exclusion...if you look at the case papers of any of our kids, what is it about the day they were

excluded that was different from all other days when they were behaving badly but were kept in school? It's always about the staff...about how the teachers were that day. It isn't actually about how the kids were...I think it's about tolerance'

(Osler and Vincent, 2003, p. 114).

The difficulty around bias in the decision to exclude a pupil can be illustrated through the exclusion appeals procedure. Parents have a right to appeal against their child's permanent exclusion. In 2007/08 nationally there were seven hundred and eighty appeals lodged by parents against the permanent exclusion of their child (DCSF, 2009a). Of the appeals heard, twenty-six per cent were determined in favour of the parent, which represents an increase of 1.3 percentage points since the previous year. This may indicate that of all permanent exclusions issued, approximately one quarter are deemed improper.

As part of the appeal procedure, if the appeal is determined in favour of the parent, the appeal panel can direct reinstatement of the pupil. Alternatively they can decide that whilst the exclusion was unlawful, reinstatement of the pupil at the school would not be appropriate, as a result of a breakdown in relationship between the school and pupil (DCSF, 2008). Of the appeals determined in favour of the parent, reinstatement of the pupil was directed for just thirty-five percent of cases, a decrease of almost five percentage points since the previous year. This illustrates the extent to which relationships between school staff, the pupil and their family may have broken down, by the point of permanent exclusion.

Whilst the views represented in some of the research papers described (Vulliamy and Webb, 2000; Osler and Vincent, 2003) have some negative connotations towards mainstream school support and staff, it must be recognised that challenging pupil behaviour can present

significant difficulties to school staff. Charlton et al (2004) describe that the literature is:

'Awash with findings that the consequences of the general disobedience and physical aggression directed by many of those at risk of exclusion towards pupils and staff can impact adversely upon the whole school' (p. 262).

2.3.3 Pupils experiencing permanent exclusion

In 2007/08 the permanent exclusion rate for boys was approximately three and a half times higher than that for girls, with boys representing seventy eight per cent of the total number of permanent exclusions (DCSF, 2009a). In 2007/08 the fixed period exclusion rate for boys was almost three times higher than that for girls, with boys accounting for seventy-five per cent of all fixed period exclusions (DCSF, 2009a). The ratio of permanent exclusion between boys and girls has remained stable over the last five years with boys representing around 80 per cent of the total number of permanent exclusions each year.

The latest DCSF (2009a) statistics indicate that boys are more likely to be excluded, both permanently and for a fixed period, at a younger age than girls, with very few girls being excluded during the primary school years. The most common point for both boys and girls to be excluded is at ages thirteen and fourteen, equivalent to year groups nine and ten; around fifty-two per cent of all permanent exclusions were of pupils from these age groups.

The DCSF (2009a) statistics report that pupils with recognised special educational needs (SEN), both with statements and those at other stages on the SEN code of practice, are more likely to be permanently excluded than those pupils with no SEN. In 2007/08, thirty-three in every ten thousand pupils with statements of SEN and thirty-eight in every ten thousand pupils with SEN without statements were permanently

excluded from school. This compares with four in every ten thousand pupils with no SEN.

Watling (2004) proposes that pupils with SEN, those at all stages code of practice and with a range of SEN, are four times more likely to be excluded than their peers. The DCSF (2009a) statistics reveal that since Watling's estimation in 2004 this gap has increased, as currently pupils with SEN, both with and without statements, are over eight times more likely to be permanently excluded than those pupils with no SEN. The latest figures show a small decrease in the rate of fixed period exclusions in secondary schools for those pupils with SEN compared with the previous year. In 2007/08, the rate of fixed period exclusion for those pupils with statements was 30.8 per cent; the rate for those with SEN without statements was 28.9 per cent. This compares to 5.1 per cent for those pupils with no identified SEN. Therefore permanent exclusion appears to be most common for certain pupils, specifically boys, pupils who are secondary school age and those with SEN.

Research indicates that school exclusion appears to be disproportionately experienced by other groups of pupils, including black children (Dunn, 2005; Parsons, 2005; Gordon, 2001), traveller children (Dunn, 2005; Gordon, 2001) and looked after children (Dunn, 2005; Parsons et al, 2001; Gordon, 2001; Munn and Lloyd, 2005). Government statistics indicate that the rate of permanent exclusion is highest for gypsy / roma pupil groups, travellers of Irish heritage and black Caribbean ethnic groups. Black Caribbean pupils are three times more likely to be permanently excluded than the school population as a whole (DCSF, 2009a).

Although not qualified by national statistics, some researchers report that excluded pupils are likely to have come from 'broken homes' (Parsons et al, 2001) and are school-aged mothers (Gordon, 2001). Some researchers suggest that pupils who have experienced abuse and neglect, as well as domestic violence are more likely to be excluded

(Parsons et al, 2001; Munn and Lloyd, 2005) along with pupils with parents addicted to drugs (Munn and Lloyd, 2005).

Children who are eligible for free school meals are around three times more likely to receive either a permanent or fixed period exclusion than children who are not eligible for free school meals (DCSF, 2009a). Following the recent statistics release, there was an increased media interest in the pupils who are being permanently excluded. The BBC news website reported the views of Liberal Democrat spokesman David Laws:

'Yet again, we can see a divide between rich and poor in our education system, with those children entitled to free school meals being far more likely to be excluded'.⁴

The purpose of this literature review is not to consider the reasons for this disparity, nor to debate the possible active, institutional or unconscious discrimination of these pupils in the education system. Whilst that it worthy of discussion, the purpose is to describe those pupils who are excluded, and to consider the context in which they find themselves. It is important to recognise that whilst the statistics and research indicate that the cohort of pupils who have been permanently excluded are small in number, they represent a very vulnerable group of pupils.

Whilst the research provides an indication of the groups of pupils who are more at risk of being permanently excluded Kinder, Halsey, Moor and White (2000) suggest that excluded pupils are not a homogenous group. Any research completed should therefore recognise the variance with the group of excluded pupils. Additionally this may make the generalisability of much published research on this issue problematic. Parsons et al (2001) conclude there is *'little doubting that excluded pupils*

⁴ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/8176140.stm>

are amongst the most vulnerable young people in society today' (p. 4), which provides a rationale for research with this vulnerable group of pupils.

2.3.4 Outcomes for pupils who are permanently excluded

Literature on the effects of permanent exclusion on children's lives, both in the short-term and long-term yield concerning outcomes. Research conducted by the charity 'Save the Children' (2005) concludes that the permanent exclusion process risks further marginalising those already vulnerable to social exclusion. Berridge et al (2001), in investigating the impact of permanent exclusion on criminal activity, found through tracking the outcomes for pupils who were previously permanently excluded that:

'Permanent exclusion tended to trigger a complex chain of events which served to loosen the young person's affiliation and commitment to a conventional way of life' (p. vi).

The relationship between permanent exclusion and anti-social behaviours has been widely investigated. In 1999 Parsons raised concerns about the growing evidence linking exclusion from school with anti-social behaviour in the community (Parsons, 1999). Since then, Berridge et al (2001) theorised that permanent exclusion represents an important and detrimental transition that can be characterised by the loss of time structures, a re-casting of identity, a changed relationship with parents and siblings, the erosion of contact with pro-social peers and adults and closer association with similarly situated young people. This will ultimately increase likelihood of wider social exclusion (Munn and Lloyd, 2005).

Cullingford (1999) found that many pupils who are excluded go on to commit criminal acts. Similarly Vulliamy and Webb (2000) describe that a high proportion of the UK prison population has previously experienced

school exclusion and that most school-aged offenders sentenced in court have experience of exclusion or truancy. Munn and Lloyd (2005) summarised three previously conducted studies, and found that in all three of the studies, pupils were aware of the potentially negative consequences of exclusion for their future prospects. As well as an increased likelihood of anti-social behaviour, Charlton et al (2004) note that exclusion and educational underachievement are often inextricably linked, perhaps due to an inevitable disruption in education. It is therefore evident that those pupils excluded from school, either as a result of the school exclusion or other factors, may find themselves disadvantaged within society.

2.3.5 Education placement following permanent exclusion and prior to reintegration

Following permanent exclusion, there is often a period of time that the pupil spends out of school. According to Hallam and Castle (2000) this leads to the disruption of efficient and effective provision of and entitlement to education for many pupils, with a sizeable proportion of pupils disappearing from the education system. Once a pupil is excluded, and prior to their reintegration into mainstream school there is a requirement for LAs to provide full-time education to the pupil. Usually this is through education in a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). DCSF guidance (2008) notes that PRUs may provide full or part time education and are described therefore as 'legally a type of school' (p. 10). They may offer provision directly or can organise packages of educational provision for pupils of compulsory secondary school age involving other providers.

Parsons (1999) questions the extent to which excluded pupils are equipped with skills, during the exclusion period, to manage themselves on return to school and additionally whether schools are disposed as institutions to face the challenges and responsibilities of receiving an excluded pupil. Atkinson, Johnson, Kinder and Wilkin (2004) identified the need for a study into the processes and components of the

reintegration strategies in order to ascertain key factors in successful post-exclusion support.

Meo and Parker (2004) explored through a qualitative research project within a PRU the strategies adopted by a small group of behaviour support service teachers in order to achieve their everyday occupational goals. The research methods used were based upon observation of every day life at the PRU. The PRU did not cater solely for permanently excluded pupils; rather it educated a mix of pupils who were permanently excluded, on a fixed period exclusion away from school or on a time-limited placement (for example one term) at the PRU from their mainstream school. The authors found that despite the teachers' commitment to the reintegration of excluded pupils into mainstream schools, the pedagogic practices adopted by the teachers served to amplify rather than moderate pupil disaffection and behaviour.

The authors noted that the ideology of the PRU failed to articulate the aims of mainstream schooling. The differences in ideology, and presumably procedures and approaches, will inevitably make the reintegration for pupils into school following a period of time in the PRU more difficult. The research paper provides a full description of daily life at the PRU, through observational data demonstrating the lengthy time that the researchers spent in the provision. One criticism of this study is that the argument presented by Meo and Parker (2004) relies too heavily on a qualitative analysis of observation. Whilst the research paper does not analyse or interpret these events in relation to theory or previous research, it does provide an informative and detailed summary of the challenges presented daily at a PRU. The research paper suggests that further research in this area is needed, particularly the role of PRUs in supporting reintegrating pupils into mainstream school.

2.4 Reintegration into a new school following permanent exclusion

One way to address some of the potential aforementioned negative outcomes for children who are permanently excluded is to reintegrate the pupil into a different mainstream school. The DCSF (2008) suggest that pupils who have been permanently excluded from school need to be placed in a new school or setting as quickly as possible for their full education to continue. Kinder et al (2000) link speed of reintegration, following permanent exclusion, to success in the placement.

The DCSF (2008) notes that often the reintegration will be following a period in alternative provision, where the pupil's individual needs and issues that may have led to their exclusion are addressed. However there is some variation as it is also advised that for some pupils an early start in a new school is the best solution. This represents a mixed message; in some cases a quick reintegration is appropriate, and for others a short placement in alternative provision is needed. It would appear therefore that the guidance is advocating professional judgment and decision-making for each case. Nevertheless the DCSF (2008) recommend that for all pupils, reintegration plans are drawn up within one month of a permanent exclusion and agreed by all parties, including LA officers and parents.

Parsons and Howlett (2000) suggest approximately two thirds of permanently excluded pupils subsequently return to a new mainstream school; however as part of Parson and Howlett's (2000) research only 31% of the sample transferred to another school. Charlton et al (2004) further estimate that just 15% of pupils are reintegrated into a new school following permanent exclusion. These statistics show a disparity, and must provide an estimated figure, as the DCSF do not collect nor publish reintegration rates. Additionally the research was completed a number of years ago, and there has since been new guidance published, such as the HTPPP, which is discussed in section 2.4.2.

The process of reintegration of permanently excluded pupils into mainstream school is regarded as difficult (Berridge et al, 2001). Research has shown that second permanent exclusions tend to occur fairly soon after entering a new school; Berridge et al (2001) described pupils' experiences of being reintegrated; one pupil is quoted as perceiving teachers to be 'just waiting' for him to misbehave. Whilst another pupil felt that teachers were waiting for him to '*step out of line*' (Berridge et al, 2001, p. 30).

Parsons et al (2001) followed up through case records the outcomes of pupils six years following their permanent exclusion from primary school. They found that 46% of the pupils received subsequent primary school exclusions and 36% received exclusions in their secondary school education, although it is not noted whether these were fixed period or permanent exclusions. Daniels et al (2003) report that reintegration into mainstream school often fails, and that it is only possible where schools were highly inclusive or where a young person was determined to make a success of the new placement. Similarly Kinder et al (2000) attribute successful reintegration to the ability of adults to build positive personal relationships with young people, indicating this is an important part of the reintegration process. This identifies that it requires a commitment from both the pupil and the school to ensure the reintegration is a success.

There is a wealth of literature, as described in section 2.3.4 that details the negative life effects of permanent exclusion. It might be assumed that reintegration would be essential to the success of pupils in re-entering the education system, and to enable them to leave school with the best possible outcomes. The potential benefits of reintegration are clear; the pupil is provided with a fresh start in a school, pupils are able to be educated with their peers, to continue their education, and to have the opportunity to achieve the Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes (DCSF, 2003). Indeed Lown (2005) suggests:

‘For permanently excluded pupils, reintegration into new schools could be viewed as an attempt to reabsorb them into...a social moral order’ (p. 46).

The ECM outcomes are universal ambitions that are mutually reinforcing, for every child and young person (DCSF, 2003). They provide a holistic portrayal of the emotional, physical and social needs of children to fully thrive in society. For example, children and young people learn and thrive when they are healthy and feel safe. Any child or young person who is anxious, unhappy at school, suffers from low self-esteem, has behaviour difficulties or is badly behaved is unlikely to be able to make the most of their education (DCSF, 2003).

It is likely that permanently excluded pupils who do not receive full-time education within a school are at risk of not achieving the five ECM outcomes. The researcher has considered the ECM outcomes and using the evidence and research base described within this chapter has mapped the possible issues in relation to pupils who have been permanently excluded; this can be found in table 2.1 overleaf.

Table 2.1 School exclusion and the Every Child Matters agenda

ECM Outcome	Pertinence in relation to permanent exclusion
Be Healthy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a child is not in school they will not have access to the healthy schools agenda, so that they can learn about healthy lifestyles. • Pupils will not have access to regular physical education. • Where eligible pupils will not have their allocation of free school meals. • The emotional wellbeing and self-esteem of pupils not attending school are likely to decrease.
Stay Safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children who do not regularly attend school are at risk of not being protected by safeguarding measures. • In order for children to feel safe they must be educated within a culture where children and young people are not at risk of fear and prejudice. • Pupils who have been excluded have been rejected from school and so may feel prejudiced.
Enjoy and Achieve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a child is excluded they are at risk of not progressing as well as they have the potential to, as they may not be provided with equitable education rights. • Pupils are excluded from schools that are able to meet their needs and so through this they cannot fully participate in school life and will inevitably fall behind. • Additionally children who have been excluded may not have the same access to leisure activities associated with extra-curricular activities at school.
Make a positive contribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening to the voice of children who have been excluded is critical to ensure they contribute to plans made for them. • If a child is not attending school they are not able to make a positive contribution • Within the community pupils may feel stigmatised, particularly if the community is based around school. Pupils may feel marginalized and de-valued within the community as a result of their exclusion. • There is research to suggest children who are excluded are more likely to subsequently commit crimes (Vulliamy and Webb, 2000)
Achieve economic well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools are the foundation for lifelong learning; therefore if school has not been a positive experience for a child who has been permanently excluded, or they have not gained basic literacy and numeracy skills, they are unlikely to engage in further education to secure qualifications and employment.

Therefore the rationale for reintegration is evident, as pupils are able to be educated in schools where they are provided with the opportunity to achieve the ECM outcomes. However despite the rationale, Parsons and Howlett (2000) stress:

‘The reintegration of permanently excluded children back into mainstream school is known to be a difficult process meeting with limited success’ (p. 3).

Brodie (2000) has observed that when pupils with transient educational backgrounds, such as those pupils excluded from school, arrive at the new school there may be little information about their backgrounds which leads to difficulty in assessing them or understanding and dealing appropriately with their behaviour. Similarly in interviews with key stakeholders by Berridge et al (2001) it appears that a lack of understanding, information or appreciation of a pupil’s background can lead to a one-dimensional knowledge, that can provide a low threshold from which the new school may subsequently exclude the pupil.

Furthermore there are additional issues related to such a process, particularly as permanent exclusion signifies the final step for dealing with disciplinary offences following a wide range of other strategies that have been tried without success. The DCSF (2008) note permanent exclusion is an acknowledgement by the school that it has exhausted all available strategies for dealing with the child and should normally be used as a last resort. Berridge et al (2001) found in their research that there was no evidence that schools permanently excluded students for trivial or ‘one-off’ infractions and that in the main, schools showed considerable tenacity, compassion and ingenuity in the face of some very testing behaviour.

Since permanent exclusion is an acknowledgement of a school not being able to provide an education for a child, as a consequence of their

behaviour, it begs the question whether a new school placement will necessarily prove any more successful. Lown (2007) contests that it is:

'Foolhardy to assume that permanently excluded pupils should always be returned to new schools because of commitment to the idea that children and young people are bound to be better off included in mainstream settings' (p. 100).

In fact Lown (2007) questions why reintegration of permanently excluded pupils into mainstream school should be viewed as something desirable to work towards. The DCSF (2008) describe how even with the best efforts in preparing for the return to school including support on arrival, reintegration will not necessarily be successful.

The DCSF website notes that the vision for full time education for all pupils does not mean an identical curriculum for all, but rather:

'An entitlement for all young people to access the education that is best suited to them, in a setting appropriate to what they are learning and where standards are assured' (DCSF, 2009b).

Therefore in practice it would be relevant to research what is presented as pupils' educational entitlement, at the point of reintegration into school.

The DCSF (2004) study into good practice around reintegration describes how one LA has drawn up 'readiness packs' which include a frank account of the pupil's behaviour and academic performance, background information, the pupils behaviour in the PRU, specific issues for the pupil and the type of teacher they may respond well to. The research did not evaluate the reception of these booklets or perceived usefulness and accuracy; rather they were named as a strategy. It would

be useful to explore the factors around readiness for reintegration and the information provided to schools.

Studies tend to be based upon negative effects, as discussed here and fail to address some positive effects of permanent exclusion, like a fresh start and gaining access to support that might not have been available prior to permanent exclusion. There are some studies based upon the facilitators to effective reintegration and these are referenced later in this review.

2.4.1 Barriers to reintegration

A DCSF (2004) commissioned report presents the main barriers to the reintegration of permanently excluded pupils, through case study fieldwork. These include purely systematic and school level barriers, representative of the range of interviewees which are limited to school staff and LA officers. The barriers included:

- School reluctance to admit excluded pupils and a lack of commitment when receiving the pupil.
- Home and family issues including the degree of interest and support offered by the family.
- Delayed admission of the pupil into the school.
- Lack of information exchange between schools so there is limited information to base reintegration plans.
- Limited support in schools.
- Tensions between offering reintegration and education, specifically where interim education providers may become 'holding centres' to prevent disengagement (DCSF, 2004).

One of the key barriers to successful reintegration in the literature is that of school systems and attitude. Cole and Visser (2000) recognise that schools can be highly resistant to admitting pupils excluded from other

schools. Furthermore Kinder et al (2000) found that '*schools opposition to reintegration could make the process virtually impossible*' (p. 55). Lown (2007) observed that whilst schools can be reluctant to accept previously excluded pupils, they may be pressured into accepting these pupils, which may result in a sense of injustice that other schools are excluding more than are being reintegrated. In practice Berridge et al (2001) found that some schools do in fact admit higher numbers of permanently excluded pupils than others.

This means that the pupil may meet with hostility and reluctance from school staff when they start at their new school. Daniels et al (2003) describe how pupils might have to contend with '*outright hostility and negative preconceptions about them*' (p. 153). Additionally, Daniels et al (2003) describe how pupils who have spent some time out of a formal school setting may find it hard to adjust to 'normal' school rules and expectations. Further it can be more difficult second time round because the pupil is entering a new and strange environment for which they might not have been fully prepared (Brodie, 2000).

As well as difficulties for the individual pupil, Dobson and Henthorne (1999) observed that admission of an excluded pupil from another school can present major challenges to the receiving school and that school staff may be ill equipped to support the pupil (Berridge et al, 2001). The research outlined here indicates that an area identified as being problematic in the smooth reintegration of pupils may be that of school staff, both in terms of their attitudes towards such pupils and the difficulty they have in coordinating the reintegration and the challenges that may bring.

2.4.2 The Hard to Place Pupil Protocol

Since the aforementioned research has been completed there has been further government guidance on the management of pupils being reintegrated into school. In November 2004 the DCSF circulated

guidance on tackling the issue of 'hard to place pupils', which includes pupils who have been permanently excluded (DCSF, 2009c). The guidance recognises that some schools, especially secondary schools, are required to admit a disproportionate number of hard to place pupils, as they have spaces available, whereas other schools are not expected to admit these pupils as they are oversubscribed.

As a result of this inequitable distribution, each LA is required to issue a 'hard to place pupil protocol'⁵ (HTPPP) whereby pupils who have been permanently excluded will be given priority for admission over other pupils. All schools in the LA are required to sign up to the protocol and headteachers are expected to respond immediately to requests for admission so that the admission of the pupil is not unduly delayed. The HTPPP was introduced into the LA at the start of the 2006/07 academic year and there has been no research within the literature on the HTPPP. It would be helpful in the local as well as wider context to clarify the extent to which the protocol facilitates reintegration.

The protocol works on the basis that if a school permanently excludes a pupil, they move higher up the list of schools expected to take the next permanently excluded pupil. An LA reintegration officer then decides which school is next on the list to admit a pupil, and approaches that school. Parental views on the school chosen and geographical factors are taken into consideration, but these will not override the protocol in terms of the school chosen according to the ranking table. Headteachers can appeal against the decision and present their case to a panel that includes LA officers and headteacher colleagues.

⁵ The name of the Hard to Place Pupil Protocol has recently been amended in title to 'In-Year Fair Access Protocol' (DCSF School Admissions Code, 2009c); it remains the same in format and content. For the purposes of the write up of this research the protocol and procedure will be named Hard to Place Pupil Protocol. An anonymised copy of the HTPPP can be found in appendix 24. The HTPPP has been agreed to support the admission of a number of pupils including looked after children and traveller children. However it almost exclusively supports the reintegration of pupils following permanent exclusion and it is this admission as part of the HTPPP which is being evaluated in this study.

Prior to the introduction of the HTPPP, the DCSF (2004) researched the approaches taken to coordinating the reintegration of permanently excluded pupils. The research found that panels where schools are represented and make a group decision on the placement of these pupils could be an effective way of instigating corporate responsibility between the LA, schools and other agencies. However more often than not, the decision-making was based on internal discussions within the reintegration services. In the LA in which this study will be based, the LA reintegration officer makes the decision regarding choice of school.

This indicates there may be LA systemic factors that impact on the success of pupils being reintegrated in terms of the decisions that lead to the reintegration and the speed of these procedures. These factors could be researched through the exploration of psychological theories. Decision-making theory, when looked at as a process of rational choices, is based on knowledge of the alternatives and consequences, as well as existing rules (Salo, 2008). Therefore the decisions reached in terms of the process of reintegration, both in terms of speed and chosen school for reintegration are important factors to consider.

Harris (1999) describes how a great deal of social psychological research has focused on the distinction between 'informational' and 'normative' influence in decision-making. The latter implies that decisions are based on achieving acceptance and status through conforming; therefore decisions may be made that are 'popular'. The former implies that judgments are made on factual information about the issue, which implies more impartiality. Harris (1999) notes however that professionals inevitably bring to decision making their own personal histories, their experience of previous cases with the school and their personal moral values. Therefore it could be considered that impartiality and normative decision-making may be unachievable.

Hart (1985) suggests that the quality of decisions should be judged against these three interrelated criteria:

1. *Outcome*: The result of the decision into which school the pupil is to be reintegrated.
2. *Process*: The degree of fairness, openness and collaboration in reaching the decision. Therefore this will relate to the openness of the protocol and the fair distribution of schools admitting these 'hard to place' pupils.
3. *Content*: This relates to the degree of 'enlightenment' or understanding individuals have of the reasons for the decisions.

Therefore prior to a permanently excluded pupil starting at a school there may be complex decision-making procedures that take into consideration a number of factors, which may impact upon the initial stages of the reintegration.

Harris (1999) researched the process of decision making when deciding if a LA should undertake a statutory assessment of a child's needs. The process and criteria described within Harris's (1999) research can be applied to that of the decision making processes around the reintegration of permanently excluded pupils. That is, a LA officer is charged with the responsibility of deciding which school to reintegrate a pupil into by ensuring they make a quality decision about if it is the most appropriate action for meeting the pupil's needs. Harris (1999) suggests that it should be based on a process that is transparent and accessible to the pupil's parents, the school and other key professionals and that it incorporates a clear rationale that can be understood and accepted by key partners.

Salo (2008) describes how appropriate norms and procedures may vary when a person, such as the headteacher, moves from one arena to another. For example they may move from a meeting with the LA officer to agree the reintegration on one hand to a school staff meeting to discuss the reintegration. Accordingly, decision-making processes might become more of a search for appropriate rules to follow rather than a straightforward use of given rules and procedures, for example the HTPPP, by which the goals are reached (Salo, 2008). The views of

headteachers on the practical application of the HTPPP would strengthen the existing literature in this area.

Harris (1999) describes how the notion that professionals make objective, rational decisions in the best interests of their clients has come under growing attack, citing Freud as alerting us to the influence unconscious motivation may have on our actions. Harris (1999) suggests that professionals may advertise themselves as people who are problem-solvers, but the idealisation of professional activity as rational and as problem-solving made rigorous by the application of scientific theory and technique has been strongly criticised by Schon (1988). Schon (1988) argues that professionals often face circumstances that are both complex and unique where there is no universal agreement as to desired outcomes.

It is therefore inevitable that each case will bring unique circumstances and LA officers will be required to make decisions based upon those circumstances. These decisions may be complex and require consideration of a number of issues, such as school staff views, parental views and the needs of the pupil. Indeed in the case of reintegration following permanent exclusion it is inevitable that decisions will be made that are not wholly supported by all stakeholders including the pupil, family and school.

Doyle (2001) investigated the role of a reintegration readiness scale to facilitate professional decision making in deeming whether pupils being educated in a nurture group setting should return to mainstream school. The research took the form of case study methodology in monitoring the reintegration of two pupils back into mainstream classes. This represents a very small sample; however the author reports that the use of the reintegration readiness scale facilitated the successful reintegration of the two cases described in addition to seven other cases.

The author reports that reintegration has been successful in all nine cases and it is suggested that this is due to accurate assessment of pupil readiness for reintegration (Doyle, 2001). It was reported that small step targets were taken directly from the reintegration readiness scale and this helped the adults to focus on reasons for the difficulties the pupils were experiencing. Reporting on the case of one pupil, Doyle (2001) noted that the reintegration readiness scale afforded staff the opportunity to act before the pupil's behaviour spiraled to unacceptable levels and his self-esteem decreased, to ensure he was subsequently fully reintegrated into mainstream school.

Doyle's (2001) research indicates that the use of a readiness scale was helpful in facilitating the reintegration of pupils into mainstream classes following a nurture group intervention. There has been no research to date on the factors around readiness for pupils being reintegrated into school following permanent exclusion. The research by Doyle (2001) provides an evaluation of the practical use of a structured readiness scale for a very different cohort of pupils. The decision-making processes and the concept of 'readiness' of pupils being reintegrated following permanent exclusion is an area that requires further research.

Therefore it would be relevant within this research to consider the wider systemic factors related to decision making in relation to the hard HTPPP. There may be a role for EPs, to draw on research in social and organisational psychology and apply that knowledge within a LA to systemic issues that affect children's education.

2.4.3 Research on reintegration following permanent exclusion

There are a small number of research studies that have specifically concentrated on the reintegration of pupils following permanent exclusion. Identifying the published research provides a base from which this study can evolve.

Some research has identified that there are core conditions that when in place facilitate reintegration. Daniels et al (2003) completed research on the reintegration of a number of vulnerable groups, including pupils who had been permanently excluded. The research was DCSF funded and consisted of a postal survey of eighty-seven LAs in addition to case study fieldwork within fifteen local authorities. Key success factors, at the school level were identified such as the pupil being provided with a fresh start entry into school, which includes school staff being '*understanding, flexible and forgiving*' (Daniels et al, 2003, p. 154).

Daniels et al (2003) also recognised that the pupil and school staff must be fully prepared for the reintegration. However do not extend this to acknowledge whether the pupil's family should be fully prepared for the reintegration. The report does not discuss specific strategies and experiences in relation to the reintegration rather it focused on wider systemic issues such as delayed admission. Additionally parental views are not reported. Inclusion of the views of parents would have strengthened this research and enabled the findings to become more widely applicable.

Kinder et al (2000) conducted research in seven LAs researching the role of PRU provision and 'projects' for pupils permanently excluded from school. The research focused on pupils who were excluded, but not yet reintegrated. The research findings indicate that the projects and PRU provision were effective in encouraging pupil attitudinal change towards education. However, this change was not sustained following reintegration into school. Interviews with pupils found that they were eager to return to school following a period of time at the alternative provision, but that once they were reintegrated any attitudinal changes were not sustained. This may indicate that supportive and nurturing approaches within reintegrating schools, similar to those in alternative provision, may facilitate the pupil's reintegration.

Bracher, Hitchcock and Moss (1998) completed research with the aim of finding a generalised reintegration process for all permanently excluded pupils. The research is now more than ten years old and government guidance in the area has since been republished. Bracher et al (1998) utilised questionnaires prior to reintegration to ascertain the views of pupils, parents, home tutors and school. Bracher et al (1998) also compared systematically at whole school policy level, the excluding and receiving school's behaviour policies. 'Fresh start programmes' are used as a generic term, however this is not explored in detail, the only explanation provided is that it included an individual education plan (IEP). The authors noted that school staff decided what a 'fresh start programme' constitutes, therefore the extent to which the initial aim of the process being generalised is questionable. The research found that any positive changes were not sustained on a long-term basis within schools, indicating that pupils could not maintain an acceptable level of behaviour for a longer period of time.

Lown (2005; 2007), who is a practicing EP, published research on participant perceptions of exclusion and reintegration. Two accounts of the same piece of research have been published in 2005 and 2007. Lown (2005; 2007) specifically researched the views of pupils, parents, school staff and LA support staff three terms following reintegration into school. The overall findings were that support, pupil characteristics and relationships were critical in cases of successful reintegration.

Lown (2005; 2007) describes how parents and school staff value preparation and support for academic work within school, although this was not determined as valuable for pupils. This could be a consequence of pupils feeling supported, but not recognising the subtle support they received. Lown (2007) found that schools did not tend to recognise the contribution of LA support provided, although it was acknowledged as a useful role. Adult to pupil supportive relationships were recognised by pupils in reflections on the process of reintegration, specifically the importance they attached to being liked by adults and someone being

there who could support them. Additionally parents and school staff recognised that this was important, particularly when adults initiated and built supportive relationships with pupils.

Lown (2007) notes that '*relationship networks between young people are tremendously important*' (p. 106) and within the interviews found that peer relationships were one of the major elements that led to a successful reintegration. Pupils interviewed recognised the critical importance of their emerging, developing and existing friendships in assisting new placements. This finding corroborates with Gillison, Standage and Skevington (2008) who note that peer relations are crucial during this period, as personal attributions such as self-esteem, perceived competence and acceptance are all based on peer judgments.

In terms of pupil characteristics, Lown (2005; 2007) found that school staff recognised the significance of pupils' own abilities, particularly intelligence and personality traits, for example those motivated for goals, as being important factors in cases of successful reintegration. Lown (2005; 2007) found that relationships were imperative to the success of reintegration, specifically relationships between parents and school staff, adults with pupils and pupil with peers.

One of the limitations of this study is that Lown (2005) chose to include participants who had maintained new placements for at least three terms and therefore focused on long-term factors that facilitate success. Whilst this is useful research, some evaluation of the support, approaches, or strategies taken at the point of reintegration would strengthen the evidence base of interventions. Lown (2007) provides a list of strategies and interventions, as recommendations for use with pupils who have been reintegrated, but has not researched the process of implementation of these recommendations.

As described Lown's (2005; 2007) study provides reflections solely on successful cases. This omits the cases of other pupils who may not have

made a successful reintegration, despite the fact there may be valuable learning opportunities from such cases. Additionally Lown (2005; 2007) adopted a solution-focused approach to explore the factors viewed as important in facilitating long-term success, through individual and group interviews. Again in adopting a solution-focused approach, some useful data may be missed, as the opportunity to tell the whole story around the reintegration may be lost.

2.4.4 School transition

There is limited existing research in the area of experiences of reintegration and so it is anticipated that research in the area of general school transition may provide additional insight into the process and experiences of reintegration to school following permanent exclusion. This is a particularly useful comparison, as there are infinitely more pupils completing transitions between schools, either for individual pupil reasons such as those pupils moving from special to mainstream school or for statutory schooling reasons, for example the transition from primary to secondary school, than there are being reintegrated into school following permanent exclusion.

James (1997) used decision theoretical programme evaluation methods to research individual pupils' transition from a residential school catering for pupils with emotional behavioural difficulties provision to mainstream school. The study utilises decision theoretical programme evaluation methods, but does not clearly describe in detail to the reader what this constitutes. The findings have some relevance for pupils being reintegrated following permanent exclusion. Particularly pertinent is the emphasis on reintegration plans, which stress the importance of multi-agency working. James (1997) additionally recognised the role of pupil's confidence and self-esteem in facilitating the transition.

The research on transition between primary and secondary school indicates moving schools is a significant life-event for many children

(Sirsch, 2003), that presents a threat to adolescent well-being (Seidman, Allen, Aber, Mitchell, and Feinman, 1994; Sirsch, 2003), is linked to increased stress and depressive symptoms (Rudolph, Lambert, Clark, and Kurlakowsky, 2001), lower self-esteem (Seidman et al, 1994) and low academic achievement (Otis, Grouzet, and Pelletier, 2005). Research has additionally found that transition between schools can have a negative effect on pupils' self-concept (Fenzel, 2000; Harter, Whitesell, and Kowalski, 1992; Watt, 2000) and most pupils also experience a degree of anxiety and depression (Wigfield, Eccles, MacIver, Reuman and Midgley, 1991). For the excluded pupil who reintegrating into a new school following the process of permanent exclusion, this presents a considerable challenge.

Some benefits of transition between primary and secondary school are reported in the literature; Sirsch (2003) found that whilst some pupils perceive the move as a threat, others identify it positively, as a challenge or opportunity. For children whose previous school placement has been unsuccessful, which is inevitable in the case of permanent exclusion, it may be that reintegration into a new school could present a fresh opportunity for the pupil to succeed in a school setting.

There are some individual pupil factors and wider social factors reported in the literature that indicate how effectively a pupil is likely to deal with the transition from primary to secondary school. These include the pupil having self-regulatory beliefs regarding control over their academic success (Rudolph et al, 2001; Seidman et al, 1994) and having high self concept and low social anxiety (Sirsch, 2003). There are a number of procedures that schools undertake in order to smooth the transition, such as arranging for school visits with peers in the year before moving and allocating older students as mentors (Sirsch, 2003). These strategies used in relation to transition to secondary school could provide insight into facilitators for successful reintegration to school following permanent exclusion.

There are two main studies on the transition from primary to secondary school, which provide the most relevance to pupils being reintegrated following permanent exclusion. Firstly a study conducted by Qualter, Whiteley, Hutchinson and Popes (2007) aimed to explore whether pupils with high emotional intelligence competencies cope better with the transition to secondary school. The authors also aimed to explore whether the delivery of a programme in the first year of secondary school, designed to support the development of emotional intelligence competencies, leads to increased levels of emotional intelligence and self-worth.

Qualter et al (2007) argue that emotional intelligence is an important predictor in determining life and school success. Furnham and Petrides (2003) suggest that adolescents with high trait emotional intelligence are happier than those with low trait emotional intelligence whilst Ciarrochi, Deane and Anderson (2002) suggest those with high trait emotional intelligence are less likely to be depressed, hopeless or suicidal. Qualter et al (2007) used teacher concerns about effort, home study and behaviour throughout the first year of secondary school, grade point average across all subjects at the end of year seven and the number of unauthorised attendances and 'late arrivals' during the year.

Children's level of emotional intelligence was measured at three points during the first year of secondary school, using a standardised measure that categorised low, medium or high levels. Analyses of this data supported their hypothesis that higher levels of emotional intelligence facilitate a pupil's ability to cope with transition. They found pupils with both high and average emotional intelligence competencies received significantly fewer teacher concerns about effort. Additionally there was evidence of greater improvement in emotional intelligence in the group of pupils who received a structured intervention opposed to pupils who did not.

However there are a number of methodological critiques of the research. For example there were multiple variables involved in the intervention so other factors may have impacted positively. These could include relationships with peers and support staff. Additionally the control and experimental groups were not tested concurrently and in fact were in different school years. However the study provides an indication of the likely emotional intelligence competencies that are most helpful in developing with pupils being reintegrated into school. Additionally it provides support to the notion that a structured emotional intelligence competencies programme can help support pupils being reintegrated.

The second piece of related research is a study by Gillison et al (2008); who present research on the emotional well-being of children experiencing the transition from primary to secondary school. A measure called the 'quality of life' questionnaire was utilised, which is conceptually based upon self-determination theory, recognizing the key elements of emotional well-being as autonomy, competence and relatedness. The measure consists of items presented as questions for the following areas: physical well-being, psychological well-being, mood and emotions, self-perceptions, autonomy, family relationships, relationships with friends, school environment, bullying and financial resources. Responses are recorded on a five-point likert scale ranging from 'not at all' or 'never' to 'extremely' or 'always', depending on the statement provided.

Gillison et al (2008) advocate quality of life questionnaires as going beyond objective indicators of income, socio-economic or health status and providing a multidimensional holistic indicator of how well life is going for the pupil. The authors note that the quality of life assessment has been incorporated into routine social practice in schools as part of the ECM white paper (DCSF, 2003) and thus suggests it represents a credible way of assessing the effects of social policies and interventions.

By using these questionnaires, Gillison et al (2008) found that over the first ten weeks of secondary school, there was meaningful improvement in quality of life and psychological need satisfaction for the majority of pupils. It implies that psychological adjustment to school transition takes place relatively quickly and that the negative impact on quality of life observed for some pupils is short lived. These results corroborate previous findings indicating that school transition can be a significant and stressful life-event for children (Rudolph et al, 2001; Seidman et al, 1994), but that most pupils adjust quite rapidly to their new environment in terms of these dimensions of well-being (Walls and Little, 2005).

In summarising the research, the key signifiers for quality of life were related to perceived relatedness, which is the feeling that one is connected to and cared for by others and perceived autonomy, which is the need for personal agency. Therefore this has significant implications for the practice of schools in ensuring reintegrating pupils perceive themselves to be connected to and cared for by others and that they feel they have autonomy in their life.

2.4.5 Implications for practice from previous research

Whilst there has been some research in educational psychology journals on strategies for the prevention of exclusion, including group work (Burton, 2006), therapeutic use of personal construct psychology (Hardman, 2001) and the use of pastoral support programmes (PSP) (Bradbury, 2004), there is limited research on the strategies that are effective in supporting the reintegration of pupils following permanent exclusion.

Burton (2006) describes the work of an EP in supporting a group of five year eight pupils at risk of permanent exclusion through a course of group work designed to promote individual responsibility for behaviour. The group work involved five pupils who were encouraged to set their own targets for behaviour and the author used a pre and post (three

months following intervention) group social skills assessment to measure progress and improvement for each participant. The pupils themselves and teachers who worked with them completed the assessment. The author perceived the outcome of the group intervention very positively. Attributions of this success were effective liaison with school staff to facilitate generalisation of new skills, the co-workers commitment to the group and the fact it uses peer influence positively.

However the author asserts that the pupils chosen for the group intervention were not those at most risk of exclusion, rather than those who were more likely to be able to '*role model different skills for each other*' (Burton, 2006, p. 224). Burton (2006) suggests that group work of this sort may not be effective for those at risk of permanent exclusion, as they require a higher level of intervention. All subject teachers were not informed nor asked to complete ratings scales for the pupils and more objective measures such as numbers of fixed period exclusions, would have strengthened the research. The success of the group work was attributed to the co-worker rather than the specific EP involvement in setting up, co-facilitating and evaluating the group. The group work was focused upon pupils who were at risk of becoming likely to be excluded, rather than being at immediate risk of exclusion. This may represent the reluctance of professionals to work with or conduct research with pupils most at risk of being excluded, or those pupils who are excluded.

Some research has contributed to the evidence base on effective reintegration in terms of school practice. Berridge et al (2001) note that the characteristics of the school to which the excluded student is transferred may have a significant impact upon whether that pupil can be maintained there. However the research does not extend to describing the specific characteristics. Lown (2007) suggests schools should provide effective pastoral and behavioural support, with multi-professional working practices. Additionally Lown (2007) argues that reintegration is most successful when school culture and ethos is

conducive to learning and good behaviour and where there is flexibility to try strategies to support reintegrated pupils.

Daniels et al (2003) outline key success factors from the perspective of school staff and also outline barriers, which include functional difficulties around delayed admission. However the research report does not provide information on specific approaches within school, or specific support packages that may be helpful to pupils being reintegrated. Rather it concentrates on factors relating to successful reintegration that are within-child and factual, rather than changeable, for example the pupil being:

- Serious about making a success of their new placement.
- Excluded for a 'one-off' out of character offence rather than having demonstrated a long record of troublesome behaviour.
- Academically able, keen to pursue an examination timetable and therefore not likely to depress the school's GCSE results (Daniels et al, 2003).

The most comprehensive literature on specific support strategies for supporting reintegration following permanent exclusion is from Lown (2007). Lown (2005; 2007) advises that effective liaison between the pupil's previous and admitting school is important as this enables fluency of curriculum transition. It is recommended that a nominated person at the school be tasked to champion the needs of the pupil and to co-ordinate professional involvement. Interventions such as circle time and circle of friends are suggested as being effective as they can enable pupils to get to know each other and forge better relationships. Similarly, perhaps a more relevant option than circle of friends for older pupils, befriending schemes and peer mentoring are recommended (Lown 2005; 2007).

This provides a helpful starting point for supporting schools in the reintegration of pupils. However there is no evidence of the success or

experience of implementation of these strategies, which could be critical in their application. Research into the challenges, opportunities and experiences of pupils, parents and school staff in providing this support at the point of reintegration will enable the research base to be strengthened.

2.5 The voice of stakeholders

2.5.1 The views of permanently excluded pupils

Obtaining the voice of the child is critical in learning from their experience, to ensure that support and approaches taken are appropriate. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) proposes that young people should be consulted about all decisions that affect them (Flekkøy and Kaufman, 1997). The impact of the permanent exclusion on pupils is apparent. Daniels et al (2003) found that two years after their permanent exclusion, 50% of pupils sampled still had negative perceptions of the effects of the permanent exclusion on their life, whilst just 19% had positive perceptions.

There has been limited research specifically into the voice of the permanently excluded pupil. Knipe, Reynolds and Milner (2007) present research named 'exclusion in schools in Northern Ireland: the pupils' voice', however the elicited pupil views were not those of excluded pupils, but randomly selected pupils from a number of school settings. The research does not specify whether any of the pupils had previously received a fixed period or permanent exclusion, therefore in essence the voice of the excluded pupil is omitted from the research and rather it presents the views of the wider school population excluded pupils. A further criticism is that focus groups were conducted with pupils who had been chosen to participate by their head of year or vice-principal of the school. Therefore the results may have been skewed as certain groups of pupils may have been asked to participate.

Nevertheless the research provides an insight into the views of all pupils on excluded pupils, specifically the management of their behaviour (Knipe et al, 2007). One question posed in the focus group was what they thought should happen to a pupil who has been permanently excluded from school; most frequently participants suggested that the excluded pupil should either be offered home tuition or the opportunity to attend another school. Interestingly the majority of participants felt that excluded pupils should be provided with a fresh start in a new school. One pupil is quoted as suggesting:

‘They should go to a new school, and shouldn’t be rejected from another school because of what happened in the last school. They should get a second chance, everyone deserves a second chance’ (Knipe et al, 2007, p. 420).

This perhaps illustrates the nurturing approach from other pupils that can be utilised in supporting pupils who are being reintegrated.

Munn and Lloyd (2005) acknowledge the importance of gaining the voice of the excluded pupil noting that the views of this group of pupils are infrequently heard. Munn and Lloyd’s (2005) research was completed in Scotland, which has a different education and exclusion system to that in England, where this study is being researched. The research paper provides a synopsis of the findings of three projects, which included interviews with, in total, sixty-six pupils. Munn and Lloyd (2005) report the views of pupils who have received a fixed period exclusion and not those who have received a permanent exclusion. However some of their findings may be relevant to that of pupils who have been permanently excluded.

Munn and Lloyd (2005) found that pupils perceived their exclusion to be unfair, that they did not take responsibility for the reasons behind their exclusion and that factors outside of school impacted on their behaviour in school. They also found that excluded pupils felt other pupils had

behaved in the same way and yet avoided exclusion. Some pupils perceived they were trying hard at school, but their criteria for this are not the same as the expectations of school staff. These findings have relevant implications in considering the feelings of those pupils being reintegrated into new school placement following permanent exclusion.

Munn and Lloyd's (2005) findings of pupil perception of lack of consistency in school practices of exclusion and their sense of unfairness and unreasonableness resonates with the findings of other studies. Research conducted by the charity Save the Children (2005) similarly found that whilst some pupils accepted the seriousness of the offence that warranted exclusion, they thought there was a lack of consistency in schools' approaches and that they had not been treated fairly. Save the Children (2005) found that young people believed that being labelled by teachers was a major factor in being excluded. Similarly Berridge et al (2001) found that pupils were aware of their status as '*trouble makers within the school prior to permanent exclusion*' (p. 27). Obtaining pupil feelings on exclusion will be important in supporting their reintegration, particularly as this usually directly follows the pupil's previous experience of school.

Research completed by Save the Children (2005) sought to identify the extent to which young people are involved in the exclusion process and whether they are given necessary information and support to facilitate their participation. The research was completed in two stages. The first stage focused on individual interviews and paired interviews with forty young people aged 11-16 who had been excluded from school permanently or for a fixed period. The second stage involved face to face and telephone interviews with twenty professionals working with excluded young people. The findings from the initial consultation with young people were the basis for the discussion with the professionals.

The research included obtaining the voice of pupils who had received fixed period and permanent exclusions. However the extent to which the

findings can be generalised is questionable as these two processes provide very different functions and outcomes for pupils. The research found that the views of young people were sporadically rather than systematically sought as part of the exclusion process. The research found that pupils appeared very confused about the exclusion process in terms of what was involved, the sequence of events and their appreciation of there being an actual process.

During the exclusion process, Save the Children (2005) found that few pupils were given any direct help to put across their viewpoint during the exclusion process. Any support the pupils did receive was in the form of a parent speaking on their behalf and the pupils or professionals did not always judge this form of assistance as being effective. Some pupils reported anger, frustration and disempowerment at not having been asked to give their side of the story in exclusion meetings.

As part of the Save the Children (2005) research the views of professionals supporting the pupils were obtained. These professionals included youth workers, PRU staff and link mentors. Interestingly the professionals shared similar views to those of the pupils. One quotation from a youth worker, reported in the research, illustrates the views of inconsistency of approach to exclusion taken within schools:

‘You’ll get someone who is excluded for something that seems incredibly minor and you wonder why on earth that exclusion has taken place or why that person was excluded and the others weren’t’ (Save the Children, 2005, p. 113).

One criticism of much of the literature on the voice of the excluded pupil is that in the main the voice of solely the permanently excluded pupil is mostly omitted from the literature. For the majority of the studies available, the research reports the views of pupils who additionally received fixed period exclusions (Munn and Lloyd, 2005) or who had not experienced exclusion (Knipe et al, 2007) or in the study by Osler and

Vincent (2003) a qualitative summary of the experiences of girls who have been excluded for a number of reasons. In the research reported by Osler and Vincent (2003) the sample includes those who have self-excluded through school non-attendance, which is an entirely different situation. Therefore available research does not focus solely on the voice of the permanently excluded pupil, which means that their views are not represented, which may mean they are not considered when plans and guidance is issued.

Possible reasons for the omission of the voice of the permanently excluded pupil in the literature may indicate the difficulty in obtaining the views of this hard to reach group. It may also highlight the possible reluctance or inability of researchers to highlight the circumstances around this vulnerable group. Munn, Lloyd and Cullen (2000) describe how previous studies in this area are necessarily small-scale as in-depth interviews are expensive. However they argue that listening to the views of children and parents is important in itself, as it helps illustrate the short-comings of schools in particular and society as a whole. Gordon (2001) highlights that we should listen to the disaffected pupils' voices, as nobody seems to be asking them, specifically suggesting we should ask the right questions and listen to children's voices before imposing adult solutions.

2.5.2 Obtaining parental views on school exclusion

There has been limited research on the views and opinions of parents of pupils who have been excluded. McDonald and Thomas (2003) reported the views of these parents and found that parents feel they are being judged, and criticised and labeled as 'bad parents'. It is therefore important to recognise the social exclusion that parents, in addition to their children, may feel. McDonald and Thomas (2003) further suggest that the process of permanent exclusion '*dehumanises them (parents) and renders them voiceless*' (p. 11). This has implications on the parent's role in reintegration, especially as they may have views about

the exclusion, which impact on their relationship with both the LA and school staff in the new school placement.

Lown (2005; 2007) suggests the messages provided by parents to pupils are critical in ensuring new school placements are successful. These include subtle messages about valuing the placement, through to greater support such as visits to the school. Additionally the DCSF (2009a) recognised the effects on families of children who are permanently excluded, reflecting that the previously high rate of exclusion had to be reduced because exclusion does not just affect pupils, but also their families and the wider community. Similarly the Children and Young People's plan in the LA in which the current study is being researched reports that school exclusion is increasingly identified as a factor that has tipped the balance for families from managing to not managing.

Lown (2005; 2007) contacted parents of pupils who had maintained school placements for at least three terms. The names of these pupils were provided to Lown (2005; 2007) by the head of the behaviour support team within the LA in which the research was based. This provided twenty-seven names. Lown (2005; 2007) contacted all parents through letter on two occasions. However the response was very low and all responses received declined to participate in the research. Telephone contact was then made with a smaller selected group of parents and five parents agreed to participate in the research. Therefore the sample in essence was self-selecting. This may indicate that the research only represents the views of these parents and may not be representative of parents of excluded pupils as a whole.

Lown (2007) found that the importance parents placed on relationships they had developed with school and support staff, whom they knew they could 'call on', was critical and that this was both in initial and on-going supportive contacts. Through the development of these close on-going supportive relationships, Lown (2007) reported that parents felt '*involved, informed and reassured*' (p. 105). Similarly James (1997), whose

research was based on the reintegration of pupils from emotional behavioural difficulties provision into mainstream schools, highlights the importance of parent's needs and requests being considered in making decisions for their children's placements.

However the difficulty of engaging with parents of this vulnerable group of children must be recognised. As described, Lown (2005) had great difficulty in engaging parents in the process of research. This therefore increases the pertinence in giving these parents a voice about their views and experience of the process where possible.

2.6 The role of the EP in the process of reintegration

The consideration of the actual and potential role of an EP would be a useful contribution to research within this area, particularly as the advice and contribution of EPs in this process is often sought in the LA in which the research will be conducted.

The literature review of outcomes for excluded pupils highlights the vulnerability of this group of children. Traditionally EPs work with groups of vulnerable children. The DCSF commissioned research on the functions and contribution of EPs (Farrell, Woods, Lewis, Rooney, Squires and O'Connor, 2006) and found that a function of the role of an EP was identified in the literature as intervention and support for vulnerable groups of children. Therefore there is the potential for EPs to support, advise and consult around this vulnerable cohort of pupils.

The importance of multi-agency work within the process of reintegration has been recognised but Parsons and Howlett (2000) notes that it:

'Is not well developed, despite a recognition that a multi-agency response is important in securing reintegration, consultation, co- operation and collaboration between agencies are still in their infancy (p. 5).

Daniels et al (2003) recognise that there are gaps in provision and support around initial reintegration '*for example around initial support and behaviour support team (BST) inputs*' (p. 80), which could also include the role of EP as a support service to schools. However when available, this study stressed the appreciation of stakeholders of the roles of other agencies supporting pupils. Daniels et al (2003) suggested 'involvement could be on a case-by-case basis, or via a regular programme of meetings' (p. 81).

Bradbury (2004) researched the role of the EP in PSPs and highlights the skills of an EP in facilitating work with vulnerable pupils. Bradbury (2004) describes EPs as having the skills needed to create a forum in which pupils and parents can express their views on fundamental problems that result in exclusion from school. Additionally EPs are described as being expert in:

'The application of solution focused approaches to problem solving where the emphasis is shifted away from "celebrating the problem" to the collaborative identification of possible solutions' (Bradbury, 2004, p. 311).

Furthermore Beaver (1996) emphasises the consultative skills of EPs:

'Psychological skills may be required more in terms of an ability to create change in the attitudes and behaviours of the adults than in devising detailed interventions for the child' (p. 2).

Therefore the range of skills that are available to EPs through their training, both in terms of individual work with pupils and consultation with the adults who support them, indicate the positive impact that EPs can have when supporting these vulnerable pupils.

There is limited research on the role of the EP in supporting this vulnerable group of pupils. Lown (2005; 2007) is an EP and discusses the perceptions of participants within the process however she does not extend this research to discuss ways in which EPs can support the process and those involved. Additionally the researcher was not involved in supporting the reintegration of these pupils. Specifically there has been no psychological perspective or application of psychological theory to help understand the process of reintegration. The contribution of the EP seems apt as the role of psychological theories, processes and insight is particularly pertinent in this area; particularly around theories of motivation, emotional well-being and the impact of life changes.

Research on the role of the EP with pupils who have been permanently excluded from school and are to be reintegrated, would strengthen the existing research base in terms of enabling EPs and other professionals, to more confidently consult around strategies and intervention for this group of pupils. This is particularly appropriate as any intervention used with children and young people should be evidence based and expanding the current evidence base would be effective in increasing the confidence of EPs in this area.

2.7 Conclusion

The literature in the area of reintegration into school following permanent exclusion has been summarised and critiqued within this chapter. Additionally research in areas such as school transition and decision making have been explored, to establish their relevance to the reintegration of permanently excluded pupils.

A rationale for this study is provided in section 2.3 where the groups of pupils experiencing permanent exclusion and the outcomes for these pupils are described. The literature summarised indicates that those pupils who are permanently excluded are one of the most vulnerable groups of pupils in the education system. This is due to the affect

permanent exclusion has on individual pupil educational achievements and their engagement in society. Additionally those pupils seemingly predisposed to being at risk of exclusion are those already considered marginalised in the education system.

It has been established that there are a number of pieces of research and some forms of government guidance on the reintegration of pupils following permanent exclusion. The approaches recommended in supporting reintegration that are outlined in the research base range from that at the individual level in relation to specific support packages for the pupil, to wider systemic guidance, for example the HTPPP. Section 2.4 provides a summary of the difficulties that individual pupils, their families and school staff may face in facilitating reintegration. This section details the HTPPP which is a recent piece of legislation that seeks to facilitate the reintegration process. Naturally when new guidance is issued there are matters of implementations and there has been no previous research completed on this protocol. The aim of this study therefore is to represent the reality of the implementation of such guidance and the impact this has on pupils, their families and the school staff.

There is limited research on the experience of those involved in supporting pupils at the point of reintegration. The story of pupil reintegration from the perspective of all stakeholders involved has not been captured in the LA in which the research is taking place or fully in the literature base in this area. The research completed by Lown (2005; 2007) provides the most credible attempt to do this. Lown (2005; 2007) found that there are a number of factors which can facilitate or hinder reintegration into school following permanent exclusion, which are summarised in section 2.4.3. However these relate to retrospective reflections by participants on self-selected 'successful' cases. Additionally the study does not provide a representation of the phenomenon of reintegration at a LA level and rather concentrates on the individual pupil cases. These mean that research in relation to a

wider and more realistic spread of pupil cases, including the evaluation of wider systemic factors, such as the HTPPP would contribute to a more realistic and complete representation of the phenomenon of reintegration following permanent exclusion.

The local context in which the research is taking place necessitates the consideration of the role of the EP in supporting pupils excluded and reintegrated into schools. There has been no previous research that considers the role of the EP within the process of reintegration into school. Section 2.6 provides a summary of the role of the EP in supporting those pupils considered vulnerable. The consideration of the role of an EP in the process, both through individual case work and at a school or LA systemic level would be a useful exploration, to increase understanding of effective support for this group of pupils and thus provide evidence based research in this area.

The case study methodology adopted for this research will enable a complete representation of the phenomenon of reintegration into school following permanent exclusion in the LA in which this study is based. This will enable more complete understanding of the differing facets, including consideration of individual, family, school and LA issues, to provide a representation of the experiences of those key stakeholders.

Through the literature review, the areas which are under-researched, or absent in previous research, have been outlined. In order to represent this, the research will be guided by the following research questions.

Research questions

1. To what extent is the hard to place pupil protocol effective in facilitating reintegration into school following permanent exclusion?
2. What factors do stakeholders⁶ consider facilitate or hinder reintegration into school following permanent exclusion?
3. What is the role of the educational psychologist in supporting pupil reintegration following permanent exclusion?

⁶ Stakeholders are permanently excluded pupils, their parents / carers, school staff and LA officers

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will provide a summary of the rationale and aims of this study. The research design will be outlined with the methodological rationale including a description of the epistemological approach taken to the study. This chapter will then provide details in relation to the data collection methods, sampling procedures, research process and data analysis methods. Lastly an overview of the ethical considerations will be provided.

3.2 Summary of the research

This research is designed as an exploratory study into the process of reintegration into school following permanent exclusion. The study will research the views of key stakeholders in the process, the role of the EP in the process and the effectiveness of the HTPPP. The methodology will be discussed in detail within this chapter. In summary a qualitative case study methodology was adopted, influenced by a social constructionist epistemological stance, to investigate the phenomenon of reintegration into school following permanent exclusion.

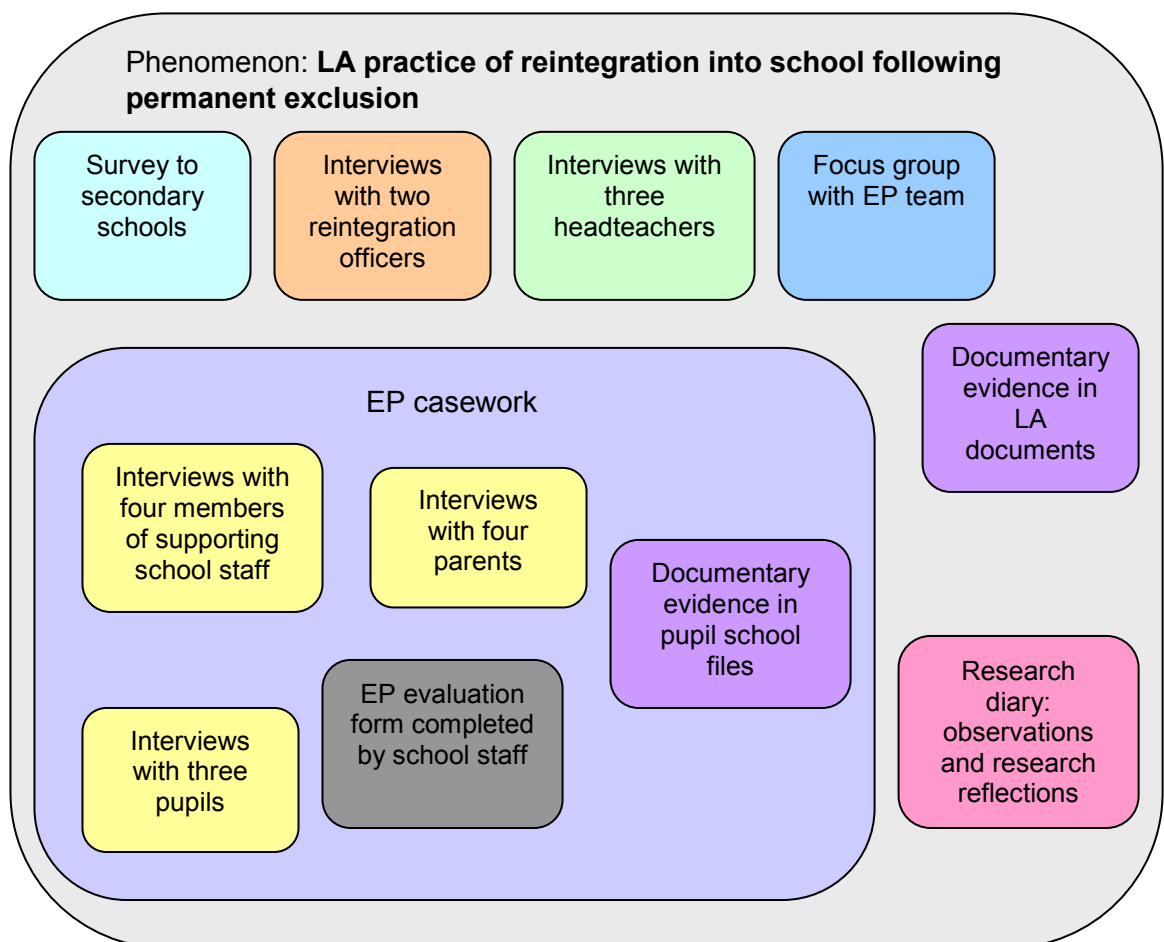
The methods utilised within the case study methodology included interviews, a focus group, survey, documentary evidence from pupil files and LA documents, evaluation of EP case work and a reflexive research diary.

Stakeholder views were gained to ascertain the extent to which the operational practice associated with the HTPPP is effective in facilitating reintegration into school following permanent exclusion. It was anticipated that stakeholder views of the factors that they consider to facilitate or hinder reintegration into school following permanent

exclusion would enable good practice to be identified. By considering the role of an EP in supporting the process, it was expected that the research will contribute to evidenced based practice in this area.

The data was thematically analysed. The results section will provide a summary of the themes from all data sets to enable a balanced summary of findings. A pictorial representation which provides an overview of the research process can be found in figure 3.1 and will be referred to further in this chapter.

Figure 3.1 Pictorial representation of research



3.2.1 Methodological rationale

Nind, Benjamin, Sheey, Collins and Hall (2005) draw attention to the lack of detail about methodology reported in areas of systematic review in education. Lack of methodological information limits our trust in a study's outcomes and also restricts the richness of our growing understanding of the methodological challenges related to such complex areas as inclusive education. The aim of this methodology section is to describe in detail the methodological process of the qualitative research and the rationale for choosing such methods.

There was no hypothesis to test. Rather the aim was to explore the phenomenon of reintegration into school following permanent exclusion, whereby a description or interpretation of knowledge was the goal. In order to address the research questions effectively, qualitative methods were used to appropriately capture the relevant data. Willig (2008) describes how qualitative research is concerned with meaning in context, involving the interpretation of data where the role of the researcher *'requires an active engagement with the data'* (p. 149). Salmon (1993) suggests that decisions around whether a researcher should adopt a quantitative or qualitative methodology should be decided by 'fit' with the phenomenon being studied. The rationale for qualitative methods within this research is evident; the participant's constructions of their lives and the situations that they have found themselves in would not have been captured within quantitative methods.

Willig (2008) provides a summary of the seven attributes proposed by Henwood and Pigeon (1992) that characterise good qualitative research. Willig (2008) notes that these are based on the assumption that the researcher and the researched and the knower and the known are not independent entities and that objectivity are not meaningful criteria for judging qualitative research. The guidelines provide good practice:

'Ensuring rigour while acknowledging idiosyncrasy and creativity

in the research process' (Willig, 2008, p. 150).

A summary of this guidance can be found in appendix 29; this provides an indication of the approach taken to each stage of the research and the methodological rigour used when conducting the research.

3.2.2 Epistemological stance

The following dictionary of psychology definitions of key methodological concepts in relation to the research are provided. Epistemology refers to:

'The theory of knowledge especially the enquiry into what is to count as knowledge, the validity of knowledge, what distinguishes mere belief from knowledge, what kinds of things are knowable, and whether anything can be known for certain'

(Colman, 2007, p. 256).

Epistemology therefore describes the relationship between the knower and the known, specifically whether they are inter-dependant or independent.

Ontology is defined as:

'The branch of metaphysics devoted to the study of the nature of being or existence or the essence of things, including the distinction between reality and appearance and whether mathematical entities exist outside of people's minds'

(Colman, 2007, p. 527).

Ontology therefore relates to the nature of reality, and whether there are several realities or one single reality.

Willig (2008) elaborates on these concepts:

'Epistemology asks 'How can we know?', whilst the question driving ontology is 'What is there to know?' (p. 13).

These concepts involve thinking about the nature of knowledge itself, about its scope and about the validity and reliability of claims to knowledge. Ontological positions can be described as 'realist' and 'relativist'. This current research represents a relativist stance, in emphasising the 'out-there-ness' of the world and the diversity of interpretations that can be applied (Willig, 2008).

This research has taken a social constructionism approach to data collection and analysis. Willig (2008) describes social constructionism as:

'Drawing attention to the fact that human experience, including perception, is mediated historically, culturally and linguistically...what we perceive and experience is never a direct reflection of environmental conditions but must be understood as a specific reading of these conditions' (p. 7).

The methodology through its epistemological assumptions, dictates what as researchers we can and cannot ask. Therefore a methodology informed by a social constructionist epistemology addresses research questions about the social and discursive construction of a phenomenon, for example how the concept of reintegration is constructed by stakeholders, including pupils and their families. Social constructionism refers to the development of phenomena relative to social contexts. Furthermore constructionism teaches us that we cannot make sense of the world with another's voice or identity and that we must employ our own vernacular. There is evidence that we need to capitalise on existing inner strengths, predispositions and preferred cognitive and artistic styles if research is to offer a secure foundation for practice improvement. Therefore the epistemological stance of the relationship between the

researcher and the researched has to be inter-dependent rather than independent.

Research from a social constructionist perspective is concerned with identifying the various ways of constructing social reality that are available in a culture, to explore the conditions of their use and to trace their implications for human experience and social practice. It suggests that there are 'knowledges' rather than 'knowledge' and that the same phenomenon or event can be described in different ways, giving rise to alternative ways of perceiving and understanding it (Willig, 2008). Therefore the ontological position is that there are several realities.

The view arising from theories of social constructionism is that meaning from the social and cultural world are created in human social interaction. Social constructionism is therefore ideally placed for being applied to social research as it considers how social phenomenon develops in social contexts. Within constructionist thought, a social construct is a concept or practice that is an artifact of a particular group. Social constructs are generally understood to be the by-products of human choices (Willig, 2008), therefore the phenomenon of exclusion and the HTPPP could be considered as social constructs.

A major focus of social constructionism is to uncover the ways in which individuals and groups participate in the creation of their perceived social reality (Willig, 2008). It involves looking at the ways social phenomena are created, institutionalised and made into tradition by participants. Socially constructed reality is seen as an ongoing, dynamic process; reality is reproduced by people acting on their interpretations and their knowledge of it. This seems to describe the situation in terms of exclusion from school, specifically that a single truth is unavailable and rather that multiple truths exist due to perhaps the diversity of stakeholders and their roles within the process.

3.3 Case study approach

The research questions will be investigated using a case study methodology. Case study is described as:

‘A strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence’

(Robson, 2002, p. 178).

Whilst O’Donaghue and Punch (2003) suggest that case studies:

‘Shed light on the fine-grain detail of social processes in their appropriate context’ (p. 208).

It was appropriate to adopt case study methodology to investigate the process of reintegration as exclusion and reintegration are real life phenomena that require investigation utilising multiple sources of evidence. Taking a social constructionist stance towards knowledge and learning leads to methods allowing for an investigation of what knowledge is held by the stakeholders and subjects.

Sturman (1999) notes that whilst the techniques used in the investigation may be varied, the investigating feature of case study is the belief that human systems develop characteristics, wholeness or integrity and are not simply a loose collection of traits. Furthermore McMillian and Schumacher (1989) advocate case studies as a useful research method within a social constructionist methodology because of:

‘The flexibility and adaptability to a range of contexts and the ability to provide a detailed description and analysis of themes voiced by participants in a particular situation’ (p. 59).

The participants to be included in this research will find themselves in a multitude of contexts and thus a methodology which allows the researcher to adopt an ethnographic approach to the research emphasises the need to understand how people interpret their world. Stark and Torrance (2005) suggest that case study methodology:

'Derives much of its rationale and methods from ethnography... very much within the social constructivist perspective of social science (p. 33).

Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2001) recognise that case studies do not set out to make judgments or test theoretical assumptions, but rather lend themselves to exploratory and discovery-orientated research. As described in the literature review, there is some research within this area. However this is limited to a handful of studies, thus the need to explore this area further using a methodology that supports this is justified.

3.3.1 Advantages of case study

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2005) outline the advantages of a case study methodology; these being the:

'Down-to-earth and attention holding nature, which provides a natural basis for generalisation' (p. 184).

McMillan and Schumacher (1993) claim that:

'Case study design because of its flexibility and adaptability to a range of contexts, processes, people and foci, provides some of the most useful methods available in educational research' (p. 375).

Hitchcock and Hughes (2001) argue that case study methodology is most applicable when 'how' and 'why' questions are being posed. That is

when the researcher has little control over the events and when the focus is on some contemporary phenomena in a real-life context. This research explores the process of reintegration into school following permanent exclusion. This is a phenomenon that the researcher has little control over, as other professionals are involved in decision making; thus representing contemporary phenomena within a real-life context.

Referring to research in educational settings, Jones and Smith (2004) note that case study methodology appears to offer the best possibility of uncovering explanations for school and teacher action, since it tries to understand why schools and teachers adopt particular approaches to promoting and maintaining discipline. McMillan and Schumacher (1997) suggest that case studies can provide a detailed description and analysis of processes or themes voiced by participants in a particular situation. Merriam (1998) affirms this descriptive power, suggesting that a case study can illustrate the complexities of a situation and the fact that not one but many factors contributed to it. This is particularly pertinent as the area of exclusion from school and subsequent reintegration is complex.

A case study methodology provides more than an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a social unit or phenomenon. It is a socio-cultural analysis of the unit of study and it is the concern with the cultural context that sets this type of study apart according to Merriam (1998). It is important to contextualise this research within the previously completed research in this area. The aim is to look beneath the statistics, to complete case study research to represent the complex process of reintegration to gain a rich understanding of the experiences of the pupil, their family, school staff and LA staff and to hear the pupil's perspective and not necessarily just school staff's official versions of what has happened.

Furthermore case studies recognise the complexity and 'embeddedness' of social truths and by attending to social situations case studies can:

'Represent something of the discrepancies or conflicts between the viewpoints held by participants' (Cohen et al, 2005, p. 184).

In the very nature of the concept of school exclusions, it is assumed that people have differing viewpoints so a case study methodology will enable this to be explored. Additionally Kinder et al (2000) note that excluded pupils are not a homogenous group, therefore the depth of information that can be gained through a case study methodology is more appropriate for this group of pupils.

3.3.2 Limitations of case studies

However there are some reported limitations of case study methodology in the literature which should be reconciled in relation to this research. A frequent criticism is that its dependence on a single case renders it incapable of providing a generalising conclusion. Nisbet and Watt (1984) argue that results may not be generalisable, may be selective and biased and they are prone to observer bias (Cohen et al, 2005).

Vidovich (2003) notes that the issue of generalisability from case study is a central one; but the advantages of multi-case analysis, which could be considered to be presented in this study through the case work representations and views from multiple groups of participants, are that generalisability is enhanced and that understanding and explanation are deepened. Nevertheless the aim of this research is not to formulate generalised findings; the literature review has already identified that the pupils who are permanently excluded are a non-homogeneous group (Kinder et al, 2001) therefore generalisations may not be appropriate.

Hamel, Dufour and Fortin (1993) and Yin (2003) both question the assumptions around generalisability of case studies and argue that the relative size of the sample does not transform a multiple case into a macroscopic study. The goal of the study should establish the

parameters and should then be applied to all research. In this way, even a single case could be considered acceptable, provided it met the established objective. In this research the aim is to study the case, which is the phenomenon of reintegration in the local context, and to present the views of those associated participants. There may be some generalisable findings; however the aim is not to uncover the 'single truth' and present replicable results elsewhere. The aim is to represent the current phenomena, which conforms to the social constructionist notion that individuals construct their own reality and it is the researcher's interpretation of that reality that is the fundamental part of this research.

3.3.3 Case study process

Yin (2009) suggests that using case studies for research purposes remains one of the most challenging of all social science endeavours and therefore it is imperative that the researcher is well equipped to conduct such research in a sound and rigorous fashion. Yin (2009) provides guidance in the form of five general characteristics that will enable a case study to contribute in a meaningful way to research. These are that the case study must:

- Be significant
- Be 'complete'
- Consider alternative perspectives
- Display sufficient evidence
- Be composed in an engaging manner (Yin, 2009).

Each of these characteristics were regarded as critical in the delivery of this study and were adhered to at all stages. Additionally Yin (2003) advises the procedure described in table 3.1 when adopting case study methodology in research, which was adhered to within this research.

Table 3.1 Case study process (Yin, 2003)

Stage	Description
1	Ensure case study is the best method of investigation for the question
2	Create a single/multiple case research design with these components: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Study question• Study propositions and purpose• Unit of analysis• Linking data to propositions• Criteria for interpreting findings
3	Data collection using questions, listening, flexibility, lack of bias and understanding of theoretical issues
4	Evidence from documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observation or physical artifacts
5	Analyse and interpret the data

3.3.4 Defining the case

Yin (2009) describes how the ‘case’ can be an individual, an event or entity other than a single individual and that units of analysis form the case. Yin (2009) describes how when a researcher does arrive at a definition of the unit of analysis, they should not consider permanent closure. As with other facets of the research design, the unit of analysis can be revisited as a result of discoveries during the data collection. Throughout this research, the ‘case’ that is being studied has been adapted and has evolved with the research. Initially the research was classed as a study of multiple cases, of pupils, in relation to reintegration. However the pertinence of contextual and wider factors, such as the HTPPP, became evident and so the case became the process of reintegration within the LA.

Yin (2009) warns researchers to be mindful of stating the unit of analysis and being careful not to mistake the generalisability of findings. For example whilst the four pupil cases represented as part of this research provide insight into the experiences of those pupils, they are not representative of all pupils who are reintegrated and so should represent the cases presented, rather than the LA as a whole.

Yin (2009) suggests that to justify using a case study approach one has to define a specific, real-life 'case' to represent the abstraction. In essence the desired case should be some real-life phenomena, not an abstraction, such as a topic, an argument or a hypothesis. The real-life case is therefore reintegration into school following permanent exclusion within the LA. However there are a number of units of analysis within the case study which include survey, interviews and focus groups, which will be described in the next section.

3.4 Methods within the case study

Yin (2009) describes how mixed methods research forces the methods to share the same research questions, to collect complementary data and to conduct counterpart analyses. In effect following a mixed methods research can allow the researcher to:

'Address more complicated research questions and collect a richer and stronger array of evidence than can be accomplished by any single method alone' (Yin, 2009, p. 63).

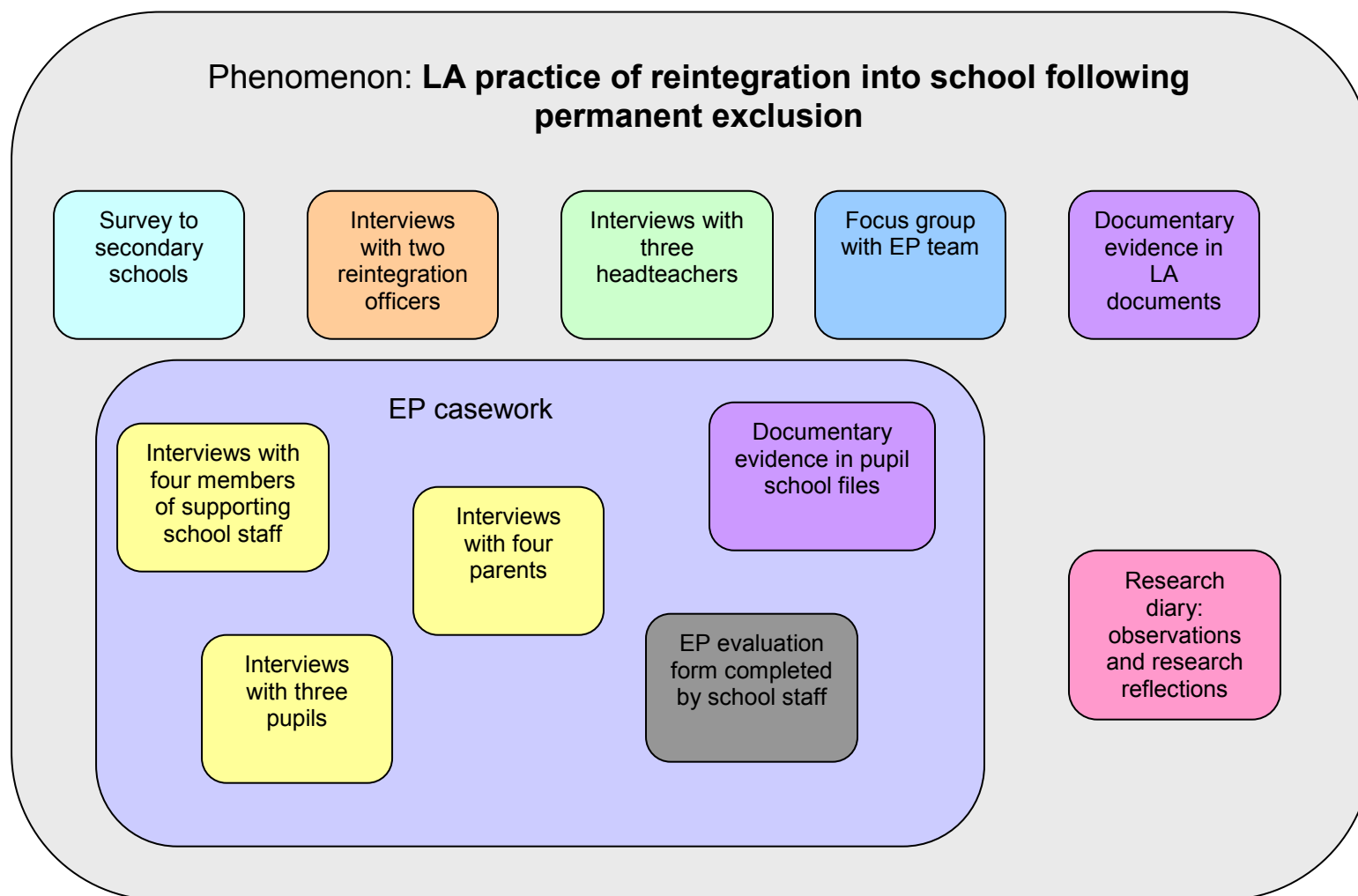
This is important as the phenomenon of reintegration following permanent exclusion is a dense and complex area, both in terms of social constructs and procedures, which would not be achieved through a single method alone. Embedded case study designs aim to gain holistic data collection strategies for studying the main case, which in this research is reintegration, but then call upon surveys, focus groups, interviews and other techniques to collect data about the embedded units of analysis, for example the HTPPP. In effect research methods are embedded within the case study.

Yin (2009) proposes reasons that might motivate a researcher to consider using a multi-methods design. One of these reasons is that the use of certain methods, such as an interview may elucidate some

underlying process whilst another method, such as survey, may define the prevalence of such processes. In this scenario of complementary as opposed to convergence, Yin (2009) describes how the study questions are likely to be closely coordinated with all of the methods and complementary inquiries can occur simultaneously. Yin (2009) describes how, whilst the initial analyses and reports from each inquiry should be conducted separately, the final analysis may merge findings from all of the different methods.

Bromley (1986) describes how case study methods will get as close to the subject of interest as they possibly can and will tend to 'spread the net for evidence much more widely than experiments and surveys' (p. 23). Within this research there were a number of many possible sources of evidence to identify. The main sources of evidence used are illustrated in figure 3.2

Figure 3.2 Pictorial representation of research



Each box represents a unit of analysis as part of the case study methodology. Within each unit of analysis there is a single method or multiple methods utilised. Each of the units of analysis will be discussed in further detail, under the following headings:

- Casework including evaluation of EP involvement
- Interviews with key stakeholders including:
 - Headteachers
 - Reintegrating pupils
 - Parents
 - LA officers
 - School staff
- Research diary: observations and research reflections
- Survey to all secondary schools within the LA
- Focus group with EP team
- Analysis of documents

The participants represented as part of the research are identified below. Information relating to identified and recruited participants are described in further detail in each section, however are summarised below.

- Reintegrating pupils, their parents and associated school staff (there were four pupils, parents and school staff identified and all agreed to participate)
- School staff to complete the survey (all identified staff agreed to participate)
- Reintegration officers for interviews (all identified reintegration officers (two participants) agreed to participate.
- Headteachers for interviews (three headteachers were identified, two agreed to participate, one declined and so a further headteacher was recruited).

- EPs for focus group (all EPs agreed to participate).

As each participant group was recruited through different means, participant recruitment will be discussed within each separate method section.

The methodological links to the research questions are illustrated in table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Research questions and linked methods

Research questions	Method
1. To what extent is the hard to place pupil protocol effective in facilitating reintegration into school following permanent exclusion?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview with two reintegration offices • Interview with parents of pupil case studies • Interviews with headteachers • Statistics from LA
2. What factors do stakeholders ⁷ consider facilitate or hinder reintegration into school following permanent exclusion?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with pupils (three) • Interviews with parents (four) • Interviews with two reintegration officers • Survey to all schools
3. What is the role of the educational psychologist in supporting pupil reintegration following permanent exclusion?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EP team focus group • Survey to all schools • Case work: reflections in research diary • Evaluation of case work with school

⁷ Stakeholders are permanently excluded pupils, their parents / carers, school staff and LA officers

3.5 Data collection

3.5.1 Case work

Yin (2009) advises that researchers should have a defined set of operational criteria whereby candidates will be deemed qualified to serve as cases and suggests that researchers choose cases that are likely to yield the best data. In consultation with the LA reintegration officer, four pupils were recruited on the following basis:

- They had been previously permanently excluded from a mainstream school.
- They were due to be reintegrated into a new mainstream secondary school⁸ which had been agreed through the HTPPP.
- There was informed parental agreement for both involvement in the research and case work. Additionally there was informed verbal consent from the pupils for involvement in the research and case work (further information on ethical considerations can be found in section 3.9).

Yin (2009) suggests that single-case designs, for example the views of just one reintegrating pupil being sought, are vulnerable because the researcher *'will have to put all their eggs in one basket'* (p. 61) and considers that evidence from multiple participants is often considered more compelling and *'the overall study is therefore regarded as being more robust'* (p. 53). Stake (2006) describes how multiple representations of the case provide characterization of the phenomenon so that we seek a better description of it but the characterization will be seen differently in different situations. As

⁸ All pupils recruited were secondary school aged pupils; the reason for this is that permanent exclusion is experienced mostly by secondary school aged pupils (see section 2.3.3 in chapter two for statistics in relation to this), so to gain deeper understanding of the phenomena it was decided to focus upon these pupils.

such the characterization of reintegration of pupils within this research will be seen differently across the cases and the schools. Therefore one of the most important tasks within case study methodology, according to Stake (2006) is to show how the phenomenon appears in different contexts and to ensure that the emphasis is placed on the experience of people within the phenomena.

Stake (2006) describes the activities of the researcher undertaking multiple case study analysis. Stake (2006) states that finding out what each case does from observations and interviews as well as describing and interpreting constitutes a large part of many case studies. The activities associated with the cases are expected to be influenced by contexts, so contexts need to be studied and described, whether or not evidence of influence is found. Therefore in this study anecdotal evidence within the research diary from conversations with school staff and parents are considered equally as important as evidence from more formal interviews. This also reinforces the fact that it is important to view the cases of reintegration in context of the schools and the LA, and not in isolation.

Yin (2009) describes how a researcher may deliberately select participants that are different because they offer contrasting situations and the aim is not a direct replication. Within real world qualitative research, it is not possible to conduct replicated experiments, nor is that the aim of this research project. None of the pupils were excluded from the research on account of any reasons other than consent being declined from parents or the school. If consent for participation in the research was declined, it was agreed that appropriate support would have been provided through the link EP for the school, if this is requested. The pupils involved in the research were therefore a self-selected group and all pupils who were eligible to participate were offered the opportunity to do so. Information related to consent for

pupils as part of the research can be found in the ethical considerations section 3.10.

Further information and detailed summaries of the cases can be found in appendices 4-7. The details of the pupils⁹ who participated are summarized in table 3.3.

⁹ Pseudonyms are used for all pupils

Table 3.3: Case summaries

	Chris Male Yr 11	Alison Female Yr 9	Samantha Female Yr 11	David Male Yr 9
Reason for exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Physical assault against a pupil 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Verbal abuse Threatening behaviour against an adult •Verbal abuse / threatening behaviour against a pupil 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Persistent disruptive behaviour Physical assault against a pupil 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Physical assault against a pupil
Time out of school	Four months	Three months	One year	Eight weeks
History of intervention and behavioural factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •No EP involvement •Fixed period exclusions for persistent disruptive behaviour and verbal abuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •No EP involvement •Previous fixed period exclusions for bullying and confrontation with staff •Difficulties with peer relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •No EP involvement •Issue around confrontations with staff, attendance and peer relations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •EP involvement at previous school; consultation records report recommendations •Although there were low level concerns, the behaviour leading to exclusion was unexpected
Family factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Chris lives with his grandparents who have full custody •He does not have contact with his 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Alison lives with her mother and father. Alison refused to participate in the research although her 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Samantha lives with her mother. Difficult relationship as her mother blames her for the impact of her 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •David lives with his mother, step-father and five siblings •His parents are very supportive of David

	<p>biological parents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •His grandparents are grateful for the that support Chris has received from the school 	<p>and parents agreed for the researcher to support the admission through staff consultation and training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Parents very angry about exclusion 	<p>exclusion and non-school attendance on her life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Mother did not support reintegration 	<p>and are keen for the reintegration to be successful</p>
Summary of EP involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Therapeutic approach using motivational interviewing and narrative therapy •Consultation with school staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Staff training on change management / reintegration to large staff group •Consultation with staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Consultation with staff and Samantha 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Therapeutic approach using MI, SFBT and anger management •Consultations with school staff
Current situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chris remains in school and is doing well 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Alison refused to attend the school other than for the first two weeks. She has not attended since this time and parents are currently being prosecuted for non-school attendance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Samantha started at the school however she soon decided to not attend and has not returned. She is currently being educated at the study centre •On reflection reintegration into mainstream school was unsuitable given length of time out of school and lack of support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •David remains in school; he has not had an easy reintegration as there have been difficulties with peer relations. He is eager to remain in the school

The parents of the pupils and the school staff supporting the reintegration were consequently asked to participate in the research on the same basis. Each was asked to complete a consent letter that can be found in appendix 17: these letters outline the aims of the research and the way in which their views will be reported.

Stake (2006) notes that the methods used in the cases may be quite similar from case to case or may be different, and unless quantitative methods are mainly used then the use of different methods across cases is legitimate. Therefore whilst the initial aim of the research was for each case to be completed similarly, the nature of real world research meant that there were some differing approaches. Subsequently the amount of time spent with each case varied depending on the individual needs of the pupil, the family, and the school staff. Further details on the interventions can be found in the case summaries in appendices 4-7. Data was collected from the following sources:

1. Document and record reviews from case files
2. Approximately three sessions of EP involvement negotiated on an individual basis to include consultation, direct individual pupil work and staff training.
3. Semi-structured interviews at various stages of the reintegration process with pupil, supporting school staff, supporting LA staff and parents.
4. Case notes and EP reflections on case work as part of research diary, including extensive field notes and information from observations.
5. Evaluation of EP involvement form completed by school staff

Direct observations from the four cases as part of the case work are documented within a research diary. Yin (2009) notes that because case

study research takes place in the natural setting of the case, the researcher has the perfect opportunity for direct observations. The observations ranged from formal to casual data collection. They included observations from meetings, school visits, and discussions with staff. The purpose of the observational data was to provide additional information and to triangulate all of the information gathered.

3.5.1i EP evaluation form: recruitment of school staff

Those members of school staff who were named link support staff for the pupils were asked to participate in interviews with the researcher in order to ascertain their views on the reintegration. They were also asked to complete an EP evaluation form towards the end of the researcher's involvement in the case. A copy of this form can be found in appendix 8. The evaluation form was based on the end of year EP team evaluation form administered to all schools within the LA in which the research was completed. The form was adapted for the purposes of this research as it was deemed appropriate for the evaluation to be based upon local procedures.

One methodological consideration relating to the interviews is that the participants may provide responses that are socially desirable, particularly given the nature of the questions in the evaluation form, which include the researcher asking for an evaluation of her own work. However it was emphasized to school staff that honest reflections would enhance further work in this area. A summary of the evaluations can be found in the case summaries in appendices 4-7 and they are considered accurate representations and are congruent with the researcher's reflections on the EP involvement in the cases.

3.5.2 Interviews

Qualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable and able to be made explicit (Burman, 1994). The four main reasons for conducting interviews are described by Burman (1994) and include:

1. To ascertain the meanings the participants accord to the topic of the interview
2. To permit exploration of issues that may be too complex to investigate through quantitative means
3. To promote research involvement and practice; an interviewer is forced to confront their own participation within the research
4. To consider whose purposes the conversation is pursuing, attending to power relationships in terms of the morality-politics of research practice and the academic criteria of adequate evaluation of research.

Interviews are therefore a useful way to gain access to past events, life history and details of situations which the researcher did not witness. Blyth and Milner (1996) suggest:

'If we from the objective perspective of an outsider deny their reality we can only move further away from our own understanding of their behaviour (p. 162).

Semi-structured interviews were held with:

- Three pupils¹⁰
- Four parents
- Four members of school staff supporting the reintegrating pupil cases
- Two LA reintegration officers
- Three headteachers

Cohen et al (2005) describe some of the weaknesses of interviews as a method of research, particularly that reliability may be questioned as interviewees may choose to answer in a socially acceptable way. Additionally Burman (1994) notes that conducting interviews is complex, labour intensive and uncertain. It is fraught with difficult issues that social scientific researchers and particularly psychologists, may be ill-equipped to address. However the depth of understanding needed as part of this research could not have been gained through the use of another method such as a questionnaire. Best and Kahn (1995) argue that interviews are best used to gather information regarding an individual's experience and knowledge. Patton (2002) affirms that the purpose of interviewing is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective. This is particularly appropriate given that this research adopts a social constructionism perspective to knowledge.

3.5.2i Guide to undertaking the interviews

Yin (2009) describes how interviews are an essential source of case study information, but that they will be guided conversations rather than structured queries. Therefore although the researcher will be pursuing a consistent line of inquiry, *'the actual stream of questions in a case study interview is likely to be fluid rather than rigid'* (Yin, 2009, p. 106). Yin (2009) identifies a key

¹⁰ See appendix 7 for details related to the reasons that the fourth pupil did not participate in the interviews

characteristic that distinguishes case study questions, from survey style questions. It is the general orientation of questions, in that the questions are in fact posed to the researcher; the questions are in essence the researcher's reminders regarding the information that needs to be collected and why.

Semi-structured interviewing, as a more open and flexible research tool, can document perspectives not usually represented or even envisaged by researchers, hence the approach can empower disadvantaged groups, such as excluded pupils and their families, by validating and publicizing their views (Burman, 1994). This was important within this study as it was evident that some participants held emotive views on their experiences. Semi structured interviews enable the topics to be clear with some questions predetermined, but it leaves space for probing beyond given answers. They can be modified based upon researcher perception of what seems most appropriate at the time, as well as changing wording and providing explanations, which is important in building up rapport with the participants (Robson, 2002). Additionally questions that seem inappropriate with an interviewee can be omitted (Robson, 2002). This was needed as each case was different and did not require the same questioning structure.

Yin (2009) advises that researchers have two jobs when interviewing, firstly they should follow the line of inquiry as dictated by the research aims, that is satisfying the line of inquiry and secondly the researcher should ask the conversational questions in an unbiased manner, therefore putting forth friendly and non-threatening questions. Burman (1994) suggests that it can be helpful to have a list of topics, with lists of issues that a researcher may want to cover so that it is easy to check them out in the course of the interview. The structures for the interviews were derived from themes from the literature review. Interview schedules for the five interviews can be found in appendices 10-14.

Yin (2009) advises that a case study should take place in the natural setting of the 'case'. Therefore, the parent interviews took place in their own homes, the school staff interviews took place in quiet offices and the pupil interviews took place in a quiet room within the school.

3.5.2ii The different types of interviews

Yin (2009) proposes different types of interview styles that case studies utilize: there are two types evident in this study. The first is an in depth interview where the researcher can ask respondents about facts as well as their opinions about events. These interviews can take place over a period of time or in a single setting and can be considered as taking place with key 'informants'. In this research the interviews with headteachers and reintegration officers can be considered informant interviews. That is because the interviews particularly with the reintegration officers were critical to the success of the case study and they provided the researcher with insights and can initiate access to corroboratory or contrary sources of evidence. Yin (2009) warns that researchers need to be mindful of the potential dependence of a researcher on an informant. To avoid this it is advised that the researcher should rely on other sources of evidence to corroborate any insight by such informants and to search for contrary evidence as carefully as possible.

Yin (2009) describes a second type of case study interview as a focused interview in which a person is interviewed for a short period of time. The interviews may still remain open-ended and assume a conversational manner, but it is more likely that they will be following a set of questions. This type of interview best describes interviews that have taken place with pupils, parents and school staff. Yin (2009) notes that the specific questions should be carefully worded so that the interviewer appears genuinely naïve about the topic and allow the interviewee to provide a fresh commentary

about it. In contrast if the interviewer asks leading questions, the corroboratory purpose of the interview will not have been served. Yin (2009) provides guidance on the levels of different questions in an interview; a summary of this can be found in appendix 15 and influenced the style of questioning adopted by the researcher. Yin (2009) advises that good researchers will note down the instances whereby the interviewees do not appear to corroborate with another's version of what took place, or version of events, or feelings.

3.5.2iii Pupil interviews

In order to understand the ways in which excluded pupils perceive and make sense of their experiences, it was important for the researcher to ask them and therefore gain knowledge from the individual's accounts of their own behaviour. For all of the interviews the aim was not to present the entirety of their views, but to present accounts of their reality through their own narratives. For the pupil interviews this was assisted by the rapport built between researcher and pupils, as the pupil interviews were not completed in isolation. These interviews formed part of the casework and the researchers understanding and interpretation of the views of the pupils were constructed over a period of time. A copy of the interview schedule can be found in appendix 11. A summary of the views of the pupils can be found in the case summaries in appendices 4-7.

3.5.2iv Parent interviews

To enable the researcher to better understand the role of the parents and the challenges they may face, it was important to gain the views of the parents of the four reintegrating pupils. The aim of the parent interviews was to obtain the views of these parents to understand the process of reintegration from the perspective of the family. Again for all of the

interviews the aim was not to present the entirety of their views, but to present accounts of their reality through their own narratives. The interviews took place in the family home when the pupil was not present. They were completed within two weeks of the pupil starting at their new school and some of the interviews took place over two sessions. A copy of the interview schedule can be found in appendix 10 and summaries of the individual parent views can be found in the case summaries in appendices 4-7.

3.5.2v Headteacher interviews

The purpose of including headteacher views of reintegration and the HTPPP was because they are key stakeholders in negotiating the reintegration of pupils. The process for recruiting headteachers to participate in the research consisted of a discussion with both the reintegration officers and the principal EP. The names provided were those headteachers of schools that had reintegrated a higher amount of pupils, as per the spreadsheet ranking table. The reason for this was that it seemed necessary for the headteacher to have a quantifiable amount of experience of reintegrating pupils and of the HTPPP, to fully participate their views to the research.

There are nineteen high schools in the LA in which the research was completed and the views of three headteachers were sought, which represents a sample of fifteen percent. All headteachers were provided with the opportunity to contribute to the research through completion of the survey. However for the purposes of the interview and to ensure that the research was manageable, three participants were selected. Initially three headteachers were individually emailed; two responded agreeing to participate in the interview whilst one headteacher wished the researcher well in the research but did not have time to participate within the time limits. A third headteacher was subsequently recruited via email. A copy of the

email request letter can be found in appendix 16 and a copy of the interview schedule can be found in appendix 13.

3.5.2vi Reintegration officer interviews

At the beginning of the research process there were two reintegration officers employed within the LA, however due to re-structuring there remains just one reintegration officer. Despite this it was possible to interview both reintegration officers individually to gain their views on the process of reintegration and the HTPPP. It was very important to gain their views as they have the responsibility of negotiating the reintegration of the pupil with both the school and the family. A copy of the consent letter for the reintegration officers to participate in the research can be found in appendix 17. It is important to reiterate that all information has been obscured to ensure anonymity for all participants. Given some sensitivities around the topics in questions, each participant was asked at the end of their interview whether they were satisfied that any comments they made could be included in the research. A copy of the interview schedule can be found in appendix 14.

3.5.3 Research diary

A research diary was kept throughout the research process as a reflective tool following interviews, consultations and pupil, parent and staff intervention. The diary was kept during data collection and assimilation stages and also to outline and describe the research process. Hughes (2000) notes the main reasons for keeping a research diary as being to provide material for reflection, to provide data on the research process, to record the development of research skills and to generate a history of the project as well as the researcher's thinking and the research process. For

the purposes of this research, the research diary seeks to provide additional information for the research questions.

Research diaries can provide a means of creating an '*open-minded and critical approach*' (p. 249) according to Silverman (2005), which enables thoughts and processes in relation to the research topic to be captured. Hughes (2000) describes how researchers use research diaries as a tool to reflect on their research practice and is an important tool in participatory research. The research diary will be structured into the following areas, as suggested by Altrichter and Holly (2005):

- Memos (including descriptive sequences and interpretive sequences)
- Notes (including theoretical notes and methodological notes)
- Planning notes

Altrichter and Holly (2005) suggest jotting down catchwords and phrases during the course of the activity which in this case was during supervision, session work within schools and interviews, as these proved useful aide memoirs. A copy of the structure for the research diary can be found in appendix 9.

The diary also includes questions and topics for further study or investigation, hunches and thoughts, diagrams and mind-maps, observations, reflections on what the researcher saw, plans for the next steps of the research and reflections on re-reading the diary. Excerpts of the research diary will be illustrated in the result section to provide information and evidence in relation to the research questions.

3.5.4 Focus group

Towards the end of the research process a decision was made to include a focus group with the team of EPs within the LA to discuss their views and experiences of supporting vulnerable pupils and those pupils who had been excluded or reintegrated. The aim of the focus group was to provide some representations, in addition to the research diary, of the views of EPs on their role in supporting this group of pupils.

The use of focus groups is a well-established qualitative research method for ascertaining people's views (Kitzinger, 1995; Robson, 2000). Willig (2008) describes focus groups as providing an:

'Alternative to semi-structured interviewing...it is really a group interview that uses interaction among participants as a source of data' (p. 30).

For definition purposes, this focus group was *homogeneous*, that is the participants shared key features as they were all EPs, *pre-existing*, as they were colleagues and *naïve*, as they did not have a specific stake in the research matter (Willig, 2008). The aim of the group was to trace the ways in which meanings are collectively constructed within a group of EPs and how consensus may be achieved through discussion. Therefore all contributions were useful in analysis.

Discussion within focus groups should not be constrained by the researcher's preconceptions but instead should be led by participants and the dynamics of the group interaction can generate suggestions that may not arise through the use of other techniques (Robson, 2002). Researchers can also gain additional information by encouraging participants to expand on ideas (Hoppe and Wells, 1995). There are also practical advantages as it

enables large amounts of information to be gathered in a relatively short period of time (Robson, 2002). Additionally Willig (2008) suggests that they are less artificial than individual interviews, which means that data generated is likely to have higher ecological validity.

Willig (2008) describes the strength of focus groups in the ability to mobilize participants to respond to and comment on one another's contributions, so that statements are:

'Challenged, extended, developed, undermined, qualified in ways that generate rich data for the researcher' (p. 31).

This allows the researcher to address questions about the ways in which attitudes may be formed and changed and how participants may jointly construct meanings.

However, there are also disadvantages associated with the use of focus groups. Some participants may be discouraged from participating in focus groups, as they are not confident expressing their views in group situations (Gibbs, 1997). Others may participate but not feel confident enough to express their views if these views conflict with others within the group (Kitzinger, 1995). Alternatively, some people may dominate the discussion and diminish alternative views (Robson, 2002). These factors can result in the focus group being unrepresentative of its target population (Gibbs, 1997). A further potential criticism is recognized by Willig (2008) who states that a focus group with six participants is never the equivalent of six individual interviews, because individuals in groups do not speak or answer in the same way as they do in other settings.

Maykut and Morehouse (1994) describe the way that the researcher's role in group interview situations is much less prominent than that in individual

interviews and that the role is characterised as moderator. Given the possible issues around gaining unrepresentative views as described, it was important for the researcher to consider her role within the focus group to ensure that views gained were as representative as possible. Maykut and Morehouse (1994) suggests that the moderator role is most effective if the researcher:

‘Genuinely demonstrates high interest coupled with incomplete understanding, reflecting in verbal and gestural invitations for participation by group members, and probes for clarification and elaboration’ (p. 109).

Maykut and Morehouse (1994) explain the importance of including all participants in the focus group interview, whilst avoiding the need for a round-robin, turn-taking routine which can undermine the conversational quality desired in a group interview. This was considered carefully and was uppermost in the researcher’s consideration of the process involved in focus groups. Therefore an interview guide was used, which acted as a reference rather than a script. A copy of the focus group interview guide can be found in appendix 18.

The focus group was completed on a team development day. These are fairly relaxed days in which EPs share information and training. At the start of the day the focus group was described by the researcher and ethical considerations were explained, including that the focus group would be audio recorded and that the analysis of the focus group would be written up as part of the thesis, however confidentiality could be assured as any identifying comments would not be used. The purpose of providing this information at the beginning of the day was to enable the EP team members to consider if they would be willing to participate in the focus group, as it was arranged for the afternoon. It was suggested that any team member

who decided not to participate, should speak to the researcher prior to the focus group in the afternoon so that alternative arrangements could be made. All members of the EP team chose to participate, which totalled seven EPs, not including the researcher.

It is the belief of the researcher that the focus group was an important addition to the study during the research process. The co-ordination of the focus group presented challenges in terms of the facilitation, and it is a reflection that the addition of a co-facilitator may have made this process slightly less demanding on the researcher. It is the researcher's perception that the dynamics and discussion gained during a focus group added to the depth of insight gained from the participants and strengthened the data gathered for the perceptions by EPs of their role in supporting this group of pupils.

3.5.5 Survey

A postal survey was administered to all secondary schools in the LA. The purpose of the survey was to provide further information on the factors that facilitate or hinder effective reintegration and the potential and actual role of EP. The results of the survey have been collated and will be presented alongside the other methods used in the results section.

Dane (1994) describes how survey methods are based on:

'The simple discovery "that asking questions is a remarkably efficient way to obtain information from and about people'

(p. 83).

Survey methods are less time consuming than interviews and provide wider coverage of views than would be possible otherwise (Coolican, 2004).

However, in some cases it may be easier for participants to present themselves in a socially desirable manner in writing, whereas such deception may be hard to conceal face to face (Dane, 1994). The disadvantages of postal surveys are that the survey must be exceptionally clear and unambiguous instructions for its completion must be written carefully. In order to address these difficulties, Coolican (2004) provides advice in relation to survey design which was adhered to. It considers there to be three major areas of decision making necessary before initiating contact with respondents. These are the sample, mode of questioning and the questions themselves.

3.5.5i Sample

Coolican (2004) suggests that of all the methods available to researchers, the survey places particular emphasis on the sample, since the aim, very often is to make generalizations about a relatively large section of the population. In this case the purpose of the survey was to ensure that the views of all participants were captured and as it is a case study methodology, ensure that all the views of school staff were gained.

The survey was posted to school staff named by the reintegration officers as having responsibility for supporting pupils who have been reintegrated. A copy of the survey and accompanying letters can be found in appendix 19. Members of school staff were asked to reflect upon recent cases, within the last two years, of pupils being reintegrated and complete the survey for that pupil, without naming the pupil. The survey and a covering letter were also sent to the headteacher of the each secondary school as a matter of courtesy. It also provided them with the opportunity to complete the survey if they wished.

3.5.5ii Mode of questioning

Coolican (2004) describes the different ways in which surveys can be administered; in person, over the telephone and through the post. Dane (1994) notes that response rates for postal surveys tend to be lower than telephone or personal interviews. However it was anticipated that the privacy of the postal method might be a factor that would produce more honest answers and so it was posted to the named individuals. Whilst the interpersonal variables are reduced to a minimum, the respondent may make assumptions about the researcher from the style of the covering letter. Dane (1994) warns that survey administration is not always smooth and that one difficulty is in constructing an instrument that will prompt objective responses, without the introduction of any bias.

Therefore the covering letter was read by colleagues and a university tutor to ensure that it covered all of the necessary information. Additionally it was read by and completed by a group of SENCOs at a group consultation coordinated by the researcher. The SENCOs were very familiar with the researcher and were at ease with feeding back comments and suggestions. They were encouraged to critically evaluate the survey to reflect upon whether they understood the purpose, the questions and the instructions. Despite this feedback and subsequent amendments to the survey, it remained a possibility that a respondent may answer in a misunderstood way, that a 'live' interviewer could have corrected.

3.5.5iii Questions

The survey was semi-structured and based upon the areas identified within the research questions. Dane (1994) suggests that the hallmarks of a survey are that the researcher presents specific questions or items to which the respondents provide answers or reactions. The questions were

therefore very clear and unnecessary questions were removed. The survey included questions on the perceived successfulness of the reintegration and questions on the facilitators and barriers to the reintegration. There was also a question on the role of an EP in the process and the support that school staff perceived to have been helpful. A summary of responses and return rate for the surveys can be found in appendix 20.

3.5.6 Analysis of documents

Maykut and Morehouse (1994) describe how a researcher's focus of inquiry may suggest that the information that will most likely yield an understanding of the phenomena under study is contained in documents. Indeed they note that Sigmund Freud was '*partial to the personal document*' (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994, p. 111) and that studies in psychology have vacillated on the usefulness and credibility given to data contained in documents for illuminating the human experience. Documents available for analysis within this research were reports and information within pupil files and LA documents.

Each of the pupil cases have large school files, within which there is a range of information related to evidence for the exclusion and other information which is relevant to this study. All school, LA exclusion team and EP team files were available to the researcher and consent was gained for these to be copied for analysis. This information is important in triangulating and confirming information within case studies, Yin (2009) notes that the most important use of documents is to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources. Yin (2009) that the case study researcher should be a vicarious observer and it is important to recognise that documentary evidence reflects a communication among other parties attempting to achieve some other objectives. That is that the researcher must understand that the document was being written for some specific purpose and some

specific audience; as such Yin (2009) notes that some documents may be biased and inaccurate, however they are nevertheless useful.

Similarly O'Donoghue and Punch (2003) emphasised that:

'Documentary evidence cannot simply be understood at face value. The story behind the production of each document needs to be probed and analysed' (p. 78).

This provides an opportunity for triangulation, specifically the cross checking of data provided in the file and the live experiences of the participants.

In describing her own research, Vidovich (2003) illustrates how at the lower levels of the trajectory, documents provided valuable information in preparing for interviews. This type of documentary analysis is important as documents provide so much of the information in relation to exclusion. Documents are presented to governing body panels to uphold exclusions, they are provided to schools to summarise pupil attainment and behaviour and are provided to parents. These alongside other methods, such as interviews and surveys, will enable the documents to be seen within a social context because documents reflect and construct a social reality.

3.6 Data analysis

3.6.1 Transcription

Transcription can be an overwhelming process in qualitative research, Lancy (1993) suggests to exhaustively transcribe even a couple hours of audiotape is *'a herculean task because of time consumption and cost'* (p. 104). Despite this Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that transcription provides a *'far more thorough understanding of your data'* (p. 88). However

Silverman (2005) suggests that the benefit of using tapes opposed to transcripts is that audio recordings can be replayed and 'analyses take off on a different tack unlimited by the original transcript' (p. 184). Therefore due to the density of interview data collected, a decision was made to not fully transcribe the interview and focus group data collected. The researcher listened to each of the voice recordings for each interview numerous times and made verbatim notes, however did not consider it necessary to undertake full transcription.

To extract only the relevant elements, Jones and Somekh (2005) advise listening to the whole tape, making brief running notes of its contents before making a selection of the sentences and passages to extract. Additionally Hubbard and Power (1999) provide guidance on analysing audiotapes without full transcription. This includes:

- Listening to tapes and note what strikes you: it is suggested that this is done informally for example whilst driving or when completing another job, so that the most pertinent elements of the interview are obtained
- Noting only topic changes
- Noting who controls the conversation
- Flagging only the comments of a case study informant

(Hubbard and Power, 1999)

Hubbard and Power (1999) suggest that these techniques take far less time than full transcriptions and in the end they may provide researchers with all of the necessary information. Etherington (2004) discusses how her perception of transcription has changed with experience. She once stated previously that '*a researcher who does not undertake this part of the work loses the opportunity that transcribing presents us with*' (Etherington, 2004, p. 78). However, she now perceives that a researcher can '*remain*

sufficiently close to the data...providing we listen repeatedly to the tapes' (Etherington, 2004, p. 79).

Braun and Clarke (2006), whilst advocating the use of transcription in analysis, recognize that constructionist thematic analysis does not require the same level of detail in the transcript as conversation, discourse or even narrative analysis. They note that there is no one way to conduct thematic analysis and so there is no one set of guidelines to follow when producing a transcript (Braun and Clarke, 2006). At a minimum it requires a 'verbatim' account of all verbal utterances, but what is important is that the transcript retains the information the researcher needs, without necessarily providing a word by word account (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

3.6.2 Thematic analysis

Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2009) describe how there is little discussion in the published literature of analysis within qualitative research, which is a different case for the more conversed quantitative research. Braun and Clarke (2006) note that if we do not know how researchers analyse their data or what assumptions informed their analysis then it is difficult to evaluate their research. It is for these reasons that thorough justification and description is required. Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2009) explain that with such little focus on analysis, many qualitative researchers believe that there is only one way to analyse qualitative data and that is through the method of constant comparative or constant comparison analysis. With limited guidance Burman (1994) notes that:

'A common reaction to analyses...is that the material has been misinterpreted or over-interpreted, manipulated to produce meanings that were not originally there' (p. 64).

Thematic analysis is a method of ascertaining, describing, evaluating and reporting themes within qualitative data (Boyatzis, 1998). It is described as a 'method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data' (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 79). Thematic analysis was chosen for this research because it is a flexible technique that allows for a wide range of analytic options (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Of significance is the fact that thematic analysis is compatible with constructionist paradigms within psychology. Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that researchers need to make their epistemological assumptions explicit and need to be clear about what they are doing and why. Thematic analysis can be a method that works to both *'reflect reality and to unpick or unravel the surface of 'reality'* (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 81).

The research epistemology guides what the researcher can say about the data and informs how one might theorise meaning. From a constructionist perspective, meaning and experience are socially produced and reproduced, rather than inherent within individuals. Therefore thematic analysis conducted within a constructionist framework cannot and does not seek to focus on motivation or individual psychologies. Instead it seeks to theorise the sociocultural contexts and structural conditions that enable the individual accounts that are provided.

However, Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2009) contend that using this approach to analyse qualitative data may lead to interpretations that are not consistent with the underlying data, which will affect interpretive validity and theoretical validity. Braun and Clarke (2006) recognize that some of the worst examples of thematic analysis have simply used the questions put to participants as the 'themes' identified in the 'analysis'. To ensure that researchers are equipped and aware of the challenges around thematic analysis detailed guidance is provided within the Braun and Clarke (2006) research paper.

The terminology used in thematic analysis is helpful in describing the process of analysis for this research and is described in table 3.4.

Table 3.4 Thematic analysis terminology (Braun and Clarke, 2006)

Terminology	Description
Data	All of the data collected within the research
Data set	Those pieces of data chosen for individual analyses
Data item	Individual items of research for analysis, for example interviews; these together make up the data set
Data extract	An individual coded chunk of data, of which excerpts will appear in the results section

Therefore each research question is answered using a 'data set', which are made up of individual data items, such as individual interviews. A summary of how the research questions have been answered using thematic analysis across the data is summarised in table 3.5 below. From this a selection of data extracts, which are individual coded chunks of data, have been taken to illustrate themes in the final analysis in chapter four.

Table 3.5 Thematic analysis data sets

Data set for RQ 1 - To what extent is the hard to place pupil protocol effective in facilitating reintegration into school following permanent exclusion?	
Data items:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Headteacher interviews• Reintegration officer interviews• Documentary evidence from LA• Observations by researcher
Data set for RQ 2 - What factors do stakeholders¹¹ consider facilitate or hinder reintegration into school following permanent exclusion?	
Data items:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pupil interviews• Parent interviews• School staff interviews• Reintegration officer interviews• Headteacher interviews• Survey• Research diary reflections
Data set for RQ 3 - What is the role of the educational psychologist in supporting pupil reintegration following permanent exclusion?	
Data items:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Research diary reflections• Focus group• Reintegration officer interviews• Headteacher interviews• Survey

Thematic analysis is a way of seeing, as well as a process for coding qualitative information. Therefore a researcher must make many decisions about the process of identifying themes and whether to analyze the interview data obtained from each participant independently or whether to use cross-case analysis. Since thematic analysis involves searching across a data set to find repeated patterns of meaning, themes across the data set will be presented jointly to enhance meaning. A decision was made to produce a rich description of the data set in relation to the three research questions, so that the reader obtains a sense of the dominant or important themes within each research question. In doing this it is necessary to ensure that the themes identified are an accurate reflection of the content of

¹¹ Stakeholders are permanently excluded pupils, their parents / carers, school staff and LA officers

the data set. In such an analysis, Braun and Clarke (2006) warn that some depth and complexity is necessarily lost. However a rich overall description is maintained. Braun and Clarke (2006) regard this as being a useful method when the researcher is investigating an under-researched area, which is therefore relevant for this research.

The researcher must also decide whether to manually create a code to label the findings or whether to use software specifically designed for qualitative data management. In this case as the interviews were not fully transcribed, specialist software was not used.

A 'theoretical' thematic analysis approach is thought of as a 'top-down' or theory driven approach and it tends to be driven by the researcher's theoretical approach, or interest in a specific area derived from a review of literature or from their experience (Braun and Clarke, 2006). A theoretical approach requires engagement with the literature prior to analysis, as engagement with the literature can enhance analysis by sensitizing the researcher to the more subtle features of the data. As Braun and Clarke (2006) note:

'Researchers cannot free themselves of their theoretical and epistemological commitment, and data are not coded in an epistemological vacuum' (p. 84)

This form of thematic analysis provides a more detailed analysis of some aspect of the data. In this approach a researcher codes the data for a specific research question. The thematic analysis therefore allowed for a cross-section analysis of the interviews to explore the views of each of the participants.

A 'latent' approach to data analysis goes beyond the semantic content of the data to identify or examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, conceptualisations and ideologies that are theorised as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data. This examination is evident within the discussion section in chapters five and six. The development of the themes themselves involved interpretive work and the analysis that is produced is not just descriptive but it is theorised. Braun and Clarke (2006) identify the latent approach to analysis as being from a constructionist paradigm where:

'Broader assumptions, structures, and/or meanings are theorised as underpinning what is actually articulated in the data' (p. 85).

The audio recordings were listened to by the researcher three times before coding in order to gain insight into possible themes embedded in the interviews. Some initial notes were made during readings of each transcript and potential themes were noted. Corbin and Straus (2008) encourage sensitivity to the data through literature review and clinical experiences. Charmaz (2006) notes that researchers have preconceptions that influence the analysis and interpretation of data and an in-depth literature review can help establish an initial framework for coding and provide data to support the researcher's assertions. The literature review was performed prior to the analysis of data in order to sensitize the researcher to subtle concepts that may be present in the interviews but could be over-looked during coding if they had not been previously introduced to the researcher (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that a theme:

‘Captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set’ (p. 82).

Therefore the importance of a theme is not necessarily in prevalence in the data, but whether it provides an important element in regard to the research question. According to Hubbard and Power (1999) it is important that qualitative researchers’ interpretations are transparent, that is the reader can see very clearly how a researcher’s interpretations of the data relate to the data. Secondly, it is important that the interpretations are plausible and that the account which the researcher offers the reader is persuasive. Therefore excerpts of raw data, in the form of extended quotations, alongside the researcher’s accounts are included in the results section. This allows the reader to make a validity check between the data and the researchers account. Additionally Braun and Clarke (2006) note that this has the added virtue of giving the participants a ‘voice’ in the published research.

The phases of analysis that were undertaken can be found in appendix 21. This provides an in depth overview of the process and stages of thematic analysis as described by Braun and Clarke (2006) and those issues which were most pertinent during analysis for this research. Two stage thematic maps for each research question can be found in appendices 25-27.

Within the results section the terms ‘many’, ‘some’ and ‘a few’ have been used when reporting the themes derived from the data. These terms have been used to convey the weight of opinion of participants for each statement or theme. The term ‘many’ is used to denote that more than half of the group of participants mentioned or agreed with the statement or theme, ‘some’ to describe the views of less than half of the participants and ‘a few’ to represent the views of one or two of the participants. Each of the

quotations used have been coded in order for readers to identify any patterns in responses from participants. They have been coded Headteacher A - C, Parent A - D, Pupil A – C, Reintegration Officer A – B, Staff supporting pupil A-D, EP team and Researcher.

3.6.3 Coding from themes to discussion

There needed to be consideration of the process in which the themes from the results chapter could be incorporated into a robustly developed discussion chapter. The researcher considered that it was important that the discussion section did not simply re-tell the results section, rather that it grounded the central 'story' of the study. To facilitate this process the approach taken to coding within grounded theory, developed by Strauss and Corbin (1990), influenced the next stage of analysis, by enabling the researcher to develop the themes into a central discussion. The selective coding stage involves the process of selecting and identifying the core category and systematically relating it to other categories (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). It involves validating the relationships, refining and developing the categories so that they are integrated together and a central grounded theory is developed. Further information relating to this process, can be found in appendix 28. This details the process followed and the coding maps developed to illustrate the relationship between the results and discussion sections.

3.7 Methodological considerations

3.7.1 Validity and reliability

Willig (2008) notes that whilst validity and reliability can be problematic for qualitative researchers. There are three ways in which qualitative methodologies address issues of validity and reliability. These are:

1. Qualitative data collection techniques aim to ensure that participants can challenge and correct the researcher's assumptions about the meanings investigated by the research. To do this some researchers obtain feedback from the participants in the form of participant validation, so that if the findings make sense to the participants, then there must be some validity.
2. Much qualitative data collection takes place in real-life settings. As a result there is no need to extrapolate from an artificial setting, such as the laboratory, to the real world, which means that '*such studies have higher ecological validity*' (Willig, 2008, p. 16).
3. Reflexivity ensures that the research process as a whole is scrutinized throughout and that the researcher continuously reviews their own role in the research. This discourages impositions of meaning by the researcher and therefore promotes validity.

Breen (2007) defines four main procedures to use to achieve maximum research rigour. These are similar to those noted by Willig (2008) and include:

1. Employing multiple sources of data and methods of data collection
2. As an audit trail, keeping a journal where daily tasks and memos are documented.
3. Checking researcher interpretations with informants to ensure accuracy
4. Providing a detailed description of both the setting and the informants involved in the study so that readers can determine the credibility of the research.

In agreeing with Willig (2008), Creswell (2004) recommends member checking, whereby the researcher checks their interpretations of the subject's reality and meanings. This was most relevant for the interviews

whereby the researcher summarised at appropriate times her understanding and interpretation of the subject's reality. However this has raised the predicament of who would then be defining 'the case'. Schostak (2006) asks:

'When an interviewee speaks – who owns what is said? Who owns the "Truth"? Who owns the power to ascribe meanings? Is the recording a mere copy of the original, the actual acts of speaking and the actual play of intentions that were shaping the meaningful utterances' (p. 76).

Internal validity refers to the process of examining an interview considered to express authenticity and an enduring view for that subject position. Thus a representation of that view can be constructed for research purposes which can then be said to be 'valid' for that individual. Each extra insight interview and question asked further reduces potential ambiguities and misunderstandings until at some point agreement can be reached that each individual is intending the same meanings. Schostak (2006) describes this as a process of obtaining as many angles on the same phenomena as possible and in the process identifying that the object in question matches the essential structure of the idea or concept in question.

In line with the social constructionist theory the aim of this study is to create a rich description of a phenomenon in order to represent it from a participant's perspective and it is with the researcher that the description of the subject should be created. However Fontana and Frey (2005) suggest that:

'Many studies that use unstructured interviews are not reflexive enough about the interpreting process' (p. 713).

Therefore participant validation and member checking was included as part of the interviews. At the end of each interview, or in some of the longer interviews at the end of each stage of the interview, a summary of the researcher's understanding of the participants views were provided to the participant to ensure that this had been sufficiently captured.

3.7.2 The role of the researcher

Axiology is a concept critical in setting the methodological tone of the research and refers to the role of values, specifically the extent to which research can be value free or whether it is value laden. This is an important concept for this study, particularly the concept of how researcher values and assumptions can influence the scope and interpretation of the research findings. Additionally it is the recognition that the researcher's values may not be the same as the participant's values, which means that care needs to be taken in interpretation and analysis.

Willig (2008) notes that all qualitative methodologies recognise that the researcher is implicated in the research process to some extent. Social constructionist approaches to research consider that the researcher is the author, as opposed to witness, of their research findings, and they are central in the research process because it is the researcher who constructs the findings. Etherington (2004) describes how reflexive research that overtly acknowledges the life and presence of the researcher as part of the research and deals with issues such as gender, culture, race and class, has contributed to 'crisis of representation' described by Denzin and Lincoln (2000). This crisis has been created in response to the move away from traditional notions of truth, reality and knowledge that previously provided researchers with familiar structures for presenting findings. As such if there is no objective truth to be found, there can be no 'findings' (Etherington, 2004).

Bruner (1993) asks about *'the extent to which the personal self should have place in the scholarly text'* (Bruner, 1993, p. 2). This question perhaps rests upon the false assumption that there can be any text that does not show the presence of the author in some form (Etherington, 2004, p 84). Burman (1994) notes that people:

'Hold multiple positionings and identifications arising from structures of gender, class and so on, which inevitably enter into the particular analysis formulated' (p. 67).

Additionally in analysis, Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that an account of themes 'emerging' or being 'discovered' is a passive account of the process of analysis and it denies the active role that the researcher plays in identifying and reporting patterns and themes that are of interest.

The dichotomy of insider versus outsider researcher is an area requiring further consideration. Breen (2007) notes that insider researchers choose to study a group which they belong to, whilst outsider researchers do not belong to the group under study. As the researcher is neither an excluded pupil nor a parent of an excluded pupil nor a member of school staff supporting these pupils, it is therefore by definition outsider research.

Breen (2007) provides a summary of the perceptions of outsider-researchers. This includes descriptions that they *'parachute into people's lives...and then vanish'* (p. 59). However Breen (2007) notes that despite the researcher's best intentions 'parachuting' often occurs because of the demands of academic pressures. The researcher was mindful of this and it was something that required contemplation when considering the role of the researcher in particularly the pupil and family's life.

Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2006) describe how the crises of representation, legitimation and praxis threaten qualitative researchers' ability to extract meaning from their data. Lack of legitimation means that the extent to which the data has been captured has not been adequately assessed, or that any such assessment has not provided support for legitimation. This may mean that the researcher has not adequately captured the data, which makes it important for interpretive researchers to be aware of the role that their biases can play during the course of a qualitative study.

Miles and Huberman (1994) identified two sources of researcher bias that can affect the qualitative research process, these are:

- The effects of the researcher on the study participants
- The effects of the study participants on the researcher

According to Miles and Huberman (1994) the first bias prevails when the qualitative researcher disrupts or poses a threat to the existing social or institutional relationships. It can also lead to informants' implicitly or explicitly boycotting the researcher, who is viewed as a spy, critic or antagonist. The second bias can inhibit informants and can lead the researcher to 'go native' and become a complete participant, as opposed to a researcher who develops perspective without participating in those activities central to person or group under study.

Schwandt (1997) advocates the use of systematic reflexivity to facilitate qualitative researchers through a process of:

'Examining one's personal and theoretical commitments to see how they serve as resources for generating particular data, for behaving in particular ways vis-à-vis respondents and participants, and for developing particular interpretations'

(p. 136).

As such, collecting and critically reflecting on researcher bias in a systematic manner can greatly enhance the legitimization of accounts of social and behavioral phenomena. It can also assist the researcher in keeping bias from unduly influencing the results and to help the researcher understand the role that her bias may be playing in the study.

Although the content and process of the researcher might become seamlessly interwoven stories, affecting each other, it is important therefore that the voice of the researcher and researched are not merged and reported as one story, which is actually the researcher's interpretation (Etherington, 2004, p. 83). Therefore in an attempt to reduce this impact, use was made of a research diary, as has been described. The purpose of the research diary was to collect data as part of the case work and interviews, but it also enabled the researcher to reflect upon methodological issues. Additionally a reflexive interview was conducted; this was to ensure fidelity to the researcher values and to ensure changes to the researcher's value system are recognised. Breen (2007) notes that engaging in a:

'Reflective process is often seen as narcissistic and navel gazing; the belief that it has the potential to undermine the legitimacy of the research and researcher, and the process requires introspection, self-questioning, vulnerability, and humility' (p. 170).

However as Etherington (2004) describes, how each story is told is for a purpose and how it is told and how it is heard will depend on the listener as much as the narrator, which requires a reflection upon the impact of researcher ideologies.

3.7.2i Debriefing the researcher

According to Guba and Lincoln (1998) one way to obtain and use reflexive data from the researcher is by debriefing the researcher. The purpose of collecting this data is to help interpretive researchers to identify and to reflect on the degree to which their biases potentially might have influenced the various facets of the research study, how these might have changed over the course of the research and how this might have affected interpretations of findings and implications stemming from the findings. In addition, debriefing interviews provide an opportunity for the researcher to evaluate initial hunches. The process of the researcher explaining their verifying initial hunches to the debriefing interviewer might illuminate to the researcher the plausibility and trustworthiness of these hunches in the conduct of the research.

Guba and Lincoln (1998) have depicted the role of the peer debriefer as the devil's advocate, as it is an individual who keeps the researcher honest and who poses difficult questions about the procedures and interpretations of the research study. It is suggested that the peer reviewer can be a colleague or any other person who is not directly involved with the research

Given the need to present a valid representation of the data gathered, the researcher's fieldwork supervisor agreed to facilitate a researcher debrief interview. The supervisor was provided with a copy of the research paper in which this approach is described (Guba and Lincoln, 1998). The interview was based around two areas; bias and authenticity. The interview was adapted from the suggested interview in the research paper by the researcher and supervisor to ensure that it was relevant. A structured tape recorded session was completed. A copy of the interview questions can be found in appendix 22. This enabled the researcher to reflect further, through

discussion of her role in the research and subsequent analysis, to ensure that it was as free from bias as possible.

3.7.3 Triangulation

Bell, Staines and Mitchell (2001) describe how people make arguments and have opinions or assertions that are not based on evidence that is seldom made explicit or critically evaluated. Most people rely on their own informal observations of a limited number of examples to support claims. For the psychologist however, this is not good enough, as they will frequently question another person's argument by examining the evidence which relates to what they are saying.

Stake (2006) describes how researchers in social situations deal with a lot of impressions including their own, as well as those of other participants. Impressions can be good data, but good researchers want assurance of what they are seeing and hearing and they want assurance that they are not oversimplifying the situation. Stake (2006) notes that researchers can be concerned that they are perhaps reading too much into what they see and they want assurance that most of the meaning gained by a reader from their interpretation is the meaning they intended to convey. The process of gaining these assurances is called triangulation (Stake, 2006).

Triangulation refers to:

'Comparisons of at least two views / explanations of the same thing(s) – events, behaviour, actions' (Coolican, 2004, p. 586).

In this research triangulation therefore refers to the comparison of two or more different views of the same thing, for example interview with observational data. It can also be used to compare various perspectives of

different participants in different roles, which is an imperative area of this research.

Schostak (2006) notes that internal validity and triangulation depend upon a presupposition of realism; that is that given the right conditions a representation of the 'real' and the 'authentic' can be produced. However this is not always achievable or desirable. Salmon (2003) describes how aspiring qualitative researchers sometimes write that they 'used' triangulation. However, this term refers to an approach whereby researchers address their subject from different perspectives or with different data, or with different methods. Salmon (2003) is critical of regarding triangulation as part of qualitative methods. However Coolican (2004) notes that whilst triangulation is borrowed from quantitative contexts of surveying and navigation, triangulation has been popularly used among qualitative researchers.

Coolican (2004) notes that triangulation can be misleading in that it connotes complete accuracy; that a researcher uses two or more points in navigation to get a 'perfect fix' on direction. In realist versions of qualitative research we might expect some form of convergence on the same ultimate findings. However, in contextualist approaches, this would not be expected given the approach to knowledge. According to Madill, Jordan and Shirley (2000) the goal of triangulation within a contextualist epistemology is completeness not convergence. The aim is to present:

'Multiple and diverse perspectives that add up to a fuller picture than would be possible when the underlying philosophy is a search for the truth of a matter' (Coolican, 2004, p. 580).

In line with social constructionist epistemologies it is considered that there are different 'realities'. The role of the researcher is to represent each reality

according to the ways in which each view constructs the objects that feature in its 'reality' without making a judgement about it from some superior 'scientific' understanding of the world. This then means that no 'reality' is privileged over any other 'reality' during this process of creating the most representative description.

When conducting a case study, Yin (2003) proposes principles of data collection that can maximize the reliability and validity of the data set. The first is to use multiple sources of evidence, which aids data triangulation, and it also helps to avoid tunnel vision (Verschuren, 2003). The second principle is to create a case study database; the detail of this should be evident in the results section where it should contain enough data so that the reader can draw independent conclusions about the study. Yin (2003) recommends keeping the data or evidence and reports separated. Stake (2006) recommends that each important finding has at least three confirmations and assurances. Triangulation within the cases and across the research project was employed to ensure validity across the data set by ensuring each finding had at least three confirmations.

In summary issues of validity and reliability were dealt with in the following ways:

- Member checking: at the end of data collection with a participant the researcher ensured that she had correctly understood and interpreted their meanings
- Research diary: constant reflections within the research diary ensured that the researcher was aware of her values and interpretations of events
- Triangulation: each important finding had at least three confirmations and assurances

- Researcher debrief interview: this helped to keep the researcher honest and it posed difficult questions about the procedure and interpretations of the research study

3.8 Research with vulnerable pupils

Research on pupils excluded from school indicates that these pupils are vulnerable members of society (see sections 2.3.3 and 2.3.4 in the literature review for further information). Valentine, Butler and Skelton (2001) draw attention to the way that common methodological and ethical dilemmas, for example in relation to accessing potential interviewees or gaining consent, can become more complex and significant when the research involves work with a vulnerable group of young people. Using the example of researching with lesbian and gay young people, Valentine et al (2001) demonstrate the fundamental importance of finding safe and private spaces in which to carry out research and the crucial significance of making every effort to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of those who agree to participate in studies. The literature review has summarised previous research and concluded that pupils who have been excluded from school can find themselves isolated and excluded from society as a whole. The aim of this research is to provide them with a voice for how they feel and to illuminate the practice of reintegration. Therefore every effort was made within this research to ensure that further consideration was given to ethical issues.

Hubbard and Power (1999) note that even when pseudonyms are used in place of young people's names there are ethical issues in writing about children's actions. Hubbard and Power (1999) discuss a researcher's predicament in describing the behaviour of children in research writing:

'I have to think hard about, "How do I write about these children?" Children who I don't want to present as bad people,

because they aren't bad people. The ethical issue for me there is accurately presenting them from a number of dimensions. Their behaviour should be seen within the context of their whole way of acting in the world rather than just isolating this one thing and saying "look at what this child did here!" and assigning it "X, Y, or Z". So when I'm writing about unpleasant things, I feel it is my obligation to find ways to present children as part of a larger picture' (Hubbard and Power, 1999, p. 60).

This is also true of the representations of all participants within this study. Hubbard and Power (1999) note that teacher-researchers live daily with the consequences of their work and how they represent students, colleagues and themselves can affect relationships. In this research it was therefore imperative that the experiences of the researcher and the views of the participants were accurately and fairly reported.

3.9 Ethical considerations

Burman (1994) suggests that a legitimate question that should be posed, both in conducting and evaluating research, is whether the participants have been exploited, that is, whether their psychological or material conditions worsened through their involvement in the research. Therefore there were a number of ethical issues to be addressed when planning implementation of this research. The research was designed to adhere to the ethical principles outlined in the British Psychological Society Code of Ethics and Conduct (BPS, 2006).

There are a number of participants involved in the research and consent is required for each group. However, this is most pertinent for the pupil participants. Including child participants in research raises ethical and legal dilemmas about children's rights and the obligations of researchers. Masson

(2005) describes how children and young people are rarely free to decide entirely for themselves whether or not to participate in research. The enclosed nature of children's lives in families, in schools and in institutions means that they are surrounded by adults who can take on the role of 'gatekeepers' and may control researchers' access and children and young people's opportunities to express their views. Masson (2005) explains that researchers need to understand both the source and limits of the gatekeeper's power so that they can negotiate opportunities for children to choose whether to participate in their research.

In keeping with the BPS (2006) guidelines, as the pupil participants were under the age of sixteen, informed parental consent was obtained for all participants through a returned active consent letter to parents or carers. This letter detailed the objectives of the research and was sent to parents or carers and the school explaining the purpose of the research and what was involved. The researcher met with the pupils and parents prior to the involvement to ensure they were clear about the details and purpose of the research.

Hubbard and Power (1999) advocate the inclusion of the following information in any consent form:

1. A brief explanation of the research project
2. Request to use pupil information in publishing
3. Explanations of confidentiality
4. A clear description of how the pupils will not be hurt in any way if they do not participate
5. A telephone number or other forum for parents to discuss the project with the researcher

A copy of the consent letters for different groups of participants can be found in appendices 17 and 23.

Verbal consent from the young person themselves was also sought. Alderson (2005) suggested that the safest course, though it can be repressive, is to ask for parental consent and also to ask for children's consent when they are able to understand. All of the participants were of secondary school age and there was no indication from school or LA staff that the young person may not be able to understand their consent to participate in the research, therefore they were asked to consent to the research in the initial meeting.

Masson (2005) suggests that care needs to be taken that children and parents do not feel obliged to participate. Where the person seeking children and parent participation is in a powerful position over them, as in the case for the researcher, children and parents may feel that they have to agree or they may feel they might be penalized if they do not. Masson (2005) argues that researchers need to be alert to such possibilities, particularly where their access is arranged by those who provide services for children. In an attempt to alleviate this, contingency time was set aside in the research time budget so that it could be communicated to parents or carers and pupils that if consent is not obtained for the purposes of this research, the pupil would still be offered support in their reintegration into school.

In line with the LA safeguarding and EP service policy, confidentiality was fully recognized and adhered to. Masson (2005) describes how where children are competent to make decisions, the law allows them the associated confidentiality which it would allow an adult. Masson (2005) describes how there are two areas of particular concern regarding confidentiality. Firstly where a child discloses that he or she is being

seriously harmed or ill-treated and secondly where the researcher identifies a condition, for example a medical condition or a learning difficulty about which the parents could take action. Failure of the researcher to take appropriate action may not only lead to criticism on ethical grounds but also in some limited circumstances could give rise to legal liability. Where parental consent is needed, it can be sought on the understanding that what the child says will not be passed to parents. In such cases parents were reassured that certain types of information would be passed to them; where this is the case the child would know that this will happen and what parents would be told.

A feedback letter was sent to each pupil, parents and the school thanking them for their participation and a subsequent brief report summarising the findings from the research will be sent to all participants. This adheres to the BPS guidelines (2006), which recommend that once data has been collected the researcher should provide the participants with the necessary information to complete their understanding of the research and will attempt to make the research more meaningful to participants.

It was anticipated that approximately three sessions of EP involvement would be offered to each case. However if the case demanded, then more time was provided to support this case. Therefore the piece of work or intervention was not limited to three sessions solely for the purpose of this research. Further key ethical considerations are summarized below:

- In the consent letter and verbally through discussions with the pupil, parent, school and LA staff, it was made explicit that at any time a participant can withdraw from the research. At that point the participant would be asked if data relating to them can still be used as part of the research; if this is declined then all information will be removed.

- The anonymity of pupils, parents, professionals and settings was respected and all names have been changed or obscured in the research report. With regard to the Data Protection Act (1998), all personal information concerning research participants will be stored securely and confidentially.
- Data in the form of voice recordings would be destroyed after use.
- Participants were made aware of their right to request that specific statements made during sessions or interviews be omitted. After each interview participants will be reminded of this and asked if they are satisfied that the recordings can be used within the research.
- In any direct work with pupils, where required, all safeguarding procedures were followed.
- The survey administered to school staff did not require details or information relating to the reintegration of specific pupils. Pupils were not be named and identifying information where included was removed.
- The purpose of the research and a summary of the intended research questions and plan have been made available to the pupils, parents and staff, to ensure there is no deception involved in the research.
- The researcher understands her moral and legal duty to safeguard the interests of those participating in her research and to report the findings accurately and in a self-reflective manner.
- It is intended that this piece of research will be useful and beneficial to participants and those working with them, as well as to a wider

audience of educationalists. For all taking part in the research it will be emphasised that the purpose of the research is to seek to find out more about the area and look at ways in increase success. As described this study is an area that the LA within which the researcher is employed is interested in.

3.10 Summary of methodological approach

This chapter has provided a summary of the methodological approach taken to the research, the methods utilised as part of this and the process of analysis. The study is influenced by a social constructionist epistemology. This refers to the development of phenomena relative to social contexts. A methodology informed by a social constructionist epistemology such as this, enables the researcher to ask questions about the social and discursive construction of the phenomenon of reintegration following permanent exclusion, specifically how the concept of reintegration is constructed by stakeholders.

Researching the phenomenon of reintegration following permanent exclusion from a social constructionist perspective will enable the identification of the various ways of constructing social reality that are available and recognises that the views of stakeholders creates 'knowledges' rather than one 'knowledge'. This will enable this study to contribute to the research base as deeper understandings of the different ways in which reintegration is constructed will provide alternative ways of perceiving and understanding it.

A case study methodology is utilised. This enables investigation into the process of exclusion and subsequent reintegration in the real life setting, using multiple sources of evidence. This is necessary as reintegration and its connected components are complex matters and require a methodology

that captures the social context in which the participants and the phenomenon exists. Multiple methods will be used to capture the experiences of a range of participants including reintegrating pupils, their parents, school staff and LA officers.

The data is thematically analysed across the data set to achieve a cohesive 'story' of the process of reintegration in relation to the research questions. The findings are presented in the results section in the form of summarized data collected and direct quotations from participants and are then discussed in further detail in chapters five and six.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will be presented in three parts, with data collected for each of the three research questions (RQ) being answered in each section. The results section provides information derived directly from the data in an attempt to answer each research question directly from the data. Chapter five will present a discussion of the results section.

4.2 Results: Research Question One

To what extent is the hard to place pupil protocol effective in facilitating reintegration into school following permanent exclusion?

4.2.1 Introduction

The research question was answered using the following units of analysis:

1. Documentary evidence from LA documents
2. Interviews with two reintegration officers
3. Interviews with three headteachers

The first section will present the documentary information available from the LA that provides data related to the effectiveness of the protocol in facilitating reintegration. The second section will present the outcome of thematic analysis of the interviews with reintegration officers and headteachers in relation to the research question.

4.2.2 Section one: Statistics and documentary information from LA

There has been a significant shift in the balance of exclusion and subsequent reintegration as practice has changed, as shown in figure 4.1 below. The number of permanent exclusions has significantly declined over the last four academic years. However the number of pupils being formally reintegrated into mainstream schools is inconsistent. This is surprising as it might be anticipated that numbers of reintegrated pupils should rise as a result of ease of admission through the HTPPP. The percentages of pupils who have been reintegrated following permanent exclusion are demonstrated in figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 Exclusion and reintegration statistics in the LA

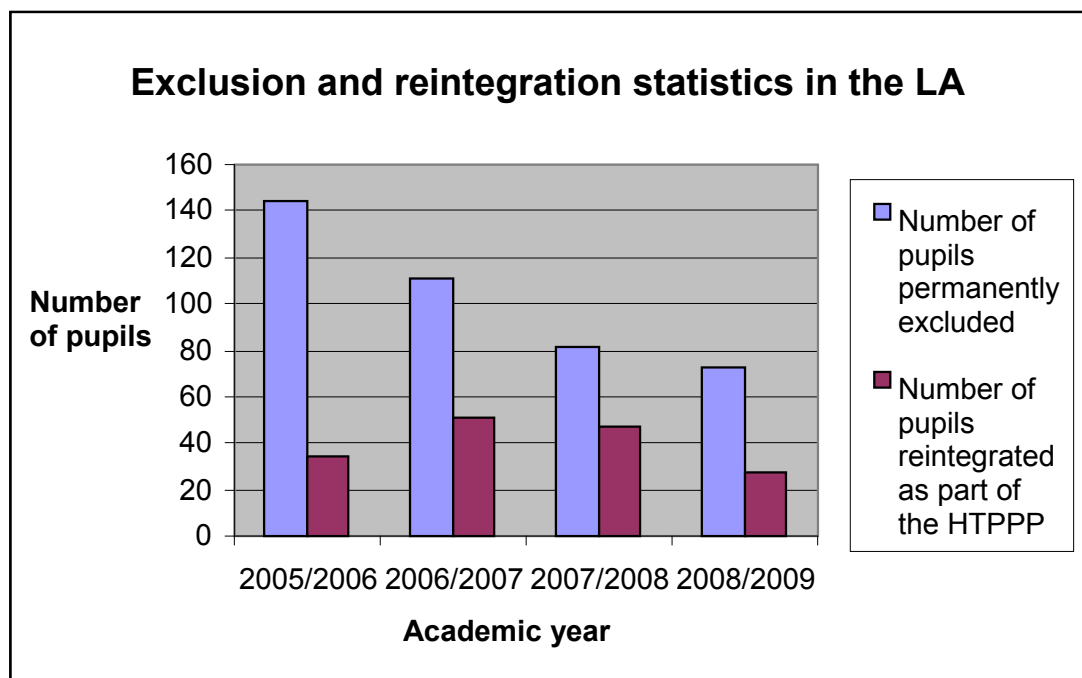


Table 4.1 Percentage of permanently excluded pupils reintegrated

Academic year	Number of pupils permanently excluded	Number of pupils reintegrated as part of HTPPP	Percentage of those permanently excluded pupils who have been reintegrated
2005/06	144	34	24%
2006/07	111	51	46%
2007/08	82	48	58%
2008/09	73	27	37%

The latest statistics available from the academic year 2008/09 were examined further to ascertain the reasons that the remaining 63% were not reintegrated into a school. Information from LA records indicate that the general decisions not to reintegrate was made for the following reasons:

- Pupils were awaiting statutory assessment or were moved to a specialist provision including provision for teenage mothers
- Pupils were excluded in year eleven
- Pupils had 'additional difficulties'
- Pupils had received a second permanent exclusion which meant that schools are under no obligation to admit them.

Further historical data relating to individual cases, such as whether some pupils were part of a number of the subgroups described above is not available, nor would it be feasible to interrogate further due to ethical restrictions.

As the number of pupils who are being excluded is reducing whilst the reintegration numbers appearing to also be reducing may also indicate that the 'core group' of pupils who are excluded are becoming more difficult to reintegrate as a result of their complex needs.

In the last academic year there has been one headteacher appeal against an admission as part of the HTPPP. The panel voted in favour of the LA and the pupil was admitted into the secondary school. The average admission period in the 2008/09 academic year was 8.3 weeks from the date of the permanent exclusion to admission at new school. Reasons for a delayed admission were cited as the following reasons:

- Pupils and parents being difficult to engage
- Schools unable to make early admission meetings and being slow to respond to requests
- Complex cases requiring a multi-agency approach prior to admission.

It is evident therefore that for more straightforward cases, the HTPPP facilitates a smooth reintegration. However the process is delayed when cases require additional consideration or support.

4.2.3 Section two: Thematic analysis of interviews with headteachers and reintegration officers

Thematic analysis of the interviews with reintegration officers and headteachers was completed, with the following themes being most pertinent in answering the research question across the data set:

- Decision making
- Perceived fairness
- Role of parents
- Relationship to permanent exclusion
- Success of the protocol

4.2.3i Decision making

The concept of decision making as part of the HTPPP was an aspect raised in all interviews. A strong theme as part of the headteacher interviews was the critical perception of the decision making process in terms of their influence and professional consideration. When comparing the process to that of other admission processes, one headteacher remarked:

“With the SEN process it is very clear, you get all the paperwork and you’re asked to say whether, given the provided resources, you’d be able to meet the child’s needs. With the protocol we’re denied that opportunity”.

(Headteacher B)

Whilst the following quote emphasises the perceived lack of involvement and control of the decision making process:

“Most of the time you’ve got no chance of fighting it off”.

(Headteacher A)

The perceived lack of respect for the professional role of the headteacher in the decision making process was clear. One headteacher discussed a current case that he felt very strongly should not be reintegrated into the school:

“(Holds up letter) That’s how it comes through, the letter...it is quite a threatening process. You get no information. What is right about that? We’ve had good success in the past, we’ve actually been commended by the LA about our good practice. And I’m quite annoyed about this. Here’s a head saying no we’re not going to take this one. And the response is oh well

we're going to have to check the protocol rules. That's not respectful of my professional authority. We all agree to the protocol, but we should be able to say no. This is the first one we've said no to".

(Headteacher B)

This highlighted the headteachers' views that the commitment of the LA staff to the protocol at times felt rigid and inflexible. Additionally headteachers felt that an insufficient consideration was given to the match between the needs of the pupil and individual circumstances or needs of the chosen school. This was represented in the interviews in a number of ways. One key factor was around the compatibility of the needs of the child and the context of the chosen school:

"We're a persistent absence school and they're telling me that I have to take this child, so here you go have a child with 43% attendance...then the EWO will be hitting us over the head for our attendance figures. Everyone knows she won't come to this school, but she'll be on our figures".

(Headteacher A)

This theme was not just evident within the headteacher interviews, the reintegration officers also questioned their own decision making process:

"I've placed kids that I've thought oh my god I shouldn't be placing this kid...there was one I was so worried about".¹²

(Reintegration officer A)

¹² Researcher note: all participants were offered anonymity, member checking was completed at the end of each interview and participants were asked if they were satisfied that anything they had commented upon could be used as part of the research study. Additionally participants were told that should they have any concerns about anything they might have said after the interview, the researcher would willingly remove those comments, in accordance with the ethical procedures followed.

It seems that whilst the headteachers recognised the difficult process that the LA faces in making a decision around reintegration into school, they felt that sometimes the pupils chosen for reintegration are inappropriate:

“In some, maybe in many cases if it’s managed properly it is the right thing to do...but there are some major criminal, safeguarding issues that mean that these pupils should not be reintegrated back into school. But they absolutely still come through to schools”.

(Headteacher C)

The concept of readiness for reintegration was found to be an important element in decision making as part of the protocol. However there seemed to be no clear process to ascertaining how ready a pupil may be for reintegration. One reintegration officer stated that at times there has been no other option other than to reintegrate the pupil:

“Some (pupils) refuse study centre and really there are only two places for our kids, mainstream and special school. Whereas sometimes we’ve kept them longer than we should have”.

(Reintegration officer B)

It is clear that there may be times that the speed of reintegration is linked to the lack of alternative provision available. This of course does cause issues in relation to the appropriateness of the reintegration plan, given the reluctance of the child to attend the education provision whilst excluded.

4.2.3ii Perceived fairness

Perceived fairness relates to the extent to which the participants perceived that the system, the situation or protocols were fair. The reintegration officers are loyal to the ranking table (see appendix 24 for further information on the ranking table) as part of the protocol and respond in a very clear and procedural way to each admission decision. One reintegration officer described the way in which the procedure is adhered to, which highlights the rigidity of the protocol, to ensure perceived fairness:

“If you start manipulating it too much you’re not running it in the way it was meant to be run in the beginning...until someone changes the protocol, that’s how it should be. Why would I be going to the bottom of the table just because the school is closer, it would take faith away from the protocol”.

(Reintegration officer B)

Both LA officers described how they adhered to the agreed protocol guidelines; they perceived that other participants such as school staff respected this part of the protocol:

“The reason it has been successful is because people do want to see where they are on the table, they want to see if it is fair”.

(Reintegration officer A)

However, the ranking table has created a sense of competitiveness. The following quotes from the headteacher interviews describe the operational considerations of the ranking table:

“It isn’t just the local authority, there’s a local league table showing how many permanent exclusions we have all done.

You think how will my school be regarded if I have too many permanent exclusions. If you have a high number of exclusions you can be perceived to be a good strong discipline school or you can be perceived as having problems”.

(Headteacher B)

“I am constantly bench marking my school against the others...there’s a huge amount of moral pressure from government, the local authority, and between schools, to take their fair share”.

(Headteacher A)

The reintegration officers were aware of the impact of the protocol on headteacher relations:

“There is dreadful blame, the protocol hasn’t had an effect on that, its made it worse. They say what about that school, they haven’t admitted any (pupils), there’s always blame. The head will look at the PSP from the excluding school, and say what rubbish it is”.

(Reintegration officer B)

However the perceived unfairness of the way in which schools are considered for pupil reintegration remains a concern for both reintegration officers and headteachers. The reintegration officers both recounted circumstances where schools may not admit a pupil:

“Yes all schools adhere to it but some get away with it, like take single sex schools, there’s not very many girls who are permanently excluded...they’ve excluded a number of pupils

but not been asked to take another pupil because they are a girl's school. But that's life. Nothing you can do about that"

(Reintegration officer B)

"Sometimes it's about location, the school really is too far away from other schools, they never get asked to admit a pupil. It's the luck of the draw".

(Reintegration officer A)

The following quotes from headteachers highlight the perception of unfairness in relation to decision making and disproportion of spread of schools chosen for reintegration despite the protocol:

"There are schools that would prefer not to take their fair share. Some schools seem to be able to throw their weight around. On paper they seem to conform but in practice they aren't actually reintegrated, they send them off somewhere else".

(Headteacher C)

"My argument was we only admitted one last week so how come we're at the top again...to be honest I don't fully understand the whole process. We must be accumulating lots of points to go from the top to the bottom then to the top again. There's some schools that sit along in the middle a lot".

(Headteacher B)

4.2.3iii The role of parents

The role of the parents in relation to the protocol was discussed in all interviews. As part of the protocol, parental involvement in decision making about choice of school is second to other factors such as the ranking table,

which may subsequently impact upon the reintegration. One headteacher illustrates this:

“The child or parent don’t want to go to this school, invariably they state a preference to go to another school, we get chosen more often than not, because it’s easier and we’re higher up on the table than a lot of other schools”.

(Headteacher B)

Therefore, whilst the protocol serves the purpose of securing a school place for the pupil, it may not be the chosen school to which the pupil and parent are committed. The reintegration officers took complete control of the negotiations with schools on behalf of the parents, the following quotes illustrate this:

“My job is to say we’re providing you with a school. Parents always agree. We’ve felt that if you leave it to the parents to make their own application....you could have a child out of school for a long time. So we put pressure on them in a nice way”.

(Reintegration officer A)

“I’d said from the offset that I couldn’t get them a place in that school. They get into their heads what they want. I visited when the child wasn’t there. The kids are in control, but it should be the parents. Mum didn’t feel she could tell him where to go to school. So I had to tell him. He was fine about it he just needed it explaining”.

(Reintegration officer B)

“Sometimes parents have got a perception about an area. Sometimes it takes a couple of visits to persuade them. But you are constantly reminding them of their responsibilities as a parent”.

(Reintegration officer A)

This may, therefore, have significant impact on the pupil’s reintegration in terms of their commitment to the process and the school.

4.2.3iv Relationship to permanent exclusion

The relationship between the protocol and the process of permanent exclusion was raised in all interviews and it became clear that it was a distinct theme. Whilst the relationship was evident, there was variance in terms of specific views held by headteachers about how the protocol has proved to be a disincentive to exclude in some schools:

“The protocol has made me less likely to permanently exclude. It’s almost the better the devil you know. You know their needs. I would rather avoid permanent exclusion than take a child you don’t know. I almost think in terms of a quota now. I have a quota of two permanent exclusions this year. I think about using those places strategically”.

(Headteacher B)

However another headteacher commented that the protocol has no bearing on his decision to exclude:

“The protocol has no impact, there’s a hard to place pupil protocol, fine, that doesn’t impact on my decision to exclude. Some heads like to keep their stats down. Doesn’t matter for

me, if their behaviour crosses the line, then they have to go. It makes no difference where you are on the ranking table”.

(Headteacher A)

An additional theme was the relationship between the rigorous decision of exclusion and the concept of enforced reintegration as part of the protocol. The headteachers seemed to be questioning the logic of the protocol as those pupils who are permanently excluded tend to be excluded for a reason and the concept of almost immediate reintegration into a school seemed illogical to the headteachers:

“There is a horrible guilt complex as a head when you’ve got to permanently exclude, but you’ve usually taken the elastic band to crisis point. So then how does a child go through life with the inevitable second failure? Sometimes we’re setting them up to fail by reintegrating”.

(Headteacher B)

“Every exclusion we make is a genuine exclusion. We’re very supportive of the children and many are from very deprived areas, so there is some lee way. But there are certain things that are non-negotiable, like a physical assault on member of staff”.

(Headteacher A)

Therefore the extent to which a reintegration can be effective after what is seen as a process where clear guidelines around expected behaviour have been broken is questioned, despite the facilitation of reintegration through the protocol.

4.2.3v Success of the protocol

The success of the protocol was only raised by the reintegration officers. However it was evident that it was a strong theme, particularly in relation to practical arrangements and ease of admission. Both reintegration officers recalled numerous occasions and examples throughout the interviews in which they described their perception that the protocol had been successful. As this was referred to independently by both reintegration officers numerous times it was deemed to be a significant finding. The following quotes highlight this:

“It saves the parents ringing the school, asking for a school place and being told it’s full, and the school never getting back to them or passing the message on, because that does happen”.

(Reintegration officer A)

“It surprises me because sometimes I’ll get a headteacher phone me and offer to admit a pupil. They have excluded, and so they know they then need to take in another pupil because of that and sometimes they hear about a pupil who isn’t too bad and so they contact me to offer admission to a pupil”.

(Reintegration officer B)

Having the protocol has also had the perceived effect of enabling school staff to understand why they are supporting a pupil’s reintegration:

“At one school the deputy head did a staff meeting on the protocol so staff had an understanding that if they permanently excluded a pupil they must admit another pupil. According to

the deputy this has improved the quality of reintegration, because it is a clear process and is part of an agreed protocol”.

(Reintegration officer B)

Speed of reintegration was perceived as an indication of success of the criteria to the reintegration officers and it is evident that the HTPPP has facilitated this:

“We look at our stats and we’re proud of the numbers we reintegrate quickly; last year the average time was seven weeks. The protocol helps with that”.

(Reintegration officer A)

Whilst the protocol has facilitated processes which help to advance the reintegration, it is clear that a child’s readiness should be based on an individual decision for that child.

4.2.4 Summary of findings in relation to research question one

The statistics indicate that the number of pupils being permanently excluded has reduced each year from 2005/06 to 2008/09. However the number of pupils being reintegrated to school fluctuates during that same period. Through the responses in the data to this research question, it is evident that some headteachers now regulate the number of pupils they permanently exclude as they are aware that a known pupil being permanently excluded can lead to an unknown pupil and their unknown needs being admitted to their school through the HTPPP. This could be seen as a possible repercussion to the statutorily required protocol, over which headteachers have little or no control.

Additionally it is evident that stakeholders recognise and are sympathetic to the views of other stakeholders, but are powerless to allow this recognition to influence the protocol process. An example would be the reintegration officer being attuned to the issues headteachers raise during the request for admission, but forced, through the protocol to proceed with the admission of a pupil whose needs may not be best met at that particular school. Therefore in some cases this can impact on the legitimacy and respect by headteachers, for the protocol.

The HTPPP provides a legitimate response to a government requirement; however it provides a rather rigid set of assumptions as one headteacher noted:

“The hard to place pupil protocol will not do anything other than provide a legalistic view of education...just putting together a protocol about getting the child actually back into a school building without thinking about all their needs, is wrong. It’s morally wrong”.

(Headteacher B)

However one of the reintegration officers reflect upon the assumptions that the protocol makes and the practicalities of this:

“I know the heads don’t like the protocol and the situation, but whenever I do an evaluation form after an admission they are amazingly positive...the headteacher has got no other ideas about how to do this. I say to the heads ‘OK if this is not working then what else can we do?’ Not one of the schools have come up with anything better, a better idea”.

(Reintegration officer B)

4.3 RQ 2: What factors do stakeholders consider facilitate or hinder reintegration into school following permanent exclusion?

4.3.1 Introduction

The research question was answered using the following units of analysis:

- Survey responses
- Interviews with three pupils, four sets of parents and four members of school staff
- Interviews with two reintegration officers
- Interviews with three headteachers
- Research diary

4.3.2 Summary of thematic analysis

Thematic analysis of the interviews, research diary and survey was completed, with the following themes and sub-themes being most pertinent in answering the research question.

- School support
 - School ethos
 - Professional support
- Communication
- Individual pupil attributes
 - Attendance problems
- Sense of belonging

- History with the pupil
 - Friendship with peers
- Familial influence
- Previous events
 - Effect of permanent exclusion on the pupil
 - Preparatory work

4.3.2i School support

The school values and attitudes were noted by all stakeholders as being imperative to the success of a reintegration. Some of the responses to the survey noted additional staff support to the pupils as being a facilitator to the reintegration, Many respondents comment on one-to-one sessions with staff and school staff allocated to support pupils in building up relationships.

The reintegration officers affirmed this in describing a successful case and said that supportive school staff were helpful in all stages of the reintegration:

“On initial visits it’s always good when the school staff have actually looked at the records and the information that’s been provided so they can talk to the kids about what they’re good at and positives...one head of year talked to the child about his interests, like wrestling, and when they showed him around the school they specifically showed him the gym because that was what he was interested in”.

(Reintegration officer A)

“His head of year did a meet and greet every day for two weeks...he was allocated a mentor who actually made sure his day to day arrangements, like free school meals, was sorted. It’s little things like that sometimes”.

(Reintegration officer B)

Some parents recognised this level of support, one commented:

“They’ve given him open access to the IRC (inclusion resource centre); he has a base there and somewhere he can always go”.

(Reintegration officer A)

School ethos

The reintegration officers noted the efforts of members of staff in the school to make the pupil feel welcome, the following quote describes this:

“One headteacher was in a meeting and what he did was he got a blank piece of paper and he said to the kid listen I’ve seen your records, I know there’s been difficulties but we’ll try and help you. He held up the blank piece of paper and said this is your record from me. You can write that yourself”.

(Reintegration officer A)

However it was evident that the perceived negative attitude of school staff impacted upon the reintegration:

“The heads will say we don’t want these pupils in our school because they put pressure on our resources, or that’s how they consider it, so you’ve got to get rid of that idea that these are

the most difficult pupils. Until you do that you're not going to get anywhere...they're looking at problems instead of trying to solve problems".

(Reintegration officer B)

One parent commented following the reintegration meeting that:

"The headmaster said to him when you come here you've got to behave, what you've got to do is, come everyday on time and be perfect. And that's it. It's too much pressure. He's never going to do it. They've got to support him".

(Reintegration officer B)

Professional support

The support of other professionals was noted as a facilitator to reintegration. One member of staff in their response in the survey noted that the:

'Pupil had become 'de-schooled' due to time spent out of formal schooling therefore we appreciated the support of other professionals'.

(Survey response)

The LA reintegration team was noted by a number of school staff as being supportive to the reintegration. One member of staff being interviewed for their reflections on a reintegration noted:

"It was good that they (reintegration officer) still attended all of the review meetings; you knew that they (the pupil) hadn't just been dumped into the school without a care, they still attended for months afterwards".

(Staff supporting pupil A)

Whilst one pupil commented:

“I like it when (reintegration officer) comes into school to see me, she asks how I am doing and helps me sort things out, like to do with my GCSE options and stuff. She helps me to sort it out”.

(Pupil A)

The support provided to the school from other agencies also needed to be flexible and adapted to need. The reintegration officer described the following:

“The pupils tend to want to still see us for a while after, usually once a week, you can’t just support for four weeks. We have to be flexible with our support, there are meant to be time limits, but I ignore those and go to need, but that does spread you very thin”.

(Reintegration officer A)

4.3.2ii Communication

Between home and school

Some respondents to the survey noted that close liaison between school and home was imperative to the success of reintegration. This included ‘parental interest and involvement, ‘parental support’ and ‘regular contact with home’.

All parents interviewed commented upon the need for close communication between school and home; one parent described this in detail:

“The old school treated me awfully. It was like I didn’t exist....in this school it has got to be better; I’ve told them I want to know everything all the time. Each day I want to know what’s happening”.

(Parent D)

Between schools

Communication with the previous school was also noted as being a factor that facilitates reintegration in the survey. This was also mentioned by one of the headteachers who said:

“I will always phone the previous head, it is essential as we need to know what we’re dealing with. You get the file and it’s either huge or has been wiped out and contains nothing. You need that background information”.

(Headteacher C)

One of the parents noted this communication. However they were concerned that this may categorise their child:

“I didn’t want him (the new headteacher) phoning her (the previous headteacher), all he’d hear was he did this and that, they wouldn’t hear about all of the good things. I asked his primary headteacher to write something for the governors meeting so I gave that to him too. It just helped him to see that it wasn’t all bad”.

(Parent B)

However, one member of staff supporting one of the cases said that:

“I got in touch with her mentor at the old school. The file was awful and I thought surely this child can’t be that bad. I got in touch with her and she said ‘no she’s not all like it seems in the file’. She told me lots of information that actually helped. She didn’t agree with the exclusion and felt that actually it had been unfair”.

(Staff supporting pupil B)

4.3.2iii Individual pupil attributes

Specific pupil attributes were discussed at all stages of the research as being a factor in facilitating or hindering reintegration. One respondent to the survey noted that *‘willingness of student to change’* was significant in determining the success of a reintegration. Within-child issues were also raised by the reintegration officers, the following quote describes the case of the previous pupil who had been reintegrated:

“The children have learning difficulties that haven’t been addressed by any schools. The girl is emotionally very fragile, she’s subsequently taken an overdose and is now tutored by medical needs service. The boy has anger issues and has now had a second permanent exclusion”.

(Reintegration officer B)

Other within-child factors were noted by almost every respondent to the survey. These included factors associated with *‘disruptive and difficult behaviour’*, *‘pupil attitude’* or *‘pupil’s lack of motivation’*. This was also evident in reflections in the research diary as a result of direct casework. Following one school visit the researcher wrote the following in the diary:

'The school staff keep placing all emphasis on the reintegration working within-child. They are reluctant to look at their systems and see what they can do to help. They are blaming the child for everything'.

(Researcher)

Rendall and Stuart (2005) found that the picture that emerges should just within-child variables be considered would be that excluded pupils are disruptive in school, either because they are 'just naughty, bloody minded and delinquent or mentally ill' (p. 175). This representation is not portrayed to this degree in this research, however it is possible to identify that school staff place a degree of emphasis for success of reintegration on pupils. It is therefore important to consider participant perception of individual pupil attributes as one part of the representation.

Within this research school staff were also sympathetic to the situations which pupils are faced when being reintegrated. In the survey the school staff described the *'pressure upon pupil with regard to taking on board school routines and procedures'* whilst another respondent said that a barrier was around the *'adjustment he has had to make to new rules, new environment and teachers'*.

School attendance

Attendance issues were raised as an issue by the reintegration officers, school staff and also through observations in case work. The following quotes from a reintegration officer and a headteacher highlight this:

"The experience from the previous school is crucial, some difficulties like attendance, and all of a sudden they're expected to have a fresh start and for it to be fixed. They didn't even

attend when they were going somewhere they felt relatively comfortable so what are they going to do now”.

(Reintegration officer A)

“Lots of the kids get lots of fixed term exclusions, followed by reintegration for two hours a day, so they just get used to not attending so of course they have attendance difficulties in the new school”.

(Headteacher A)

This was evident and supported in terms of the case of Alison¹³. Alison’s attendance at her previous school was very poor and then when she was reintegrated she did not attend. One teacher commented about that case:

“Her attendance was so bad at that school I don’t actually know how she got herself excluded, because she was never in. It’s very questionable”.

(Staff supporting pupil A)

Therefore attendance difficulties are particularly significant in impacting on the perceived success of reintegration.

4.3.2iv Sense of belonging

The reintegrating pupil's sense of belonging was highlighted as an important factor in facilitating the reintegration. One pupil commented:

“I just don’t belong here, the teachers don’t like me, and all the kids are weird, they’re all Goths and I just don’t fit in”.

(Pupil D)

¹³ Pseudonyms used throughout

One member of staff supporting a pupil noted that as a result of the HTPPP, the pupil was attending a school in a different area to the one in which they lived. He commented:

“He had a perception of what the other pupils were going to be like. Because we’re in an affluent area and he’s not from this area he has got into his head that he doesn’t belong”.

(Staff supporting pupil D)

A reintegration officer described how they perceive school staff to consider the extent to which reintegrating pupil’s belong and are part of the school:

“It’s quite clear the kids not regarded as one of the school cohort. One member of staff called the child an ‘import’, that’s the mentality. What they mean is the child hasn’t come through their system since year seven, they’ve come from another system and that’s why they’re different; they don’t feel welcomed by the school, so they become floaters”.

(Reintegration officer B)

A reflection within the research diary commented upon the way in which schools take ownership of the pupil:

“There needs to be a way of handing over, the school are seeing the pupil as being additional to their own cohort. Instead of the reintegration officer taking charge and responsibility, the school need to take it, the handover from their service to the mentor needs to be made very clear. There needs to be a clear collaboration”.

(Researcher)

There have been some ways in which schools have welcomed and encouraged the pupil to belong, a reintegration officer recalled:

“One teacher said to the child, there weren’t any spaces at our school so you’re really lucky. But I need you to know that you’re on our records now, you’re one of us so we want it to work”

(Reintegration officer A)

History with the pupil

When reflecting on a case, one member of staff said that a difficulty around the reintegration was the fact that they did not have any shared history:

“You can’t say, ‘do you remember when you did that in year eight, you did really well then’. You can’t say that, you don’t really have anything to hold on to, any good times like that”.

(Staff supporting pupil C)

A pupil commented upon this in an interview:

“The teachers are mad, they shout at me for no reason. They don’t know me; all they know is that I’m that bad kid from (previous school). They don’t even know my name, but they all know about me. They don’t like me”.

(Pupil A)

The school survey also raised this issue as being a difficulty in reintegration, in noting that ‘*poor attachment to school*’, ‘*not knowing the pupil*’ and ‘*some teachers ‘labeling’ of student*’ can add to barriers around the reintegration.

Friendships with peers

The survey responses noted that peer relations were a determining factor in facilitating reintegration. One response was *'difficulty for the student in being 'accepted' by peers that are not going to lead him astray'; 'the likelihood of him gravitating towards 'kindred spirits'.* Whilst another response was in relation to the groups of peers that the pupil chose to be with, *'lack of socialisation with appropriate peers'* and also *'reputation of student with peers'*.

The pupils themselves discussed how important peers were in helping them to reintegrate. When asked what advice they would give to another reintegrating pupil, almost all of the pupils suggested advice such as 'find mates'.

4.3.2v Familial influence

The extent to which parental support is offered to the reintegration was a factor derived from the survey. Responses noted *'lack of parental support'* and *'lack of parental engagement'* when noting barriers to the reintegration. Additionally the support offered to parents as a result of the exclusion was noted by the reintegration officers. One said:

"The gap is the parents, nobody is supporting the parents".

(Reintegration officer B)

One of the headteachers described the difficulty around parental support if the HTPPP has determined that a pupil should attend a school that is not in line with parental wishes:

“There are always problems if the parents state a preference for another school but they get your school as part of the hard to place protocol. That can be very difficult to manage”.

(Headteacher C)

In a description of the stresses families face in dealing with exclusion and reintegration, one reintegration officer described the following:

“For me one of the biggest difficulties is the family and the family situation. It’s like opening a can of worms. At the point of permanent exclusion there have been so many things that have been laying dormant and hidden from public view for so long and the exclusion just makes it all come out...you’ve got a mother who’s been trying to hold it all together, but she is putting sticking plaster on gaping wounds. The traumas that the family have gone through have built up and now it’s at crisis point”.

(Reintegration officer B)

When interviewed, the parents of the cases did share some of the stresses they had dealt with:

“You’re just left with nothing. I couldn’t do anything. I was so angry with him, but I was so frustrated at the system. We were just shut out. We are here saying, yes we’re in a mess, we need support. But nobody is there”.

(Parent C)

4.3.2vi Previous events

Effect of permanent exclusion on the pupil

The effect of the initial permanent exclusion on the reintegration was raised by most participants. One reintegration officer described the situation the pupil finds themselves in:

“The worst thing a permanent exclusion does is that a school says they don’t want you, and it’s true, they don’t...we have to re-group, nurture...the biggest thing is closure. There should be a restorative approach or process so that a young person can have that understanding, not to be told by one school you’ve behaved like that so you’re out and then to be told by the next school that if you behave like that again you’re out. It doesn’t mean anything to them. Often the pupil denies ever having done it (the incident they’ve been excluded for), so they don’t deal with it”.

(Reintegration officer A)

School staff also recognised that reintegration does not necessarily provide a fresh start for the pupil. The survey responses indicated that a barrier to reintegration is a lack of alternative opportunities which had not already been tried.

One parent commented that her child’s perception of the new school following the permanent exclusion was critical:

“He had this perception of what it’s going to be like. He always said he wanted to go back to (the excluding school). He

wouldn't even talk about going to another school, he wanted to go back".

(Parent A)

The headteachers' commented that permanent exclusion is often for a valid reason and this therefore affects the reintegration:

"It's such a difficult decision to exclude, it's not done at the drop of a hat, therefore reintegration is always going to be difficult".

(Headteacher B)

Preparatory work

It is evident that there is a high level of preparatory work done prior to the pupil starting at the school. One reintegration officer described the level of preparatory work in relation to schools in facilitating the reintegration:

"Having the initial meeting between me (reintegration officer) and school staff, without the young person because any of the pain the school has about taking the young person and the challenges around that, they can offload onto me. At least the kid hasn't seen that. It has happened before. In the past the kid was there, and it was just not appropriate. It was an interrogation".

(Reintegration officer A)

In relation to the pupil one reintegration officer described how the pupil is prepared for the reintegration:

"There's lots of prep for pupil before visit. Talk to him about what to expect on initial visit. One of the biggest difficulties is

getting the child to engage on the first visit. We pick them (child and parent) up from home, because sometimes they don't turn up, and picking them up makes a massive difference".

(Reintegration officer B)

Some of the headteachers contributed to the issue of preparatory work. They commented that the provision for pupils out of school does not necessarily facilitate reintegration:

"There are no turnaround units and there is very limited provision for the time they are excluded so in terms of keeping them in touch with formal education, the chances of that are very limited".

(Headteacher B)

The reintegration officers noted that a challenge around the reintegration is often the headteacher's opinion on how supported the child is in their time out of school. One reintegration officer provided the following argument:

"It's different when they're out of school, they're in a smaller group, that's fact, they're always going to be out of school. It's always going to be different, you can't have a school to mirror a school, it has to be like this. The smaller study centres mirror an inclusion room in a school and the idea is that they will feed into school".

(Reintegration officer B)

Two of the pupils said that they did not want to re-enter mainstream school as they wanted to remain in the out of school provision:

“It was easy, we had laugh, I didn’t want to come here. The teachers were well good, we used to go out on trips...we went bowling”.

(Pupil A)

Whilst another pupil was keen to move back into mainstream school:

“I couldn’t wait to get out of there; they were always pecking your head about your behaviour and always phoning me Mum. I had a few problems with the other boys in there. They were mental”.

(Pupil D)

4.3.3 Summary of findings in relation to research question two

The findings of this study indicate that there are a number of factors which hinder or facilitate reintegration following permanent exclusion. These include issues related to the pupil and their family and how this can impact on the reintegration. Poor pupil attendance soon after admission is cited as being particularly difficult to manage, especially since school staff feel that they have no shared history with the pupil.

Communication is referred to as important in relation to communication between the reintegrating and excluding school, and communication between school staff and home. It is the communication between previous and new school that can often enable a more realistic, multi-dimensional and often positive picture in relation to the individual pupil.

In the initial stages of reintegration, pupils, school staff and parents indicated the need for pupils to feel that they ‘belong’ in the school and to recognise that they are part of the school cohort. Recognition of these

factors highlights the difficulties that pupils, their families and school staff face in working together to create a positive reintegration.

4.4 RQ 3: What is the role of the EP in supporting pupil reintegration following permanent exclusion?

4.4.1 Introduction

The research question was answered using the following units of analysis:

1. EP team focus group
2. Case work reflections in research diary
3. Evaluation of case work with school
4. Survey to all schools

Sections 4.4.2 and 4.4.3 present a summary of the perspectives of school staff on the role of the EP within the process. This will be documented through excerpts from the evaluation form used and from the survey. Additionally the casework that was completed by the researcher will be briefly described.

Section 4.4.4 presents a summary of the perspectives of EPs on their roles, through a thematic analysis of the focus group with the team of EPs and reflections from the researcher that were reported in the research diary.

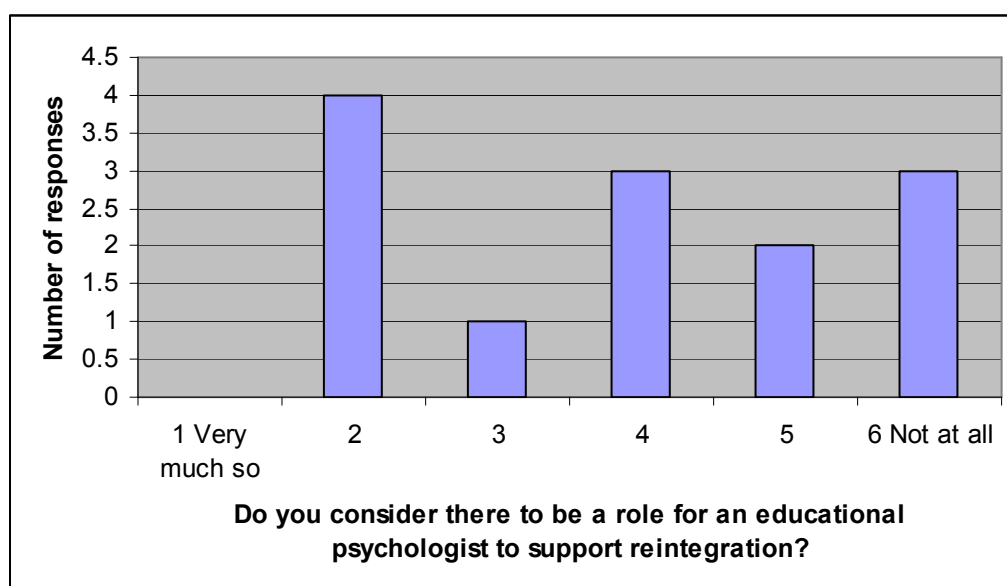
4.4.2 Survey to all schools

To provide some context of EPs previously being involved in supporting the reintegration of pupils, a question in the survey to school staff asked whether an EP had supported the reintegration. The survey results indicate that out of the thirteen represented pupils reintegrated over the previous two years, an EP supported the reintegration on two occasions. For the remaining eleven cases it was indicated that an EP had not supported the

reintegration, however it was offered for one case although parents did not agree to involvement.

The outcome of a scaling question asking whether the respondent considered there to be a role for an EP to support reintegration generally is illustrated in figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2 Results of survey question regarding the role of the EP



This indicates that school staff do not necessarily consider there to be a definitive role for EPs in supporting reintegration. To further expand on the role that school staff considered EPs to have, the following open ended question was posed to the respondents:

‘What contribution do you consider that an educational psychologist could make to a future reintegration?’

A summary of response themes can be found below, with further more detailed information available in appendix 20.

Summary of school staff responses:

- Advice and strategies
- Providing a current assessment of a pupil's educational needs
- Individual therapeutic work with pupil
- Supporting home-school relations
- Consultation and work with key staff prior to and during reintegration
- Attendance at reintegration meeting
- Third party perspective
- Smooth transition of EP support from previous school is needed

4.4.3 Casework completed

The casework completed was negotiated with the key member of staff in each school and varied dependent on the area of need of the pupil. Further details on the range of casework completed can be found in appendices 4-7. However as a summary it included:

- Consultation with school staff, parents and pupils
- Therapeutic intervention with pupil, including motivational interviewing
- Staff training on managing reintegration, transition and change
- Attendance at multi-professional meetings

Evaluation of case work with school

A member of staff from the school in which the pupil was reintegrated was asked to complete an evaluation form in relation to the involvement of the EP. The outcome of this evaluation form for each case can be found in appendices 4-7.

Due to the diverse nature of the cases, there is no real cohesive response to the evaluation form in terms of the role of the EP. Where EP support had been utilised heavily, as was the case for pupils David and Chris, the feedback was encouraging, as school staff perceived the intervention and reintegration to be positive. Some comments identified the contribution of preventative work, which was in contrast to the school staff experience of more general pieces of EP casework that had been reactive.

In the cases where EP involvement had been necessarily limited, as was the case for pupils Alison and Samantha, the responses to the evaluation revealed the frustration by school staff at the lack of EP involvement and of missed chances to support the reintegration.

4.4.4 EP team focus group

Thematic analysis of the focus group with the EP team was completed, with the following themes being most valid in answering the research question. Reflections from the researcher that were reported in the research diary are presented alongside the analysis of focus group. The following themes from both sources of evidence were found to be:

- Application of psychological theory and knowledge
- Managing other peoples expectations of EP involvement
- Complex casework
- Changing perspectives of the 'problem'
- Work with school staff
- Obtaining and championing the voice of the child

4.4.4i Application of psychological theory and knowledge

The application of psychological theory and knowledge was a strong theme in determining the role of the EP in supporting cases. There was an emphasis that EPs are more likely to approach case work from a contextual psychological approach, rather than a one-dimensional view of behaviour and learning:

“We can offer a slightly different picture, we can stand back from the situation, and bring everybody together to see this is the fundamental issue that we need to address and I’m not sure any of the other agencies do that. They don’t have that view of the world that we do”.

(EP team)

However, the frustrations around the distinctive role of the psychologist were evident, in addition to the way in which psychologists are defined. One EP noted that:

“We are professional applied psychologists. But everyone’s a psychologist, because of popular psychology, but we have a professional title for a reason. We have been at fault for giving away psychology. With these cases we look at the psychology of the situation they find themselves in. We don’t just take it off the shelf.”

(EP team)

The researcher reflected on the type of approach taken to the casework for reintegrated pupils. This reflected the diversity required to meet the needs of the individual cases:

'My skills are being used at a much higher level of work, more about organisational psychology, which is actually more rewarding'.

(Researcher)

4.4.4ii Managing expectations of EP involvement

The expectation of others, including school and LA staff, was a clear theme. At times EPs felt that they were unsure of what their role was. This is evident in the following quote from an EP:

"I think sometimes our role is just to tick the EP box off. To rubber stamp. This means that the expectations of my involvement are very low, they don't actually see my role, but they just want everyone to be involved".

(EP team)

In relation to the excluded pupils, EPs felt that they had been brought in at the end of the process and that desired outcomes from school staff are unachievable:

"Because you're brought in at the end their expectations of what you're going to do as a professional so outweigh what you can actually do as a human being, it's impossible. I'm not a wand waver".

(EP team)

This resonated with the researcher's experience of supporting cases and negotiating work with schools. In the research diary the following quote represents this:

'If I would have been involved earlier I could have been more supportive of this, the problems haven't just emerged, she's had problems from very young age'.

(Researcher)

However the benefits of working with this group of pupils and in this type of work were recorded in the research diary:

'Because of this research I am being asked by other EPs and school staff and LA staff for recommendations about other pupils. I'm being seen almost as a specialist in this area, it's given EPs a place on the map in this area...the principal (EP) has said that it's helping to change the profile of EPs and what EPs do'.

(Researcher)

4.4.4iii Complex casework

The EPs seemed to feel that their expertise was best utilised where the situation was complex, due to the application of psychology:

"We bring a complex model of psychology to a complex situation, we're not basic behaviourists who predominantly use tick charts and sticker charts for parents and teachers to use. That's not worked, so then they come to us because previously that's been too basic a behaviourist model applied".

(EP team)

The complex nature of the cases was also raised in relation to the challenges EPs face when asked to support:

“Looking at the bigger picture, we try to put them into boxes and they don’t fit, we keep pushing them back in and they keep popping back out, because these children are too complex to do that. They are vulnerable, because they don’t fit other boxes”.

(EP team)

This was a reflection within the research diary also, in relation to the complex cases and the amount of other agencies already involved in supporting the pupil:

‘There are already a number of other people involved, I’m not really sure what my role is’.

(Researcher)

When cases are complex, it can be challenging managing the time spent supporting the case. The following quote from one EP reflects the discussion within the focus group:

“We got him into a new school, but I can’t think how much time I spent on that, it was colossally time expensive, I’m not saying it’s a bad thing, but if you have to be involved you’ve got to see it through. You can’t half do it”.

(EP team)

4.4.4iv Changing perspectives of the ‘problem’

The role of the EP in altering the perspectives of other people involved in the case was raised as important. One EP noted:

“The greatest success is when the perspective has changed from the child being a problem to it being something else. So it goes from this unmanageable issue with this little kid, once they’re given a new perspective, they re-evaluate, they re-focus, and see it in context”.

(EP team)

The researcher reflected this notion within the research diary:

“I’ve got to change the perception from ‘this is a health and safety issue’, to ‘this is a vulnerable child’. They keep on saying that but by changing their interpretation, it will make a massive difference”.

(Researcher)

Similarly within the context of the exclusion, some EPs reflected that the role of an EP is to manage blame, one EP said:

“Sometimes we need to manage blame; blaming of other people, blaming the child, school blame parents, parents blame school, it’s really emotive. Managing that is really difficult as the child sees everyone around them blaming everyone else, and so isn’t taking responsibility themselves”.

(EP team)

Rendall and Stuart (2005) suggest the adoption of a circular rather than a linear approach to causality, which takes into account the interrelations between an individual’s systems and moves away from a blame culture. It is possible to identify the role of the EP as being facilitator to adapting and influencing the systems which have occurred over time which have

perpetuated the culture of blame that exists and is evident through the findings of this research.

4.4.4v Work with school staff

A consensus was formed in the focus group that a role for EPs was in supporting school staff in their support of the pupils and their families. This theme is summarised in the following quote from an EP:

“There’s often a lot of hand holding. It can be very challenging to staff, we empathise with the difficulty of the situation. It can be overwhelming for staff involved”.

(EP team)

This resonates with the researchers reflections of the role of the EP in relation to supporting school staff:

‘Sometimes it’s about permission giving; they’ve got an idea of what they want to do to support the pupil, but feel they need permission from me’.

(EP team)

However there were also challenges raised to the role of the EP in supporting members of staff. It was evident that the EPs felt frustrated at times regarding their role in supporting these members of staff. The following quote from an EP in the focus group illustrates this:

“I have written interventions and made suggestions time and again, and I know that fundamentally nothing will change for that child, because it’s the same management structure and the same teachers. I feel like I’ve lost track with it. If I they did

what we talked about then it would be OK, but I know they're not going to".

(EP team)

This resonates with the findings of Farouk (1999) who, in exploring EP consultation with teachers, advocates the need to share knowledge and skills as an integral part of the consultation process. Farouk (1999) suggests EPs should avoid the role of expert advice giver, especially when working with teachers dealing with children who show emotional and behaviour difficulties. The researcher also reflected on the challenges of supporting these pupils in relation to staff attitudes:

'It needs to be a whole school approach. Some teachers are making this reintegration worse through their attitudes and comments to the pupils. It needs to be tackled at a whole school level. Needs a joined up approach making it a success rather than making it a failure'.

(Researcher)

Where EPs had supported a reintegrating pupil previously, they spoke of the difficulty school staff experienced in supporting the pupil:

"They need to change the perception of 'the problem'. They've already made a decision their opinion of the pupil, and it's very hard trying to change that perspective. It's hard when the schools have fought against the admission, it's a conflict of interests, the school has already made up its mind that they don't want the pupil".

(EP team)

4.4.4vi Obtaining and championing the voice of the child

The team of EPs felt that part of their role was to advocate for the pupil and to champion their voice and rights. The following quote from an EP demonstrates this:

“That is the key, go and see the child, advocate for the child. I check that the child’s opinions are recognized as usually they aren’t, it might be my role to find out their views”.

(EP team)

The perceived impartial position of the EP in terms of their role in the school and LA was also raised as significant. The following quotes from EPs at the focus group illustrate this:

“Other people have a vested interest in saving money, watching out for their school, SATS results, but we’re in it to be an advocate, we can have that distinctive contribution”.

(EP team)

“It’s about us being an advocate, and upfront to the school system and the local authority. I will challenge the provision; I’m not going to rubber stamp”.

(EP team)

The researcher recognised this role as part of the experience of the research. The following quote from the research diary illustrates this:

‘I am feeding this information back to school staff, often I thought I wouldn’t be telling them anything new, but they often

don't know. No-ones ever asked the pupils their views. The school staff said 'I didn't know that' about the child'.

(Researcher)

4.4.5 Summary of findings in relation to RQ 3

Whilst EPs recognise the challenges of supporting pupils, their families and members of staff in reintegration, many raised the lack of opportunity to become involved in this type of work. EPs consider themselves to be well placed to support this area and the data indicates that this is on an individual level for the pupil and their family as well as support for school staff including work at a systemic level.

However, the research indicates that the perception of school staff is that whilst EPs can support the reintegration, as indicated by the evaluation summary, there are frustrations around other factors that impact on the ability for them to support the reintegration. School staff consider EPs to be helpful with individual casework, but are discouraged at the lack of time and opportunities for EPs to support these cases.

As part of the focus group, during the discussion around lack of opportunities to become involved in supporting reintegration, the principal EP said that the team should consider 're-thinking our message'. It was considered that as the pupils are vulnerable, the EP team should prioritise this type of work, particularly as it is considered a 'powerful way through' in terms of both outcomes for pupils and also reputability of EPs in completing this work.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF THEMES

5.1 Introduction

In this section the intention is to discuss some common themes from the research undertaken in order to address the research questions. Please see section 3.6.3 in the methodology in chapter three and appendix 28 for further information relating to the themes discussed in this chapter. The themes most pertinent for deliberation, derived from the data set, are summarized below. These will be discussed in relation to the literature in the area of each section.

- Challenges to the school system
- Perception of unfairness
- Vulnerability of pupils
- Is reintegration always right?
- Factors that facilitate and hinder reintegration
- Decision making
- The role of the parents

5.2 Challenges to the school system

The outcome of this study indicates that pupils being reintegrated into schools following permanent exclusion bring with them a high level of challenge to the school system, particularly to the staff within schools. All survey responses alluded to this challenge and this was reiterated in interviews with school staff. The difficulty that reintegration presents is two fold. Firstly there is the complexity of the individual pupil in terms of their school history, their behaviour and their school attendance. Secondly there are also the pressures that schools face in terms of ensuring that all children

achieve outcomes, and have described how a reintegrating pupil may impact upon this.

The issue around individual pupil difficulties has been found in previous research. Dobson and Henthorne (1999) suggest that as well as difficulties for the individual pupil, admission of an excluded pupil can present major challenges to the receiving school and that school staff may be ill equipped to support the pupil (Berridge et al, 2001). However Brodie (2000) observed that pupils with transient school histories, may arrive at their new school without the school having information relating to their background or their needs. As a result they may have difficulty assessing their understanding and dealing with their behaviour appropriately. The current study found that this absence of information was managed by staff personally liaising with staff at the previous school. This enabled a less one dimensional knowledge, in terms of the labels that have been ascribed to pupils who have been permanently excluded.

The results section described the challenges in relation to the willingness and ability of school staff to provide the pupils with a positive and welcoming start at their new school. The findings resonate with those of Berridge et al (2001) who found that pupils felt that school staff were 'waiting' for them to misbehave. When visiting the pupils during their initial reintegration period, most of them felt very strongly that staff did not like them and were in fact more likely to discipline them than other pupils. Some however felt that staff in their new school liked them more than staff in the previous school, but that they were tentative of them.

During this research, it was only those cases where the pupil, parents and school staff were determined to make a success of the reintegration, that a positive outcome was achieved. In the cases where the reintegration was not considered to be successful by participants, both in terms of the pupil

casework and those cases discussed in interviews or raised in surveys, there was a missing link, in terms of support towards the reintegration from either the pupil, parent or school staff. This meant that the reintegration was less likely to have a positive outcome.

Each headteacher described the pressures not just in terms of reintegration but also academic and attendance pressures. Charlton et al (2004) indicate that pressures on schools to raise their academic and attendance profiles may increase the likelihood of pupil exclusion. The findings of this study indicate that these pressures also impact on the ability and the commitment of school staff to reintegrate pupils following permanent exclusion. Webb and Vulliamy (2003) describe how school related weaknesses could overlook, create or exacerbate pupils' personal academic and social needs. This resonates with the findings of this study. Headteachers described the pressures they face in terms of ensuring all children achieve their outcomes and that the school meets national standards. They described how pupils being reintegrated presented challenges to this particularly in relation to school attendance figures. Significantly, whilst pupil attendance was raised as a significant challenge to the schools, individual behaviour difficulties were raised much less as an issue for school staff.

5.3 Perception of unfairness

The results of this study indicate that many of the participants felt that they had been treated unfairly. This was on two levels, from the pupil and from the headteacher. Each will be discussed in relation to the literature in this area.

5.3.1 Sense of unfairness: pupils

Many pupil participants felt that their exclusion had been unjust and this had an impact upon their ability to successfully reintegrate into another secondary school. One reintegration officer noted that pupils do not take responsibility for their behaviour and the incident that led to permanent exclusion, which means that there is 'no closure' for the pupil. This was the experience of the researcher. All pupils interviewed perceived their exclusion to be unfair and unjustified given their behaviour. Many of the pupils seemed to be grieving for the end of the chapter at the previous school. For many of the pupils this had been sudden and they had not had the opportunity to talk through the incident with members of staff prior to the exclusion.

This is consistent with research conducted by Munn and Lloyd (2005) who found that pupils perceived their exclusion to be unfair and they did not take responsibility for the reasons behind their exclusion. They also found that excluded pupils felt other pupils had behaved in the same way and yet avoided exclusion. Similarly Berridge et al (2001) found that some pupils acknowledged their behaviour at their previous school had not been good, but they were surprised that the incident which triggered the exclusion had merited exclusion in its own right.

Rendall and Stuart (2005) investigated the sense of unfairness of excluded pupils and used the Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale for Children (CNSIE) as a measure of locus of control. Rendall and Stuart (2005) measured excluded pupils and non-excluded pupils locus of control and found that the group of excluded pupils showed more external locus of control than the comparison group. This indicates that excluded pupils are more likely to hold the view that something or someone else is responsible for their actions or for events which happen to them, such as their exclusion

from school. This in turn perpetuates their sense of unfairness at their exclusion. This indicates that a significant focus for support during the exclusion period prior to reintegration should be to recognise the role of locus of control in terms of a pupil's understanding of their own actions and behaviour.

During the exclusion process, Save the Children (2005) found that few pupils were given any direct help to put across their viewpoint during the exclusion process. Some pupils reported anger, frustration and disempowerment at not having been asked to give their side of the story in exclusion meetings. This highly resonates with the experience of some pupils in this study who felt angered, even after a long period, that their exclusion had been unwarranted. However Berridge et al (2001) found variance in the pupil views on this area and whilst some were shocked and expressed great, others did not. This study has similar findings. Whilst some of the pupils acknowledged their part in the exclusion, none took full responsibility for this and indicated it was due to the actions of others, such as headteacher for making the decision.

There may be some rationale behind these feelings. Vulliamy and Webb (2000) suggest that there is an element of situational bias in determining which pupils are permanently excluded and describe how a pupil may find him or herself in a social 'game', in which others are constructing reality for that pupil. The findings of this study could provide some evidence for this. Whilst there was some variance in the perceptions of the headteachers regarding their decision to permanently exclude, one headteacher spoke about his decision to exclude being in relation to a quota. He described how he was more likely to think strategically about the decision to exclude, rather than in relation to the individual pupil behaviour, as he was aware of the impact this would have in terms of expected admissions as a result of the HTPPP. This has a significant impact upon the reintegration of individual

pupils, both in terms of the justifiability of the initial decision to exclude and the pupil's own feelings about their exclusion which impacts on their attitude to the reintegration.

5.3.2 Sense of unfairness: headteachers

As well as the pupils, the headteachers felt that the system of reintegration was unfair; this was in spite of the basis and rationale of the HTPPP being to create a shared sense of fairness. There has been no previous research completed in relation to the views of headteachers on reintegrating pupils, particularly those being reintegrated as part of an agreed protocol. However research in the area of general reintegration has also found that school staff can be highly resistant to admitting pupils excluded from other schools (Cole and Visser, 2000) and that they may feel pressured into accepting these pupils which can result in a sense of injustice that other schools are excluding more than are being reintegrated (Lown, 2007). This research provides the omitted information in this area as it summarises the views of some headteachers. The headteachers in this study did not feel that the spread of reintegration was fair. However the findings indicate that it goes deeper than this perceived unfairness. It is the way in which the protocol is administered, the lack of flexibility and the headteachers' lack of influence and voice in the process that leads them to perceive themselves as powerless and thus frustrated with the system of reintegration and the protocol.

This study indicates that despite the agreed protocol, the headteachers still feel that sometimes the chosen school for reintegration and the process adhered to are unfair. Kinder et al (2000) found that '*schools opposition to reintegration could make the process virtually impossible*' (p. 55). The findings of this study indicate that reluctance on the part of the school staff

in supporting the reintegration can have a profound effect on the success of the reintegration for the pupil.

5.4 Vulnerability of pupils

The vulnerability of the pupils who participated in this research was evident. Many were supported by a number of different agencies and presented as pupils with significant emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. The researcher considered some of them to have 'slipped through the net' in terms of missed opportunities for them to receive appropriate, effective and targeted support at an earlier stage and that exclusion occurred as a result of these missed opportunities. Many of the participants, particularly the reintegration officers spoke of the lost chances to support these pupils at an earlier age. Some of the parents also felt that had their child received appropriate support they would not have been excluded. This meant that often decisions are made to reintegrate pupils who should receive a higher level of support.

The relationship between permanent exclusion and anti-social behaviour has been widely investigated and there is evidence in the literature to reiterate the vulnerability of these pupils found in this study. Parsons (1999) raised concerns about the growing evidence linking exclusion from school with anti-social behaviour in the community. Since then, Berridge et al (2001) theorised that permanent exclusion represents an important and detrimental transition that can be characterised by the loss of time structures, a changed relationship with parents and siblings, the erosion of contact with pro-social peers and adults and closer association with similarly situated young people. It was evident in this study that for some of the pupils this re-casting of a new identity as a result of the exclusion had happened to such an extent that their reintegration was rendered impossible.

In this study, exclusion emerged as evidence of a contractual breakdown between the pupil and schools. Through the accounts from the pupils and their parents, it is clear that the breakdown in relationship between the pupil and the excluding school happened before the decision to exclude was made. In fact it could be argued that the breakdown provoked the exclusion. Research completed by Davies and Lee (2006), albeit in the area of school non-attendance provides a way of representing this. Davies and Lee (2006) found it helpful to think of a contract between a pupil and school. Schools insist upon compulsion and compliance, but in exchange offer a safe environment, meaningful and relevant learning, opportunities for association with friends and dignified and respectful treatment. All such systems rely upon consent and there has to be benefits on both sides, and sustaining this contract ensures stability and the potential for educational productivity. It is where the contract is broken that dilemmas occur and where situations become unpredictable for the pupil.

In all of the pupil cases, there was evidence of a high level of incidents prior to the final exclusion, which gradually led to a breakdown in relationship between the pupil and the school and eventually resulted in the permanent exclusion. The pupils interviewed, with some backed up in independent conversation with their parents, identify with some clarity the breakdown of the agreed, albeit implicit, contract. They did not feel dignified or respected and some did not feel safe and protected by their school, which is demonstrated in the very fact that they were excluded from that setting. These are the pupils who are then very quickly expected to be reintegrated into a school where staff are concerned and resistant to their admission and the pupils themselves are still grieving over the initial exclusion. In terms of a contract, the pupil's trust in school staff has broken, they have been excluded from a whole school system and so it may be difficult to expect them to feel secure in a new environment.

This study provides further evidence of this and for some pupils it will take considerable time and effort to construct a new contract between pupils and school staff to ensure that the pupil feels secure in their new school. This impacts significantly on the pupil's sense of belonging in the school and this study indicates that the pupil will need support in this area prior to reintegration to enable them to feel ready to start at the new school, having experienced closure from the previous incident which led to exclusion.

This however can be a challenging concept to school staff who may not perceive that the pupil deserves sympathy. The interviews and survey results from this study indicate that the perceptions of the school staff towards excluded pupils were negative at the point of reintegration. However for each of the pupils tracked as part of the case work, there was a member of staff championing them. In the case of David the SENCO referred to him as 'poor David' and described how he had been let down by the previous school. This support was not explicit with specific schemes of work, as is recommended in the literature (Lown, 2007) rather it was the implicit relationship building through mutual respect and consideration of what the pupil had been through that had a positive effect on the reintegration.

5.5 Is reintegration always right?

The deliberation of whether reintegration is right, desired or achievable has been considered by the researcher throughout this study. Lown (2007) questioned the purpose of reintegration in her research. She said that it is imprudent to assume that permanently excluded pupils should always be returned to school because of commitment to the idea that children and young people are bound to be better off included in mainstream settings. At the beginning of this study the researcher reflected on the notion proposed

by Lown (2007) and in considering her axiological values and commitment to inclusion, deemed that it was notwithstanding that a swift re-entry into mainstream school is the most appropriate place for all excluded pupils. However having completed the study the researcher's values in relation to the extent to which it is appropriate that there should be a single route for all permanently excluded pupils to follow has been significantly questioned.

Whilst the reintegration officers provided a 'face' to the procedure and protocol and are under obligation to persuade and make a success of the reintegration, in fact at times they felt that reintegration was not appropriate. However the complexity of this matter goes further, as it could be questioned that just because a pupil has received a permanent exclusion, it does not then render them incapable of being educated in a mainstream setting, and thus they may deserve a second chance. The experience of the researcher in this study is that sometimes reintegration was not appropriate but was initiated due to lack of other viable options. This meant that pupils were at times being put into situations where they were inevitably going to experience a second 'failure'.

Some of the pupils discussed as part of this study did not seem to be appropriately placed in mainstream schools. It was the researcher's experience that some of these pupils performed better, achieved more and were happier when being educated in the alternative provision at the study centre. Osler and Vincent (2003) found that excluded pupils they researched generally had a very positive motivated attitude towards the alternative provision between exclusion and reintegration. This was cited as being because the curriculum better suited their needs and current competencies and they were able to receive a higher degree of teacher support. This, the authors suggest in part can explain their previous behavioural difficulties in terms of institutional and structural factors and

Osler and Vincent (2003) propose that these pupils found inclusion through exclusion.

This is consistent with the findings of this study to some extent. However there was some variation in terms of pupil views on being reintegrated and about their time in alternative provision. Some pupils were more than ready to move on to another school. This was the case for Chris and David. They were eager to return to mainstream school and had not particularly enjoyed their time at the study centre. Daniels et al (2003) describe how pupils who have spent some time out of a formal school setting may find it hard to adjust to 'normal' school rules and expectations. Additionally Brodie (2000) suggests that it can be more difficult second time round, because the pupil is entering a new and strange environment for which they might not have been fully prepared. For the cases of Chris and David there was limited evidence that they struggled to adjust to the normal school rules and they seemed to settle in fairly well.

However Samantha's needs seemed to be much better met by the study centre provision. She enjoyed a sense of belonging through the smaller classes, the type of curriculum and style of teaching. Regardless of this she was still eager to return to mainstream, as she wanted to be, in her words, 'normal'. Despite school staff and parents not supporting the admission she was reintegrated, which on reflection was the incorrect decision for her, as she promptly failed in that school. This is similar to the findings of Kinder et al (2000) who saw that pupils were eager to return to school following a period of time at the alternative provision, but that once they were reintegrated any attitudinal changes related to behaviour or school were not sustained.

It could be argued that the inflexibility of the school curriculum to meet the needs of individual pupils leads them to feel lost and that they don't belong

in the school system. It could be argued that it is not the fault of the individual pupil that they are not provided with a curriculum that is suitable to their needs. Taking a social constructionist stance, it is possible to recognise the extent to which factors external to the pupil, in their social situation, impact on them. Vulliamy and Webb (2003) blame school exclusion on strategies to promote the government standards agenda, such as publishing league tables which undermine the inclusion agenda. It could be argued that mainstream school does not meet each pupil's needs and that increased flexibility and alternative styles of curriculum, such as the style of education at the study centre, may more appropriately suit their needs.

5.6 Factors that facilitate and hinder reintegration

There have been a number of attempts in the literature to establish factors that facilitate and hinder reintegration into mainstream school following permanent exclusion. The findings from these previous studies are summarized in the literature review. However they include systemic difficulties around school reluctance to admit excluded pupils and family issues including the degree of interest and support offered by the family (DCSF, 2004). Other studies have attempted to pinpoint specific school strategies that facilitate effective reintegration (Lown, 2007; Gillison et al, 2008).

Whilst this study has corroborated some of the facilitators and barriers cited in previous research in this area, there was a high level of variance in what constituted a facilitator and barrier to reintegration. Whilst some pupils recognised the importance of peer friendships during this time, other pupils felt that being given freedom in the early stages of reintegration was important. Similarly whilst one headteacher noted that a quick reintegration was imperative to facilitate the reintegration, another said that pupils needed

to be educated in a smaller study centre for a prolonged period of time prior to reintegration.

When interviewing one reintegration officer, the researcher asked a question about the facilitators and barriers to reintegration and whilst answering the question, the reintegration officer explained:

“I can’t tell you, that’s an odd one, I can’t tell you why one doesn’t work and one does. Sometimes everything looks good; the parents are supporting the admission, you have a child who appears to want to go to the school and change some of their behaviour, you feel that issues have been addressed and you put them in and it goes wrong from the word go”.

As part of the research process as colleagues became aware of the research, the researcher was frequently asked about specific advice, strategies or approaches that facilitated reintegration and this became a very difficult question to answer. Each individual case is often very complex and therefore requires a high level of diversifying so that the pupils individual needs can be met. A reflection about the research question itself is whether it is truly possible to have generic advice about facilitators and hindrances when the pupil group in question are so very diverse. It was perhaps naïve of the researcher to consider that this was a question readily answerable through this research.

Thomas and Glenny (2005) suggest that there is a strand in the argument against inclusive education that inclusive education is all very well, but there is a central problem; support for it springs from ideology rather than rationale inquiry. In effect researching inclusion and inclusive practice makes some ‘big assumptions’. For example with proper analysis, inclusion can in some way be disambiguated and that with proper grounding in

evidence we shall know what is best. This suggests that without sentiment and with proper definition, it will be possible to discuss inclusion clearly, rationally and disinterestedly. As a result of this study the researcher agrees with this. Whilst EPs work in evidence based practice (Cameron, 2006), it is not possible to always find the 'answer' that is 'out there'. This research was completed within a social constructionist epistemology and whilst an understanding of the needs of the studied participants has been achieved within this stance and contributes to research in this area, the 'answers' are unachievable due to the complex nature of exclusion and reintegration in terms of the participants and the procedures.

Generally the groups of pupils who are being reintegrated following permanent exclusion are multifarious and it is therefore not possible to simply implement 'off the shelf' advice. This study has identified some areas of good practice in terms of facilitators and some factors that can act as barriers to reintegration. However it seems that each case is different and needs to be personalised and adjusted to such an extent that it requires a high level of professional input, support and advice.

5.7 Decision making

Whilst decision making in relation to the HTPPP was the most significant theme in the headteacher interviews, it was also significant in the reflections of the researcher in the research diary and was recognised by reintegration officers as being an area of significance. Decision making in relation to the school chosen for reintegration was wholly adhered to in relation to the process described in the protocol and there was very little deviation in this. The match between pupil and school, in terms of distance the pupil needs to travel and individual pupil and school needs, came second to the criteria in the protocol in terms of the ranking table. The decision making process is the responsibility of one member of LA staff, who relies upon the information

provided by the excluding school, to make the correct judgment. The results of this study indicate that a more cohesive and higher level of professional judgment and decision-making may improve the reverence of the decisions made.

There has been no previous research on decision making processes in terms of reintegration following permanent exclusion. However Harris (1999) describes the distinction between 'informational' and 'normative' influence in decision-making generally. The former implies that judgments are made on factual information about the issue, which implies increased impartiality. The latter implies that decisions are based on achieving acceptance and status through conforming. This leads to decisions being made that are 'popular'. The decisions made in terms of school placement for these pupils can be described as informational, as frequently they are based upon factual information such as a school's placement in relation to the ranking table. It could be argued that whilst decisions made in a more normative way may improve the reputation of the protocol, this may negate the impartiality and purpose of the protocol in terms decision made based on clear systems.

Harris (1999) notes however that professionals inevitably bring to decision making their own personal histories, their experience of previous cases with the school, their biases towards optimism or pessimism of case and their personal moral values. Therefore it could be considered that impartiality and normative decision-making may be unachievable. However this research found that the reintegration officers had to frequently make 'unpopular' decisions, which meant that they were criticized by school staff.

A reflection by the researcher around this issue is in terms of the pupil's readiness for reintegration. There was no clear system for determining at what point the pupil is 'ready' for reintegration. Taking such a realist approach, it could be argued that such a scientific response, such as 'yes'

or 'no' answer to reintegration is too simple to apply to a complex area and to complex pupils. Doyle (2001) investigated the role of a reintegration readiness scale to facilitate professional decision making in determining whether pupils being educated in a nurture group setting should return to mainstream classes. Doyle (2001) reported that reintegration was successful due to accurate assessment of pupil readiness. Such a scale may not be appropriate for these pupils. However the rationale behind some of the decisions is unclear and mixed. Providing clearer criteria for assessing readiness may improve school staff's confidence and support for reintegration. Similar approaches may also include the use of group decision making, rather than an individual's decision, utilizing the expertise of professionals; potentially EPs, to provide their professional judgment on the suitability of reintegration.

5.8 The role of parents

The contribution of parents to the process of reintegration can perhaps be illustrated in this study by the difficulty in meeting with and interviewing parents. All of the parents of the four pupil cases were interviewed. However there were many occasions when the researcher visited the family home and the parents were not in, or they had forgotten about the pre-arranged meeting. In her research Lown (2007) resonates with this experience, as she contacted twenty-seven parents and following a long period of time pursuing responses, was able to interview five parents. This highlights the difficulty of obtaining the views of parents and ensuring that their needs are met, as well as the pupils.

However Rendall and Stuart (2005) describe their ease at recruiting and accessing parents of excluded pupils and in fact they had greater difficulty in recruiting parents of other school aged pupils for their control group study. This may perhaps be due to the difference in LA systems within the two

differing LAs that were researched. It could also represent the differences in resources available to support parents; in 2010 there are a number of agencies within the LA that offer support to parents of those pupils who are excluded whereas five years previously this support may not have been as evident and so parents were pleased to have the opportunity to tell their story.

James (1997), whose research was based on the reintegration of pupils from emotional behavioural difficulties provision into mainstream schools, highlights the importance of parents' needs and requests being considered in making decisions for their child's placement. This is a crucial concept. As a result of the HTPPP, parental views and wishes are not necessarily adhered to and they are sometimes 'persuaded' to agree to admission in a school they have not chosen. This has an impact on their support to that school placement and their feelings of belonging as a parent in the school community.

The reintegration officers build up close relationships with parents and visit them often during the exclusion period. However this support often does not continue with school staff. Many of the parents in this study were found to be appreciative of the support of school staff and needed comfort and reassurance from school staff as much as the pupils themselves.

Research conducted by the charity 'Save the Children' (2005) concludes that the permanent exclusion process risks further marginalising those already vulnerable to social exclusion. Berridge et al (2001), in investigating the effect of permanent exclusion on criminal activity, found that permanent exclusion tended to 'trigger a complex chain of events which served to loosen the young person's affiliation and commitment to a conventional way of life' (p. vi). The findings of this study would indicate that it goes further than that and the effect on the family is highly significant. The interviews with reintegration officers confirmed this as described in the results section,

the escalating effect of pupil exclusion on many other areas of family life is of great consequence. Additionally the parents interviewed as part of this research recognised the stress that the exclusion had caused.

It seems that too much of the previous research has placed emphasis on the role of the school staff and the individual pupils to make a success of the reintegration, Daniels et al (2003) report that reintegration into mainstream schools often fails and that it is only possible where schools were highly inclusive or where a young person was determined to make a success of the new placement. Similarly Kinder et al (2000) attribute successful reintegration from the ability of school staff to build positive personal relationships with young people, indicating this is an important part of the reintegration process. However it seems that often the missing connection is the parents. In this study it was found that the extent to which parents supported the admission had a critical impact upon the outcome of the reintegration. Additionally some parents felt unsupported and their views and wishes seemed to be unrecognised in terms of the support they required in this difficult process.

5.9 Concluding comment: discussion of themes

The purpose of this section was to relate, in addition to the results section, a further more detailed analysis of the pertinent points identified by the researcher. The themes identified were those of most significance from the data collected or those described in detail as important in the research diary. There are a number of areas that have been discussed, specifically in relation to the previous research in this area and these contribute to a fuller understanding of the process of reintegration. Some of concepts discussed, particularly those related to the operational factors and potential improvements to the HTPPP will be inputted into a working group, looking at ways to review the protocol.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

6.1 Introduction

This study provides a unique insight into the experiences of pupils, school staff, parents and LA staff in relation to reintegration following permanent exclusion. The following chapter provides a summative review of the findings in relation to the research questions. The chapter will be presented in the following format:

- Summary of findings in relation to the research questions
- Contribution of the study to EP practice
- Researcher practitioner reflections
- Methodological reflections
- Ideas for further research
- Conclusion

6.2 Summary of findings related to the research questions

6.2.1 Research Question One

To what extent is the hard to place pupil protocol effective in facilitating reintegration into school following permanent exclusion?

This research indicates that the hard to place protocol is effective in facilitating reintegration for the following reasons:

- It has eased negotiation arrangements for reintegration.
- It has formalised a system and provided a response to government directed policy.

- Some participants perceive the protocol to increase fairness and transparency of practice.

However there remains some difficulty in practice in the following areas:

- Some participants acknowledged that inequality of spread of reintegration and blame remains despite the protocol.
- It works on a legalistic and basic premise that all pupils should be reintegrated, without allowing for more in-depth assessment of suitability of placement.
- The views of parents on chosen school places are not always sought or followed.

6.2.2 Research Question Two

What factors do stakeholders¹⁴ consider facilitate or hinder reintegration into school following permanent exclusion?

This research indicates that stakeholders consider the following areas to be important in facilitating or hindering the success of reintegration:

- Support for the pupil in terms of access to specific school support packages, the effect of school ethos and professional support
- Communication between school staff and parents
- Individual pupil attributes including willingness to contribute to their new school and attend
- Pupils feeling that they belong in their new school, including having friendships with peers
- School staff having shared history with the pupil

¹⁴ Stakeholders are permanently excluded pupils, their parents / carers, school staff and LA officers

- Familial and societal factors
- The impact of the permanent exclusion and any preparatory work

However a concluding remark in relation to the research question is regarding the variability of each individual pupil case and the cohort of excluded pupils in general, in the extent to which agreed strategies can be formulated and recommended.

6.2.3 Research Question Three

What is the role of the educational psychologist in supporting pupil reintegration following permanent exclusion?

School staff considered the following to be part of the role of the EP in supporting reintegration:

- Advice and strategies
- Assessment and consultation
- Individual therapeutic work with pupil
- Supporting home-school relations
- Attendance at reintegration meeting
- Providing a third party perspective

EPs considered themselves to have the following role:

- Applying psychological theory and knowledge
- Managing other peoples expectations of EP involvement
- Supporting complex cases
- Changing the perspective of what other people view as being 'the problem'
- Working with school staff

- Obtaining and championing the voice of the child

6.3 Contribution of the study to EP practice

6.3.1 Is there a role for an EP?

It was evident in both personal reflections and from feedback as part of the research process that there is a role for an EP in supporting the process of reintegration into school following permanent exclusion. The distinctive part of this role was perhaps in looking at the case holistically, through the application of models of casework that were evidence based. The study provided the researcher with the opportunity to apply psychology in a different way, to school work and case work, within a multi-agency arena. However Thomson and Russell (2007) note one of the potential problems with multi-agency approach is that in revealing and dealing with complex and multifaceted issues, the young people concerned can sometimes feel as though too many people are involved. It is the researcher's experience that being involved in some of the cases did further complicate the process rather than resolving it. This was for two reasons. Firstly at times the contribution of an EP was in addition to already effective support work. Secondly EP involvement could sometimes leave the school staff underpowered to make decisions and negated the school responsibility for the pupil.

This study has highlighted to the researcher the role of an EP in relation to the evidence base in which EPs work. As identified in the literature review, there has been some research that can be located in journals, in relation to reintegration of excluded pupils. However the stakeholders, in this case the reintegration officers and school staff, do not necessarily have access to this valuable evidence base. This is undoubtedly the case for other areas of research. EPs do work from an evidence base. However if EPs are not

involved in that area of work or contribute to practice in the LA then there is no way of assimilating that evidence based effective practice. This provides a valuable contribution by EPs to practice in schools and local authorities.

6.3.2 The contribution that EPs can make to LA policy evaluation

This research has explored the way in which EPs can contribute to LA systems at a policy level, through the evaluation of the HTPPP. The LA in which this research was completed are interested and keen to implement changes as part of the outcomes of the research. It is envisaged that a summative report of the findings will be produced following which the researcher may contribute to a working group on the way in which practice can be improved. Sylva, Taggart, Melhuish, Sammons and Siraj-Blatchford (2007) describe how the traditional relationship between research and policy was linear, with funders supporting the efforts of researchers who then disseminated it to those responsible for shaping and implementing policy. However the model presented in this research is one of knowledge exchange whereby collaborative problem solving exists between the researcher and decision-makers through linkage and exchange. This research has enabled the LA to detect the contribution that EPs can make to researching policy in the LA. Sylva et al (2007) describe how such contributions enable exploration of the changes in the way that educational researchers engage with policymakers.

6.4 Researcher practitioner reflections

As a link trainee educational psychologist to a number of schools, the researcher is frequently presented with complex cases with different facets of complicated situations and it is with this initial guiding information that hypothesising begins. More often than not however the time delegated to individual case work only provides the researcher with limited scope. This

research provided an opportunity to apply psychology at many different levels; mainly the application of theories of behaviour, change management and contextual approaches. By mapping the pupil's experience prior to exclusion, the period of time spent out of school and their subsequent reintegration, it was possible to explore the whole context of the situation in which the pupil has found themselves in.

It has been helpful to extend the researcher's own thinking beyond that of the conventional EP spectrum, by providing permission to complete casework in a more diverse way. It has made her think differently about the children the researcher sees on a daily basis and in her repertoire of skills.

One EP reflected during the focus group how they often tried to put vulnerable pupils into boxes but they kept on 'popping out' of the boxes as they didn't fit. This research has enabled the researcher to feel more confident to discount the need to place pupils into boxes, and reflect that this is in fact unnecessary and unproductive. These pupils are vulnerable for a very good reason, and they present as complex cases, both for within child and contextual reasons. It is for that reason that psychologists can offer an alternative way of supporting these pupils.

The axiological stance taken was one of the researcher and the researched being inter-dependent. It was not deemed possible to complete research without the researcher being part of that process. The axiological position of this study and the particular attention given to it, both through the reflective diary and reflective interview has increased the researchers understanding of the effect of 'herself' on case work, development of hypotheses and understanding of cases. Taking a social constructionist approach to the research has been critical in allowing the different facets of information to be reconciled. Without recognising the social factors that have impacted on the

cases and the phenomena of reintegration, the underlying and important concepts would not have been captured.

The approach taken to the research and the casework as part of that, highlights the way in which this study has developed the researcher's understanding of her own practice. The literature review highlighted a number of interventions for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion. Therefore as this research was planned, it was anticipated that the approach taken to the casework would be therapeutic. Indeed one of the initial guiding research questions was in relation to the role of therapeutic approaches in supporting reintegration. However it was evident in each case that whilst the pupils individually had difficulties, they did not need 'fixing' or therapeuticising. The problem wasn't necessarily solely within the child, it was casework at a more consultative and wider level that was likely to be most effective.

Davies and Lee (2006) researched the area of non-school attendance and suggested that pupils who do not attend school are necessarily a problem for schools, local authorities and the political community, but 'non-attendance' is not necessarily a problem for the pupil. It is in effect possible, whilst not dismissing the dilemmas of local authorities, to stand back from the assumption that exclusion is a problem. It could be suggested that in the case of exclusion, excluded pupils offer a critique of the school system and they solve their personal problems by being excluded. By moving away from the stance of viewing pupils as 'the problem' as was the initial guiding approach and seeing 'exclusion' as the problem enable a more proactive and helpful approach to the case work.

The voice given to the participants was something that the researcher gave a high level of consideration. Hubbard and Power (1999) discuss the importance of giving a voice to the participants and is mindful of the

particular voice given to pupils, even when pseudonyms are used. The debrief interview provided deeper reflection on this area, as it provided a challenge in relation to the way in which the researcher's values about the way in which people, such as pupils, should behave in their own role. At the start of the process the researcher was fairly pessimistic about the pupils and felt frustrated at their lack of involvement and engagement with schools in the initial stages of reintegration. However through living the process with them, by considering the challenges they face and listening to their histories of school, enabled a broader more sympathetic approach emerged.

6.5 Methodological reflections

Salmon (1993) argues that when pressed methodologists state an epistemological position to justify particular methods but in fact they should be more explicit about the epistemological basis of their work. Salmon (1993) notes that this presents two problems. Firstly that epistemologies describe the use to which methods can be put, not which methods can be used. For instance, qualitative methods can serve a researcher who believes that research discovers underlying reality as easily as they serve one who believes that researchers' interaction with research participants constructs reality. Secondly Salmon (1993) suggests that it is a rare researcher who thinks through an epistemological position before choosing a method. Such positions are more often post-hoc rationalisations of what has been done. In reality, researchers use methods for historical, ideological or practical reasons and they use the methods they have learned to use and that they can use. Salmon (1993) argues for a more realistic and robust approach to evaluating research quality, instead of the alliance of methodologism and retrospective epistemologism.

In relation to the epistemological stance, the researcher reflects that there was no explicit decision making in terms of the social constructionist

approach taken to the research. In essence there was no decision to be made. In agreeing with Salmon (1993) it is the researcher's experience that researchers do use the methods and indeed methodologies, they have learned to use and that they can use. The researcher took a social constructionist approach to the research, as that is the stance taken to everyday practice as an EP. It is likely that the research would always have taken a social constructionist approach, as that is the epistemological background and values of the researcher.

The epistemological stance drove the research ideologies but it did not restrict the approach taken to the research. Salmon (1993) suggests that

'Good research is playful, research that slavishly follows methodological rules stultifies the discipline, and that real scientific progress results from imagination, creativity and common sense, rather than merely deduction and induction'

(p. 25).

However whilst research can be imaginative and creative, it is imperative that methodological rationalisations go further than this, because what is interesting, fun or seems to 'fit' for one researcher might leave another bored, uninspired or dissatisfied. Therefore it was imperative that this research was methodologically sound.

Reflecting on their research Nind et al (2005) suggest that perhaps the pleasure, as well as the problem, of a story such as research, is that some tensions and differences cannot be resolved. The task of the researcher is one of making the most creative use of the challenges, for the researcher, the research participants and those who engage with research. Similar reflections can be made of this study. It is highly likely that another researcher may have approached the research topic in a different way.

Another approach to the research project many have been to take a quantitative approach to the research by analysing the reintegration statistics to consider the effective of the HTPPP through length of time pupils had remained in school. Another researcher may have used other models of EP practice, such as activity theory, to consider the phenomena of reintegration. Alternatively yet another researcher may have taken an action research approach to the research, evaluating the impact of a different way of coordinating the HTPPP. Similarly taking on different epistemological approaches may have changed the outcome and the story of this research.

In short there are a number of ways in which this study could have been conducted. However the way in which this was completed, best fit with the approach taken by the researcher, the context of the phenomena of reintegration and availability of the contribution of the participants. The completeness of any research presents challenges, as does the scope available within the research project.

Measor and Woods (1991) suggest that research reports frequently give the appearance of confident well-organised progress through the lengthy period of research. However this probably is rarely the case. Measor and Woods (1991) characterise their research by:

'More stops than starts, false trails and blind alleys. There were long periods of routine data collection, and some flashes of excitement; alternating experiences of being promoted and obstructed, of being deeply involved and almost totally marginalised' (p. 59).

It is intended that this research answers the questions posed and provides a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of reintegration following

permanent exclusion. The purpose was not to generalise the findings to all reintegrated pupils, rather to highlight the practice within this area.

6.6 Identification of future research

The discussion in this research was deliberately constrained to reflect selected themes due to constraints of completing the doctorate course. It is with regret that a broader scope of research was not completed. A longitudinal qualitative study on the effect of exclusion on long term outcomes and pupils views of this would be very beneficial as this would strengthen the research base to go further than the statistics that are provided about the long term outcomes for excluded pupils. It would have been extremely useful to conduct a follow-up of the pupils that took part in this research, perhaps one year later, to gain an update on their progress, but it was not possible to do this within the scope of the research.

The role of the parents in supporting the reintegration was a key theme as part of this research. Research into the type of support parents identify at the point of exclusion and how this supports the reintegration process would be a very fruitful area to research, particularly as this may provide information that would strengthen practice in this area.

It would be valuable to further research the process of decision making in terms of the reintegration, perhaps through action research to evaluation an alternative way to make decisions, to consider how this can impact upon the viability of the protocol.

6.7 Conclusion

This study was conducted to examine the phenomena of reintegration into school following permanent exclusion. This is a complex area of study.

Case study methodology was used to examine the following research questions. In conclusion the findings for each research question are indicated below.

Research Question One: To what extent is the hard to place pupil protocol effective in facilitating reintegration into school following permanent exclusion?

The HTPPP has eased negotiation arrangements for reintegration and has formalised a system to provide a response to government directed policy. Whilst some participants perceive that the protocol increases fairness and transparency of practice, others acknowledged that inequality of spread of reintegration remain despite the protocol. The HTPPP takes a legalistic and basic premise that all pupils should be reintegrated, without allowing for more in-depth assessment of suitability of placement. Additionally it does not address in full the views of parents.

Research Question Two: What factors do stakeholders¹⁵ consider to facilitate or hinder reintegration into school following permanent exclusion?

There are a number of factors critical in facilitating or hindering reintegration, these include support, communication, willingness of the individual pupil, sense of belonging, familial factors and the impact of previous events. However the extent to which it is possible to devise a summary or list of factors that facilitate or hinder reintegration is questioned. This is due to the diverse and complex nature of the difficulties that pupils who are being reintegrated bring with them.

¹⁵ Stakeholders are permanently excluded pupils, their parents / carers, school staff and LA officers

Research Question Three: What is the role of the educational psychologist in supporting pupil reintegration following permanent exclusion?

School staff considered the role of the EP to be advice giving, assessment and consultation, individual therapeutic work with pupil, supporting home-school relations and providing a third party perspective. EPs consider their role to be the application of psychological theory and knowledge, completing complex case work, changing the perspectives of 'the problem', working with school staff and obtaining and championing the voice of the child

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Appendix 1

Guidance on Systematic Literature Reviews

The seven main stages of a systematic review: Adapted from Torgerson (2003) p. 24-25.

1. A protocol or plan of the research is written to establish: the theoretical, empirical and conceptual background to the review; the research question(s); the objectives; the scope of the review and the methods for searching, screening, data extraction, quality appraisal and synthesis. *This formed part of the research proposal whereby a summary of the aims and objectives of the research was presented.*
2. Within the protocol a set of predetermined written inclusion and exclusion criteria are specified. For example the protocol may specify that only studies employing a 'true experimental' design and written in the English language will be included. *As the amount of literature in the area of reintegration was limited, no studies were excluded.*
3. Once the protocol has been developed, the literature search can commence, starting with an electron search. The literature search may also include hand searching of key journals and other methods of retrieval.
4. At the scoping or mapping stage the studies retrieved for the review are described and classified. At this stage all of these studies may be data extracted for inclusion in the in-depth review, or it may be decided to further refine the research question and inclusion criteria and select a more narrowly focused area for the full systematic review
5. Once the relevant papers have been identified their data need to be extracted.
6. Extracted data are then summarised in a synthesis that can be done as a qualitative overview of the data. A copy of the form used for the summaries of each piece of research can be found in appendix 2.
7. The synthesised data will be interpreted within a report.

Appendix 2

Literature Review Summary Form

Title and full reference

Quick reference

Why am I reading this?

What are the authors trying to do in writing this?

What are the authors saying that is relevant to what I want to find out?

How convincing is what the authors are saying?

In conclusion, what use can I make of this?

Code

return for detailed analysis / important general text / minor importance / not relevant

Appendix 3

Literature Review Search Strategy

Multiple database searches were performed to identify recent publications in the area of reintegration into school following permanent exclusion. Search terms were limited to publication dates ranging from years 2000 to 2009 (inclusive). All identified documents were examined and those that were relevant were retrieved for inclusion in the review. Reference lists of retrieved documents were hand searched to identify additional publications, which may have led to particularly relevant research being retrieved from prior to year 2000. A summary of the database searches that were performed during the process of conducting the review is set out below.

Database Searched:

- PsychInfo
- ERIC or model 162
- Google scholar
- EBSCO
- Dialog Datastar

Terms used:

School + exclusion
School + expulsion
School + suspension
Children out of school
Pupil(s) out of school
Excluded pupil(s)
Excluded children
Vulnerable pupils

Excluded parents / carers
Voice excluded parents
Exclusion parents

Voice child exclusion
Voice pupil excluded

Decision making school
Decision making exclusion

School systems exclusion
School reintegration
Reintegration exclusion
School exclusion reintegration

Appendix 4

Case Summary: Chris

Year: Eleven

Reason for exclusion: Physical assault against a pupil

Time spent out of school: Four months

Summary of case:

Chris was permanently excluded following a number of fixed period exclusions for persistent disruptive behaviour, verbal abuse and physical assault against pupils. The final incident that led to permanent exclusion was for verbal abuse against a member of staff. Chris had been supported in his previous school in a number of ways including mentoring and anger management work.

He spent four months out of school at the study centre where he had settled in well. Initially it was decided that as Chris was excluded at the end of year ten, that he should remain at the study centre, however as he had a positive experience there it was decided that he would be able to be successful in a mainstream high school.

Chris lives with his sister and his grandparents. He does not have a relationship with his biological parents and Chris finds it difficult to talk about his biological Mother.

He had a good start to his admission into school and he appeared to be settled into school for a prolonged period of time. Towards the end of the researcher involvement in the case there had been some minor incidents which included leaving a lesson and being caught smoking. School staff felt confident in dealing with his behaviour. The school is the researcher's link school; this means that although the researcher involvement has ceased, the option for further support has been possible. When the research visits the school it is possible to monitor his reintegration through updates from staff.

Views of pupils:

Chris was relieved to have started in the school and was happy to be a part of the new school community. Whilst he did enjoy and progress during his time at the study centre, he was very eager to return to mainstream education.

During discussions with Chris he was able to discuss openly how he was going to deal with certain circumstances in school. He was honest in his interpretation about events, such as when he was caught smoking and admitted that he frequently smoked. Chris shared with the researcher the type of support he would like to receive, this was not mentoring work initially, however he said that he would like support in English and Maths.

Views of grandparents:

Chris's grandmother was keen for Chris to return to school; she had been upset about the exclusion and was keen to move on. She felt that Chris needed anger management work in school as she was concerned that he might get excluded again. Chris's grandmother was relieved that someone else had sorted out the school place for him as she felt that she wouldn't have known where to start.

Views of school staff:

School staff said that Chris didn't seem to be 'as bad as the file'. The key worker was the manager of the Inclusion Resource Centre (IRC) and staff in that provision were protective of Chris. They were keen for him to initially spend a large proportion of his week in that provision to settle in. The assistant headteacher thought that Chris needs 'nurturing back into school'.

School staff reported that an 'off the record chat' with staff from his old school to gather information proved helpful. When the researcher initially support the case, school staff reported that there was a 'state of flux', as it was too early to decide how EP support should be utilised.

School staff main concerns were initially around peer relationships as he is friends with other children in the school who they are aware as being difficult. The staff saw part of their role as steering Chris away from these children. He was hanging around with the 'wrong' crowd and staff had been trying to steer him away from them. Staff said that he seems unmotivated and they called him 'lazy'.

An issue had been around his lessons as he had been put into a technology class that he hasn't done previously; he did resistant materials at his previous school but has been put into a product design class. So he subsequently spent the lesson on his own. Staff said 'the teacher didn't know what he was meant to be doing', 'he didn't know what he was meant to be doing', so then he said he wanted to go home. The assistant headteacher has said that he should be in all of his mainstream lessons; however Chris wants to be in the LSU. When asked why this was, LSU staff said they didn't think he was settling in very well and was feeling a bit lost.

Chris was placed in a form group which was chosen as it is the smallest form group, it is close to the IRC and the teacher is a food technology teacher, which is Chris's favourite lesson.

Approach taken to casework:

The case work consisted of individual therapeutic work, with the use of an eclectic approach including narrative therapy and motivational interviewing and consultation with key members of staff. Following this a consultation record was produced which details advice and strategies that were discussed and agreed. The main points suggested were:

- Providing Colin with individual mentoring sessions once per week at a set time so he has the opportunity to discuss any concerns
- Colin voiced that he was concerned about his coursework for food technology, therefore a teacher should take responsibility for ensuring that all coursework is up to date.
- Smoking cessation work

Reflections on casework:

The casework seemed to be effective as the school was the researcher's link school. This meant that systems were already in place and relationships had been maintained. Chris was successful in his reintegration as he had friends at the school and had chosen to attend the school. He had said that was the only school he would attend, which meant that he had 'signed up' to the school. The researcher involvement in the case was a discreet piece of casework involving consultation and therapeutic work; had the casework not been for the purposes of research, the casework would not have involved this level of intervention. As Chris was settled into school, he did not require a high level of EP involvement and school staff felt confident in dealing with Chris's behaviour.

The success of the reintegration seemed to be because of Chris's desire to attend the specific school and also that Chris appeared to have matured and spent enough time at the study centre in order to prepare himself for reintegration.

It was difficult to engage with Chris on a one-to-one setting, however as the researcher had initially met Chris at home, this seemed to ease him.

Summary of EP evaluation:

<p>➤ What involvement have you had from the EP service for this case?</p>	<p>Group (with staff/parents)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consultation ➤ Project/Development work ➤ Facilitation <p>Individual child focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consultation ➤ Direct intervention programmes
<p>➤ What do you think has been most effective about the service that you have received?</p> <p>➤ In what ways has this contributed to improved outcomes for the named pupil?</p>	<p>It has helped up to view Chris in a different light – we have been able to support him more successfully than previous cases. We understand his situation that bit better</p> <p>The evidence speaks for itself – he is attending and causing minimal disruption – as a result of planning and support for him from the consultations?</p>
<p>➤ What has been least effective?</p> <p>➤ What could we do differently to improve things next time?</p>	<p>Nothing – it has been successful.</p> <p>To become involved in more cases like this instead of the usual casework – this was about planning and pre-empting any problems instead of being reactive.</p>
<p>➤ Based on your experience how would you rate the EP input for this case on a scale of 1-5 where 5 is most effective / useful and 1 is least effective / useful?</p>	<p>5 – more of this type of work please</p>

Appendix 5

Case Summary: David

Year: Nine

Reason for exclusion: Physical assault against a pupil

Time spent out of school: Eight weeks

Summary of case:

David was permanently excluded for a physical assault against another pupil. This was described as a premeditated and sustained assault which despite adult intervention, continued. Previously David had been supported through individual and group mentoring. He had been seen by an EP and recommendations had been suggested.

He spent eight weeks out of school at the study centre where he had a mixed experience. Study centre staff felt that he should be reintegrated as soon as possible, however he had been in trouble at the study centre for assaulting another pupil and had huge difficulty with peer relations.

David lives with his Mother, step-father and five siblings. He had a close relationship with his family and they were fiercely protective of him.

He had a mixed start to his admission into school as there were a number of incidents fairly close to the start of his reintegration. However he sought support from staff where appropriate and was able to control his feelings better than he was able to do in his previous school. He remains in the school and is now being supported by staff that are being supported by the school EP.

Views of pupils:

David was happy to start at his new school and was eager to move on from both his previous school and his time spent in the study centre. David was able to articulate in detail his experience of starting at the school and shared his concerns openly. As a result of the incident for which he was excluded he was scared of repercussions in the community; he had received threats from other pupils. David seemed to enjoy recalling events which led to his exclusion and described how he 'went on a rampage'. He enjoyed close relationships with the staff at the study centre and described them as 'dead nice' however he did not perceive them to prepare him for reintegration to school.

At his new school David feels he has better friends and that it has a better reputation. He felt that staff knew how to calm him down and they were helping him with his learning. He was very aware of how other pupils may perceive him in the school and was eager to behave in a socially acceptable way.

As a whole he did think that his life would have been better had he not been excluded, especially as he had been excluded in the 'worst year' as he had missed his year nine SATS tests.

David was able to articulate where he would like support in lessons and said that he would like further mentoring. He said that he would like someone to talk to about how his week has been.

Views of parents:

David's Mother felt that his exclusion was very unfair; she perceived that a lot of David's behaviour was provoked. She felt that they had a case for appealing against the exclusion, however thought that David needed a fresh start in a new school so did not appeal. David's Mum was clearly frustrated at the lack of support in the previous school in addition to the limited communication. She felt that meetings in the old school 'were about David and to me'. As she has other children at the school she described teachers at the school to be 'smug' that David has been excluded. After his exclusion she said that David was very upset and felt that he'd let a lot of people down.

David's Mum was very frustrated at the factors around the reintegration process. She felt that there was too long of a time lapse between exclusion and reintegration. She also felt frustrated at not being party to discussions around his new school placement. She seemed annoyed that she did not own the decision around which school David was going to be reintegrated into.

However she described the new Headteacher as 'lovely' and she was happy that he was prepared to provide David with a fresh start. She perceived David to be excited about starting at his new school and said that she was more worried than he was. David's Mum felt that the new school had a lot more to offer him than his previous school.

When asked what had helped with the reintegration, she said that the new school acknowledging that a lot of the incidents that occurred in his old school were provoked. David's Mum said that poor communication has hindered the process of exclusion and reintegration. David's mum said that he would need a mentor and some support in lessons but that David himself

would be the best person to tell staff what support he needs. She said that as long as he is happy, then she is happy.

His Mum was proud of some of his achievements; on the wall of the home she had framed certificates of courses he had completed.

Views of school staff:

It was evident that the SENCO who was David's key worker liked him; when talking about him she said 'oh poor David was excluded'. One strategy that was particularly effective was that she re-wrote his school file in a more positive light for other school staff to read. This enabled her to be an advocate for him.

The SENCO was frustrated at her lack of involvement in the initial meetings with David's Mother and the Headteacher. This meant that she was unaware of some of the discussions around provision and support. In the initial days of the reintegration David had an incident and the SENCO described how it 'all kicked off, because no-one knew him'.

The SENCO saw her role as ensuring that David had a fresh start in the school and ensuring that he 'played the game'. She was critical of the previous school and in particular about the incident that led to his permanent exclusion; she said 'why didn't they (school staff) just separate them'.

The SENCO had been asked to write an IEP for David; however she felt that really that was not her job and that the LA team should be doing that for her.

Approach taken to casework:

As David fully engaged in one-to-one discussions, it was decided to adopt a therapeutic approach to the case work. This involved a mixture of motivational interviewing, social focused brief therapy and anger management. This was in addition to cycles of consultation with key members of staff including individual consultations with learning mentor following her sessions with David. Consultation records detail this process.

Reflections on casework:

As a result of involvement with David the school staff requested that the researcher support two additional pupils. It seemed that because an educational psychologist was involved, this opened the floodgates to staff requesting more and more additional support. Following individual incidents of behaviour, the school staff contacted the researcher immediately, and

when talking to the researcher about him called him 'your David'. A reflection of the casework is that whilst the school staff seemed to feel supported in their reintegration of David, the level of EP involvement did at times mean that the school staff did not take responsibility for dealing with David's behaviour themselves. This possibly disempowered them.

EP evaluation summary:

➤ What involvement have you had from the EP service for this case?	Individual child focus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consultation ➤ Direct intervention programmes – therapeutic intervention ➤ Mentoring / training with staff ➤ Facilitation ➤ Project/Development work
➤ What do you think has been most effective about the service that you have received?	We knew that there was someone who we could talk to about concerns – we knew the EP would be coming in and we could share how the reintegration was going with someone who understood. There was a fairly smooth cross-over between EPs
➤ In what ways has this contributed to improved outcomes for the named pupil?	The reintegration has been challenging, but it has been successful. He is still in school and has had no exclusions.
➤ What has been least effective?	Lack of time – would have liked more time for EP to do some more therapeutic work with David. The fact that the involvement was time limited. The school EP was not a specialist in this area.
➤ What could we do differently to improve things next time?	More specialist support for these types of pupils.
➤ Based on your experience how would you rate the EP input for this case on a scale of 1-5 where 5 is most effective / useful and 1 is least effective / useful?	4 – only because we needed more EP time

Appendix 6

Case Summary: Samantha

Year: Eleven

Reason for exclusion: Persistent disruptive behaviour and physical assault against another pupil

Time spent out of school: One year

Summary of case:

Samantha had been permanently excluded for physical assault against another pupil. She had been out of school for one year prior to reintegration. The main issues in relation to Samantha's behaviour were around confrontations with staff, her attendance and peer relationships

As Samantha was in year eleven the LA had originally planned for her to remain in out of school provision, however she did well in the provision, and Samantha was keen to re-enter a mainstream school, as she wanted to belong. Samantha had idealised the process of reintegration and had focused everything around reintegration.

The high school at first decided to appeal against the admission as they said they could see from her behaviour that she wasn't going to be successful in the reintegration. However they did agree to the reintegration, on the basis that the LA would increase the monitoring and would withdraw the placement should it be initially unsuccessful. The reintegration officer said that she would monitor it so closely that in effect Samantha would not be allowed to be permanently excluded again.

Samantha found it very difficult to start at the school, attending for just one morning prior to refusing to attend again. On the morning she attended there had been some confusion around her timetable and as a result was sent home. This proved to be a catalyst in her refusal to attend again for some time. Samantha did attend the school again for very short sessions prior to a decision being made to withdraw the reintegration. Samantha now attends college provision through the study centre and is attending.

Views of pupil

Samantha was very eager to return to mainstream school. Whilst she had enjoyed her time at the study centre she wanted to be 'normal' again and attend school like other children. She had aspirations to become a hairdresser and knew that if she returned to school she might be able to do this.

Despite being keen to start back at mainstream school, she seemed unaware of the challenges of this. Her desire to appear like other pupils meant that she was reluctant to be educated for part of the week in a smaller resource centre in the school. She wanted to be in full-time lessons at the school with her peers.

When asked what she might need to complete a successful reintegration she said for teachers to leave her alone and for her to have friends.

Samantha was quiet and appeared to be withdrawn. She did share some of her concerns about starting back at school, however was keen to demonstrate that she was ready to reintegrate. She proudly showed off some of the work she had completed whilst at the study centre.

Views of parents:

Samantha's mother did not think that the reintegration would be successful and it was evident that she did not support the reintegration. Samantha's mother had been previously prosecuted for Samantha's school non-attendance, and she was concerned that she would again not attend.

Samantha and her mother had a difficult relationship. Samantha's Mother was angry that her own life and university studies had been affected as a result of Samantha's behaviour and subsequent exclusion. She felt that Samantha was old enough to look after herself. In terms of the exclusion, her Mother felt that she had deserved it. In relation to the reintegration her Mother was certain that it would not be successful and did not support it, saying that she would have preferred Samantha to remain at the study centre. At the reintegration meeting Samantha's Mother voiced her concerns about Samantha in general and about the reintegration and made it clear that she would not support strategies such as waking her up in the morning.

Views of school staff:

School staff were happy to provide Samantha with a fresh start at the school; they were eager to support LA attempts to reintegrate her. However they were realistic about the difficulties they faced in reintegrating Samantha, without support from home.

The interview with an assistant headteacher indicated that they did not perceive the information provided from the LA to be correct, and thought that some of the reports may have been written in a more positive light than had been in reality.

The assistant headteacher had taught Samantha's Mother and this helped at the reintegration meeting as the teacher felt that her Mother 'softened'.

Approach taken to casework

As Samantha did not attend the school for any period of time, the EP involvement was limited to

- Initial home visit to discuss the reintegration
- Meeting and consultation with school staff
- Three individual sessions with Samantha planned, however she was absent on the day of each session.

Reflections on casework:

Reflecting on the case, although Samantha was eager to return to mainstream school, the decision making around whether she should have been reintegrated was flawed. Samantha should not have been reintegrated, as there was limited support from home and she had an unrealistic view of how school might be for her. It was a difficult case, as Samantha wanted to go back to school, and in line with pupil choice it is positive that she was listened to, however from the initial stages it was evident that it wasn't going to be a positive outcome.

The EP involvement was limited as the reintegration did not take place. However it was an interesting case, as EP involvement in the earlier stages, when decision making was occurring may have been more useful. Whilst the views of pupils need to be heard, the contextual factors in relation to the reintegration, including parental support and support packages available in schools, should have also been considered.

Whilst there is no right and wrong with these decisions, it is clear that as a result of Samantha attempting to reintegrate, she may now perceive herself to have another negative school experience.

EP evaluation summary:

<p>➤ What involvement have you had from the EP service for this case?</p>	<p>Individual and group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Consultation➤ Facilitation
<p>➤ What do you think has been most effective about the service that you have received?</p> <p>➤ In what ways has this contributed to improved outcomes for the named pupil?</p>	<p>The EP was eager to support the reintegration and made numerous attempts to engage Samantha and the family. She came into school numerous times when Samantha was not present, which is frustrating.</p> <p>Samantha felt supported, however was not in a position to accept support from anyone</p>
<p>➤ What has been least effective?</p> <p>➤ What could we do differently to improve things next time?</p>	<p>Lack of opportunity to support the reintegration, lack of opportunity to support and share insight into the case.</p> <p>Consider ways to engage Samantha in different ways. However I am certain that this was never going to be successful.</p>
<p>➤ Based on your experience how would you rate the EP input for this case on a scale of 1-5 where 5 is most effective / useful and 1 is least effective / useful?</p>	<p>3</p>

Appendix 7

Case Summary: Alison

Year: Nine

Reason for exclusion: Verbal abuse / threatening behaviour against an adult and verbal abuse / threatening behaviour against a pupil

Time spent out of school: Three months

Summary of case:

Alison was permanently excluded for verbal abuse / threatening behaviour against an adult and a pupil. This was following eight and a half days of fixed period exclusions in the academic year. She was described as having very few friendships. She also found it difficult to forge long-term relationships with members of staff.

Alison's parents agreed to participate in the research; however Alison refused to attend the initial meeting, despite it being at her home, and decided she did not want to participate. This led parents to withdraw consent for individual work with Alison. However parents did agree to be interviewed themselves and agreed for school staff to be supported through consultation and staff training in relation to Alison.

Alison was originally due to be reintegrated into another school in the locality however due to opposition from the headteacher it was agreed that Alison would be reintegrated into another school. The reason for opposition was due to Alison's friendships in the community and parents of other pupils being concerned about Alison starting at the school. The school that Alison was subsequently reintegrated into was next in the list for reintegration, however was more than five miles away from her home.

At her previous school Alison's attendance was 69% therefore a number of concerns were raised about Alison's future attendance and the new school placement.

Alison attended the new school for a short period of time; however she almost immediately started to refuse attending. She is now not attending school despite various interventions. The Education Welfare Service is prosecuting the family for Alison's school non-attendance.

Views of pupil:

It was not possible to ascertain Alison's views as the EP did not meet with her.

Views of parents:

Alison's parents were very defensive of Alison and felt that her exclusion was unjust. It was evident that they were very angry about what has occurred in her previous school and whilst they did not reject the school chosen for reintegration, they did not fully support her start back into mainstream school. Alison's parents did not express an opinion when asked about where they would like her to attend school or the type of support that they perceived her to require.

Views of school staff:

School staff were clear from the start of the admission that they did not perceive it to be successful. They were concerned that Alison would not attend despite their intervention and felt that Alison and her family had not 'bought into' the idea of attending the school. They tried to be innovative and took on strategies agreed such as personalising follow up attendance contact and welcoming her through cards. They felt frustrated at the lack of support from outside agencies and felt that it was inevitable that Alison was not going to attend and so thought that the initial decision for Alison to be reintegrated should not have been made.

Approach taken to casework:

Due to Alison being unwilling to engage on an individual level, the EP involvement consisted of:

- Staff training on the process of change, reintegration and transition between schools.
- Consultations with school staff

The staff training sessions took place as the school received a high number of pupils as part of the HTPPP, as they were a high excluding school (the highest in the LA), therefore in terms of capacity building it seemed appropriate to use the EP support in this way, to effect maximum benefit to all pupils. The staff training took place over an afternoon with approximately thirty members of staff including pastoral staff, teaching staff and some senior management. The session was well received and the feedback consisted of staff comments that it helped them to prepare for vulnerable pupils transferring to their school.

Reflections on casework:

The casework took a different approach to that of the other cases; it was purely consultative and focused on capacity building with staff. This was due to lack of choice as Alison and parents had withdrawn consent for individual therapeutic work. Her parents had refused the support of outside agencies at her previous school, including EP support. Had parents agreed for Alison to engage with outside support, her reintegration may have been facilitated further. However because of this there were increased opportunities to work with staff at a group and whole school level. As a result of the training the way in which the school supports pupils being reintegrated has altered to benefit pupils and their families.

The difficulties around this case centred on the choice of school; the school chosen was not Alison's nor her parent's choice of school, she had no friends at the new school, and as a result she was unwilling to approach the admission with positivity. In addition her parent's refusal to engage in a supportive way to Alison's education, especially around her difficulties in attending school, made the admission unsuccessful. As a result there is now a pupil who certainly has difficulties, who needs support, but is supported in not attending any sort of education.

EP evaluation form:

<p>➤ What involvement have you had from the EP service for this case?</p>	<p>Organisational (whole school / large group of staff)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Training ➤ Project/Development work <p>Group (with staff)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consultation
<p>➤ What do you think has been most effective about the service that you have received?</p> <p>➤ In what ways has this contributed to improved outcomes for the named pupil?</p>	<p>Training – learning about and sharing with staff the process of change we all undertake and how this impacts on children changing schools. Individual consultation re. Alison. Thinking on our feet about changes to plans!</p> <p>Has empowered staff to feel more confident in their approach to Alison. In relation to the training we all now understand change and can plan in an informed manner the reintegration plans we make.</p>
<p>➤ What has been least effective?</p> <p>What could we do differently to improve things next time?</p>	<p>Lack of individual work with Alison. No support from home for the work we have done with Alison. Lack of engagement from Alison.</p> <p>Couldn't have done more with this family.</p>
<p>➤ Based on your experience how would you rate the EP input for this case on a scale of 1-5 where 5 is most effective / useful and 1 is least effective / useful?</p>	<p>5 – innovative with the training.</p>

Appendix 8 EP Evaluation Form

School:

Pupil:

Staff:

Date:

<p>➤ What involvement have you had from the EP service for this case?</p>	<p>Organisational (whole school)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consultation ➤ Training ➤ Project/Development work ➤ Facilitation <p>Group (with staff/parents/pupil groups)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consultation ➤ Training ➤ Project/Development work ➤ Facilitation <p>Individual child focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consultation ➤ Direct intervention programmes <p>Other</p>
<p>➤ What do you think has been most effective about the service that you have received?</p> <p>➤ In what ways has this contributed to improved outcomes for the named pupil?</p>	
<p>➤ What has been least effective?</p> <p>➤ What could we do differently to improve things next time?</p>	

➤ Based on your experience how would you rate the EP input for this case on a scale of 1-5 where 5 is most effective / useful and 1 is least effective / useful?	
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Appendix 9

Research Diary Aide Memoir

Annotated from Altrichter and Holly (2005). Use pages 25-26 as reference for writing the diary.

Memos:

- Mainly to be written during or directly after school visit / intervention / home visit / meeting.
- Recalling experiences of the meeting
- Try not to talk about the event before recording into diary as this may modify recollections
- Include chronology of events
- Jot down catchwords or phrases

Memos can be broken down into:

1. Descriptive sequences

Accounts of activities, descriptions of events, reconstructions of dialogues, gestures, facial expressions, description of a place, facilities, try to provide exact quotations, record words that are typical of a person, group or the school.

2. Interpretive sequences

Feelings, speculations, ideas, hunches, explanations of events, reflections on assumptions and prejudices, development of theories.

Notes:

Theoretical notes:

- Clarifying a concept or idea
- Making connections between various accounts and other bits of information
- Identifying surprising or puzzling situations worth following up
- Connecting my experience to the concepts of an existing theory
- Formulating a new hypothesis

Methodological notes:

- Observations and reflections on research strategy

- Methods and activities as the research unfolds.
- Issues of methodological critique and ideas for alternative methods and procedures, which may help improve the quality of the research project and competence of the researcher.

Planning notes:

- Alternative courses of practical action
- What was forgotten and how to address it next time
- What has to be thought through more carefully.

The diary was broken down into three areas; a diary entry may for example cover 'memos' and 'planning notes', but not 'notes' depending on the content of the entry.

Memos	Notes	Planning notes

Appendix 10

Interview Schedule: Parent

Derived from literature review and research questions

Outline of interview

- Overview of the study
- Ethical considerations
- Anything can be removed if so wish.
- Tape recording but also notes taken during the interview
- Anonymity

Introduction to include research aims and consent

☐

Story around exclusion

Feelings about exclusion

Time out of school / excluded

Reintegration:

What are the plans for reintegration?

Who is coordinating the plans? (H2P pupil protocol)

How do you feel about how the reintegration has been coordinated?

How does (pupil) feel about the reintegration?

How do you feel about the reintegration?

What has helped so far? (facilitators)

What has hindered so far? (barriers)

Who has supported the parent?

How can I support?

Advice for other parents?

Other comments

Thanks

Reminder of ethical review - Anonymity, right to withdraw, exclusion of anything said

Appendix 11

Interview Schedule: Pupil

Derived from literature review and research questions

Outline of interview:

Introduction to include research aims and consent

☐

Story around exclusion

Feelings about exclusion

Time out of school / excluded

Reintegration:

Who have you spoken to about the reintegration? Who has supported?

How do you feel about how the reintegration has been coordinated?

How do you feel about the reintegration?

What has helped so far? (facilitators)

What has hindered so far? (barriers)

How can I support?

Advice for other pupils?

Other comments

Additional PCP interview schedule - pupil

'The success'

- Picture a person who you think would be successful in reintegrating into school following permanent exclusion
- What does this person look like?
- What are they like?
- How do they behave in lessons / at break?
- What music do they listen to / what do they watch on TV?
- What do they carry in their bag?
- What do they wear? How do they wear it?
- What activities do they do?
- Would they have any particular strengths or difficulties?
- How would this person be with friends? With whom would they be friends?
- What is their greatest fear?
- What words would this person use?
- How did this person come to be like this?
- What will happen to this person in the future?

'The failure'

- Picture a person who you think would be unsuccessful in reintegrating into school following permanent exclusion
- What does this person look like?
- What are they like?
- How do they behave in lessons / at break?
- What music do they listen to / what do they watch on TV?
- What do they carry in their bag?
- What do they wear? How do they wear it?
- What activities do they do?
- Would they have any particular strengths or difficulties?
- How would this person be with friends? With whom would they be friends?
- What is their greatest fear?
- What words would this person use?
- How did this person come to be like this?
- What will happen to this person in the future?

'The toolbox' – on paper

If could create a toolbox of helpful items for the pupil who is reintegrating into a new school, what would you put inside? Colour code for those that already exist and those that are additional items for the future.

What is helpful and supportive at school already?

What else could support a person who is reintegrating into a new school?

Do you have any additional thoughts about reintegration?

Is there anything that we have not covered that you would like to mention?

Thanks

Reminder of ethical review - Anonymity, right to withdraw, exclusion of anything said

Appendix 12

Interview Schedule: School Staff

Derived from literature review and research questions

Outline of interview

Overview of the study

Ethical considerations

Anything can be removed if so wish.

- Tape recording but also notes taken during the interview
- Anonymity

Introduction to include research aims and consent ☐

Reintegration:

Story around reintegration

Own feelings and other staff members feelings about the reintegration

What are the plans for reintegration?

Who is coordinating the plans? (H2P pupil protocol)

How do you feel about how the reintegration has been coordinated?

How has the reintegration been?

What has helped so far? (facilitators)

What has hindered so far? (barriers)

Who has supported the school staff? The parent? The pupil?

How can I support?

Advice for other schools?

Other comments

Thanks

Reminder of ethical review - Anonymity, right to withdraw, exclusion of anything said

Appendix 13

Interview schedule: Headteacher

Overview of the study

Background to the headteacher interviews

Ethical considerations

- Anything can be removed if so wish.
- Tape recording but also notes taken during the interview
- Anonymity

General thoughts on permanent exclusion

- Challenges to the school of the pupils
- Support from LA
- Role of parents
- Types of behaviour challenges
- Making the decision to exclude

Time spent out of school in alternative provision

- Is it the correct type of provision?
- What is effective?
- What would improve the situation?

Reintegration

- Is it the right thing

School experience on reintegration

- Individual case level.
- Success of this – why was it successful
- Problems around individual cases
- General challenges

H2P protocol

- How effective is the protocol
- Problems encountered
- Ways to improve the protocol / systems
- Does it affect decisions to exclude

Thanks

Reminder of ethical review - Anonymity, right to withdraw, exclusion of anything said

Appendix 14

Interview Schedule: Reintegration Officer

Overview of the study

Ethical considerations

- Anything can be removed if so wish.
- Tape recording but also notes taken during the interview
- Anonymity

General thoughts on permanent exclusion

- Challenges to the school of the pupils
- Support from schools
- Role of parents

Time spent out of school in alternative provision

- Is it the correct type of provision?
- What is effective?
- What would improve the situation?

Reintegration

- Is it the right thing

Officer experience on reintegration

- Individual case level
- Success of this – why was it successful
- Problems around individual cases
- General challenges

H2P protocol

- How effective is the protocol
- Problems encountered
- Ways to improve the protocol / systems

Thanks

Reminder of ethical review - Anonymity, right to withdraw, exclusion of anything said

Appendix 15

Levels of questions

Adapted from Yin (2009, p. 87)

Level 1: Questions asked of the interviewee

Level 2: Questions asked of the individual case (these are the questions in the case study protocol to be answered by the investigator during a single case, even when the single case is part of a larger, multiple-case study)

Level 3: Questions asked of the pattern of findings across multiple cases

Level 4: Questions asked of an entire study – for example, calling on information beyond the case study evidence and including other literature or published data that may have been reviewed

Level 5: Normative questions about policy recommendations and conclusions, going beyond the narrow scope of the study.

Appendix 16

Email request to headteachers

My name is Katie Moran and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist employed by ----- council; I currently support schools in the ----- area.

I am in the third and final year of the Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology at the University of Manchester. As part of my doctoral training I am completing research on the process of pupil reintegration into school following permanent exclusion

One of my research questions is in relation to the Hard to Place Pupil Protocol and it would be useful to gain the views of Headteachers on the process of reintegration in general and specifically the role of the Hard to Place Pupil Protocol as part of that process.

I am hoping to interview three Headteachers and I am writing to you to ask whether it would be possible to meet with you to gain your views of this area. The interview would take no longer than an hour. The thesis will be published however it will be completely anonymous; all names including those of pupils, individuals, schools and local authorities will be omitted. To aid my analysis it would be helpful to audio record the interview; however I will not be typing up a full transcript.

I would be very grateful if you could let me know if you would be interested in participating in this interview; it is anticipated that this research will effect positive change in the process of reintegration into school following permanent exclusion. I hope to complete the interviews before Christmas and would be able to complete the interview at a time that is convenient for you.

I hope to hear from you soon.

Kind regards,

Appendix 17
Consent letter: School Staff, Headteacher and Reintegration Officer

Dear

As you will be aware I work for ----- Educational Psychology Service as a Trainee Educational Psychologist and I am also in the second year of training at the University of Manchester to become a qualified Educational Psychologist. In order to complete my training I have to undertake some research within ----- and this research will consist of a project looking at the ways in which Educational Psychologists can support the reintegration of pupils who have been permanently excluded.

The aims of the research are to:

- To increase understanding of the facilitators and barriers leading to a successful reintegration into school following permanent exclusion.
- To increase understanding of the perspective of pupils, parents and school staff on reintegration into school.
- To consider the role of the Educational Psychologist within the process.

To do this it is anticipated that I will complete a range of research including interviews and casework. I would be very grateful if you would consent to participating in an interview to discuss pupil reintegration. As part of the project is to ascertain your views it would be helpful to meet with yourself to discuss your views on the reintegration. If you agree to take part in this project, I will be in touch shortly to arrange a meeting with you. I am writing to ask you for consent to write up any work relating to yourself as part of the project.

All of the names and places within the research project will be anonymised, so that it will not be possible to identify people or schools. You and the school will always have the right to withdraw from the research, at any point in the process, and this will not affect the level of support provided.

I would be very grateful if you could sign the attached form and return it to myself.

If you wish to ask any questions in relation to this research, please do not hesitate to contact me on -----.

Yours sincerely,

Katie Moran

Trainee Educational Psychologist

----- Educational Psychology Service / University of Manchester

- I have read the attached letter and understand the aims and purpose of the research.
- I provide consent for any work with myself to be written up as part of the research.
- I agree for the researcher to present my views and use them as part of the research where necessary.
- I understand that all names will be changed so that no person or school can be identified.

Signature

Name Date

School staff:

Dear

I work for ----- Educational Psychology Service as a Trainee Educational Psychologist and I am also in the second year of training at the University of Manchester to become a qualified Educational Psychologist. In order to complete my training I have to undertake some research within -- ----- and this research will consist of a project looking at the ways in which Educational Psychologists can support the reintegration of pupils who have been permanently excluded.

The aims of the research are to:

- To increase understanding of the facilitators and barriers leading to a successful reintegration into school following permanent exclusion.
- To increase understanding of the perspective of pupils, parents and school staff on reintegration into school.
- To consider the role of the Educational Psychologist within the process.

To do this I plan to support the reintegration of four young people into secondary schools in ----- . In order to do this it is anticipated that I will support school staff through consultation, staff training or individual casework with the pupil. Additionally it is anticipated that interviews with key members of staff will support the research. This support will be available within the first term of the pupil's reintegration, and will amount to approximately one and a half days.

----- will already have mentioned to you about the support I can offer to the process of reintegration. I am obliged to ask you for consent to write up any work relating to the school as part of the project.

All of the names and places within the research project will be anonymised, so that it will not be possible to identify people or schools. The child and school will always have the right to withdraw from the research, at any point in the process.

Unless I hear from you I will make contact with the appropriate staff within school to arrange interviews and planning meetings. If you wish to ask any questions in relation to this research, please do not hesitate to contact me on -----.

Yours sincerely,

Appendix 18
Focus group guide

Introduction:

Welcome and thanks:

- Individual approval for audio-taping the interview - permission to record the interview on tape.
- Confirmation of confidentiality agreement; participants understand that their names will not be used in any way, nor will information be shared that reveals their identity in any way.
- Inform participants that any time during the interview the tape recorder can be turned off.
- If participants not happy for some thing recorded to be used then can ask for it to be removed.

Focus for the group:

- Reminder of area of research; exclusion / working with vulnerable children / reintegration
- Voice of the EP missing from the research
- Six areas for focus group

Verbal consent:

- Does everyone give consent to take part?

Focus group prompts:

The following questions and statements were posed to the group of EPs. They were read out and also written onto some pieces of card, as a reminder of the question.

1) What are your experiences of supporting 'vulnerable pupils' in the past?

Considering:

- The type and range of work completed
- The successes
- The challenges

2) What are your experiences of supporting pupils being reintegrated back into mainstream school following permanent exclusion?

Considering:

- The type and range of work completed
- The successes
- The challenges

3) What are the benefits and opportunities of supporting vulnerable pupils, in particular those pupils being reintegrated into mainstream school following permanent exclusion?

4) What are the challenges of supporting these pupils?

5) If you were asked to support the reintegration of a pupil following permanent exclusion, what would you do?

6) In completing this type of work, what might be the distinctive contribution of the EP?

End:

- Reconfirm confidentiality agreement
- Thank you for participating

Appendix 19
Survey including letter to named school staff and headteacher

Letter to headteacher:

Dear Headteacher – add in name of headteacher

Please find enclosed letter detailing research that is currently being conducted in ----- high schools. The letter and survey have been sent to the member of staff within your school who has been named by ----- as responsible for supporting pupils being reintegrated following permanent exclusion. Within your school the survey has been sent to: *add in name*

If you wish to ask any questions in relation to this research, please do not hesitate to contact me on telephone number ----- or email address ----- . If you feel that another member of staff could complete the survey, please could you forward the survey to them for completion. Additionally if you would like to complete the survey, your views would be very much appreciated.

Thank you in anticipation of your co-operation in this matter

Yours sincerely

Katie Moran

Trainee Educational Psychologist

CC: Pupil Support Officer
Senior Educational Psychologist

Letter to school staff including survey:

Dear

I work for ----- Educational Psychology Team as a Trainee Educational Psychologist and I am also in the second year of doctoral training at the University of Manchester to become a qualified Educational Psychologist. In order to complete my training I am undertaking research within ----- LA. This research will consist of a project looking at the ways in which Educational Psychologists can support the reintegration of pupils who have been permanently excluded.

The aims of the research are:

- To increase understanding of the facilitators and barriers leading to pupils' successful reintegration into school following permanent exclusion.
- To increase understanding of the perspectives of pupils, parents and school staff on reintegration into school.
- To consider the role of the Educational Psychologist within the process.

In order to gain a fuller understanding of the views of stakeholders, and the potential role of an Educational Psychologist within that process, I am surveying members of staff within all secondary schools in ----- LA who have recently supported the admission of a pupil who has previously been permanently excluded. It would therefore be very much appreciated if you could complete the attached survey specifically in relation to your experience of a pupil who has recently been reintegrated into your school following permanent exclusion.

In order to maintain anonymity I would ask that you do not use the name of any pupil in your response. If there has been more than one pupil who has recently been reintegrated, could you please complete a survey for each pupil; I have included three surveys. The data gathered will be used only by myself as part of the data collection for the thesis, and any comments provided will be treated confidentially. If you are willing to be contacted further as part of the research, to discuss your experiences further please tick the box at the end of the survey.

I have enclosed an envelope for you to return the survey. It would be appreciated if you could return the survey by Friday 10th July 2009.

If you wish to ask any questions in relation to this research, please do not hesitate to contact me on telephone number ----- or email address -----.

Thank you in anticipation of your co-operation.

Yours sincerely,

Trainee Educational Psychologist

Please return completed survey to:

CC: Headteacher
Senior Educational Psychologist
Pupil Support Officer

Please note: Survey in relation to pupils who have been integrated into your school, following a permanent exclusion from another high school.

Year group of pupil:

Gender:

Month and year of reintegration:

Any other relevant information:

How successful do you consider the reintegration to be?

Very successful Not very successful

1

2

3

4

5

6

What do you consider to have been the three main factors in facilitating the reintegration?

-
-
-

What do you consider to have been the three main barriers to the reintegration?

-
-
-

Did an educational psychologist support the reintegration?

Yes No

Do you consider there to be a role for an educational psychologist to support reintegration?

Very much so Not at all

1

2

3

4

5

6

What contribution do you consider an educational psychologist could make to a future reintegration?

-
-
-

Any further comments?

Completed by:

School:

Please tick if you would be willing to be contacted to discuss this further

Please return to -----

☐

Appendix 20

Summary of survey responses

Year group of pupil : 11 (x2), 10 (x6), 9 (x3), 8 (x1)
 Gender: 36 male and 2 female
 Month and year of reintegration: Sept 07, Feb 08, Sept 08, Mar 09, April 09
 June 07, May 08 & June 08

How successful do you consider the reintegration to be?

Very successful
successful

Not very

1	2	3	4	5	6
3	3	2	2	3	-

What do you consider to have been the three main factors in facilitating the reintegration?

- Strength of Head of Year
- Use of the Inclusion Centre
- Staff support in lessons
- Pupil had become de-schooled due to time spent out of formal schooling therefore we appreciated the support of other professionals. IPF funding secured by school to create tailored package of education
- Support from (reintegration officer) and support workers
- Close liaison between school and home
- Communication with previous school and pupil support officer
- Parental interest/involvement
- A relevant, personalised curriculum package
- EIP alternative provision (x2)
- School's flexibility (x2)
- Parental support
- Willingness of student to change
- Adaptability of school to curriculum and personal needs
- Patience of key staff
- Off-site
- Personalised curriculum
- 1:1 tuition
- Supported and monitored from the very beginning (x 2)
- One-to-one sessions with Behaviour Manager (X 2)
- Parental support. Fair/consistent approach at school and home (X 2)

- Bespoke timetable
- Targeted support
- Regular contact with home
- Parental support
- Individual support package
- Gradual reintegration
- Excellent inclusive pastoral system
- One teacher allocated to meet him to build up relationship
- Tolerance for his difficult situation

What do you consider to have been the three main barriers to the reintegration?

- Timetable barriers – pupil had already taken option choices
- Reputation of student with peers
- Pressure upon pupil with regard to taking on board school routines and procedures
- Very disruptive, difficult behaviour
- Not knowing the pupil
- Lack of alternative opportunities which had not already been tried
- Pupil attitude
- Factors/influence outside of school
- Difficulty for the student in being “accepted” by peers that are not going to lead him astray; the likelihood of him gravitating towards “kindred spirits”
- Time: sometimes plans e.g. for alternative curriculum provision haven’t, through no one’s fault, happened quickly enough
- The adjustment he has had to make to new rules, new environment, teachers, etc, etc
- Lack of parental support (x2)
- Student’s lack of motivation (x2)
- Student’s unwillingness to change (x2)
- Peer group
- Long distance from school
- Loss of continuity due to exclusion
- Lack of socialisation with appropriate peers
- Access to full National Curriculum
- Behaviour issues and truancy at last school
- Drugs use (x 2)
- Disaffection
- Aggressive towards staff and peers
- Inappropriate behaviour
- N/A successful reintegration
- Attendance

- Lack of parental engagement
- Poor attachment to school
- Some teachers 'labeling' of student

Did an educational psychologist support the reintegration?

Yes - 2 No – 11 (1 said that parents refused EP involvement)

Do you consider there to be a role for an educational psychologist to support reintegration?

Very much so					Not at all
1	2	3	4	5	6
-	4	1	3	2	3

What contribution do you consider an educational psychologist could make to a future reintegration?

- Home school and school to school link
- Support doing time out of school – between exclusion and reintegration
- Advice and guidance
- Suggested strategies
- Assessment contribution
- Assessment of pupil's educational needs
- Helping a young person deal with the associated potential complexities surrounding "change"
- Suggesting coping strategies for dealing with stressful situations
- Attend reintegration meeting
- Consultation before and after reintegration
- Pre- and post- integration consultations
- Advice for staff (starting a fresh)
- Informing the school how they might meet the needs of an individual more effectively
- Provide a current assessment
- Third party perspective
- If EP support in first school, there should be following from one school to the next (x 2)
- Meet with relevant staff before student attends new school (x 2)

Any further comments?

- All permanently excluded students have been apportioned individual learning programmes that have been off site (Key Stage

4). The school has adopted a proactive approach to reintegration 'managed moves' which are carried out before the onset of a

- permanent exclusion. These have been successful within the ----
- consortium. In the main there have involved Key Stage 3 pupils.
- Although initial integration went well, factors and influences outside school meant that outcomes for pupil were no good. This may have happened anyway however fantastic the virtual reintegration was.
- EP support is not always available when needed (finance?) (x 2)

Appendix 21

Stages of Thematic Analysis

Adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006)

1. Familiarizing yourself with your data:
Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes: Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes: Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes: Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes: Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report: The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Appendix 22

Researcher Debrief Interview

The following debriefing topics and questions have been adapted from:

Onwuegbuzie, A., Houston, S. Leech, N. & Collins, K. (2008). Interviewing the Interpretive Researcher: A Method for Addressing the Crises of Representation, Legitimation, and Praxis. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 7 (4), 1-17.

Section A: Bias

Researcher's interview background/ experience

- How would you characterise your training / experience (e.g., clinical, applied) conducting interviews?
- What experiences have you had that you believe impacted your decisions to conduct the interview(s)?

Researcher's perceptions of the participant(s)

- How comfortable were you interacting with all of the participants?
- Which participants made you feel more / less comfortable?
- Which participant responses did you feel were the most helpful?
- In what ways did you think they were the most helpful?
- How did these feelings that you have described influence your perception of the interview process as a whole?

Perceptions of nonverbal communication

- To what degree do you think the setting impacted the dynamics of the interview(s)?
- To what degree do you think the tonal quality (volume, pitch, quality of voice) or the dialogue between the interviewee and yourself impacted the dynamics of the interview(s)?
- To what degree do you think the pacing of the conversation (e.g., length of time between question asked and answered) impacted the dynamics of the interview(s)?

Interpretations of interview findings/ interpretations

- What role did the sample characteristics (e.g. gender / race / culture / class / hierarchy / status / age) play in shaping your interpretations of the interview data?
- What findings surprised you?

- What findings gave you a negative reaction?
- Why do you think you reacted negatively to this finding(s)?
- What findings gave you a positive reaction?
- Why do you think you reacted positively to this finding(s)?
- To what degree were the findings similar or dissimilar to your thoughts prior to conducting the interview(s)?

Impacts on the researcher

- Which part of the interview(s), if any, impacted you?
- What background variables of the participant (e.g. gender / race / culture / class / hierarchy / status / age) influenced your perception of the participant?
- In what ways, if any, do you feel you are a different person now that you have conducted the interview(s)?
- In the future, how will you conduct interviews based on what you learned during the interview(s)?

Impacts on the participant(s)

- In what ways, if any, do you feel your gender / race / culture / class / hierarchy / status / age influenced the participant's responses/comments during the interview(s)?
- What other background variables may have influenced how the participant reacted?

Ethical or political issues

- What types of ethical issues did you encounter during the interview(s), if any?
- How did you handle the ethical issue?
- In your opinion, how did the ethical issue impact the participants and/or the integrity of the interview(s)?
- What political issues did you encounter before, during, or after the interview(s)?
- In what ways do you feel the political issue impacted the study?
- During the interview, did you feel at any time that the interviewee was providing socially acceptable or politically acceptable answers that did not reflect the true state of affairs? If yes, how did you respond?

Unexpected issues or dilemmas

- At what point did an issue or situation arise in the study that you were not expecting? How did you respond?

- What dilemmas did you encounter during the study? How did you handle the dilemma?

Section B: Authenticity bias

Fairness

- To what extent do you think you have identified and, subsequently, interviewed representatives of all the major stakeholders of the study?
- What types of techniques have you used to ensure that the participants' constructions are presented, clarified, and member-checked in as balanced a way as possible?
- To what extent do you think you have exercised balance in representing the thoughts, perceptions, feelings, concerns, assertions, and experiences of all participants?
- To what extent do you think you have identified and negotiated any stakeholders' conflicts with respect to assertions, issues, concerns, and problems?

Ontological authenticity

- To what extent do you think you have provided the participants with opportunities to increase their levels of awareness of the complexities of their surroundings and/or situational context?
- To what extent do you think you have sought and obtained evidence of the participants' increased awareness of their own lives?
- What evidence can you provide, if any, of your own level of awareness of the complexities of your surroundings and/or situational context?
- What strategies have you used to monitor your own developing constructions (i.e. progressive subjectivity) and document the process of change from the beginning of the interview process/study until the end?

Educative authenticity

- To what extent do you think you have promoted participants' understanding of and appreciation for the constructions of others?
- To what extent do you think you have helped the participants realize that the constructions of others stem from the value systems of these other individuals?
- To what extent do you think you have helped the participants to develop empathy and obtain insights in terms of relating to the personal and or professional experiences of other stakeholders?
- To what extent do you think your own empathy and insights of the participants evolved during the course of the interviews?

Catalytic authenticity

- To what extent do you think that participants' newly evolved constructions and appreciations of the position of others have led to some action(s) taken or decision(s) made by the participants?
- To what extent do you think you have sought and obtained evidence of each participant's interest in and willingness to act on the increased understanding?
- To what extent do you think you have sought and obtained evidence of joint actions of participants who have come to resolutions stemming from negotiations of tensions invoked by contesting and contradictory constructions of the stakeholders?
- What follow-up strategies do you intend to use to assess the extent to which the participant's actions stem from the increased understandings that emerged during the course of the study?

Tactical authenticity

- How empowered do the participants appear to be?
- How participatory were the actions taken by the participants?
- To what extent are all participants more skilled than they were previously (e.g., since the study began; since the last interview) in understanding and using power and negotiation techniques?
- To what extent do the stakeholders believe that they or their representatives have had a significant role in the action(s) taken and/or decision(s) made?

Note: Debriefing interviewers are by no means expected to ask all of these questions in this table; rather, our goal in this table is to provide ideas of questions that debriefing interviewers might consider asking.

Appendix 23

Parental Consent Letter

Dear

I work for ----- Educational Psychology Service as a Trainee Educational Psychologist and I am also in the second year of training at the University of Manchester to become a qualified Educational Psychologist. In order to complete my training I have to undertake some research within -- ----- and this research will consist of a project looking at the ways in which Educational Psychologists can support the reintegration of pupils who have been permanently excluded.

The aims of the research are to:

- To increase understanding of the facilitators and barriers leading to a successful reintegration into school following permanent exclusion.
- To increase understanding of the perspective of pupils, parents and school staff on reintegration into school.
- To consider the role of the Educational Psychologist within the process.

To do this it is anticipated that I will support your child's school through consultation with school staff, staff training or individual casework with your child. This support will be provided within the first term of your child's reintegration, and will amount to approximately one and a half days.

(Reintegration officer) will already have mentioned to you about the support I can offer to the process of reintegration. In addition to the educational psychology service consent forms, I am obliged to ask you for consent to write up any work relating to yourself or your child as part of the project.

All of the names and places within the research project will be anonymised, so that it will not be possible to identify people or schools. Your child, yourself and the school will always have the right to withdraw from the research, at any point in the process, and this will not affect the level of support provided.

As part of the project is to ascertain your views it would be helpful to meet with yourself to discuss your views on the reintegration. If you agree to take part in this project, I will be in touch shortly to arrange a meeting with you.

I would be very grateful if you could sign the attached form and return it either to (reintegration officer) or myself.

If you wish to ask any questions in relation to this research, please do not hesitate to contact me on -----.

Yours sincerely,

Katie Moran

Trainee Educational Psychologist

----- Educational Psychology Service / University of Manchester

- I have read the attached letter and understand the aims and purpose of the research.
- I provide consent for any work with my child or myself to be written up as part of the research.
- I agree for the researcher to have access to any case notes on my child and use them as part of the research where necessary.
- I understand that all names will be changed so that no person or school can be identified.

Signature

Name Date

Appendix 24
Copy of the Hard to Place Pupil Protocol

Forward

The Government's Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners set out a number of ways in which schools will enjoy greater independence and freedom. However it also highlighted the need for schools to work together on their wider responsibilities, such as the provision of places for 'hard to place' children. All schools are being encouraged to recognise that they share a collective responsibility to ensure that these children are admitted to a suitable school as quickly as possible. The basis of this protocol is about helping vulnerable children and is a requirement for all schools within the LA.

The groups of children and young people to whom this protocol applies include:

- Looked after children
- Children of registered refugees and asylum
- Children who have been out of education for longer than one school
- Children returning from secure units or otherwise having serious offending issues
- Children in refuges, fleeing domestic violence
- Pupils permanently excluded from other schools

In we are working hard on improving services for vulnerable children and as far as possible reducing the disadvantages and obstacles some children and young people face simply because of their life circumstances or difficulties they or their families encounter.

This protocol has been developed over a lengthy period by Head teachers and Local Authority officers in consultation with governors and partner agencies. It has been agreed by the Admission Forum and the Children's Services Panel as the protocol for and, in accordance with statutory guidance, applies to all schools.

I am very pleased to present this protocol to schools and wish to thank all those who have been involved in its development. I am sure it will benefit some of our most vulnerable children and young people, helping pupils to re-enter mainstream education and engage in positive experiences in order to meet their full potential.

Director Children's Services

'Hard to Place' Pupil Protocol

Introduction

1.1 In line with the School Admissions Code of Practice (DfES 2003) and Guidance on Hard to Place Children (DfES 2004), it is seen as unfair to overburden those few schools that may have places available with an unfair share of hard to place pupils. In accordance with Section 5.10 of the Schools Admissions Code of Practice, Admissions Forums are responsible for seeking to promote agreements on arrangements for dealing with these issues. This protocol has been agreed and accepted by the Admission Forum, it outlines the arrangements to ensure pupils are admitted on a fair and equitable basis to all schools. In all cases, admission authorities are expected to adhere to the requirements of this protocol.

1.2 This protocol applies to all mainstream schools both secondary and primary. The Association of Primary Head teachers and the Association of Secondary Head teachers has agreed on the principle of speedy admission of vulnerable pupils into school with Head teachers taking joint responsibility for the admission of vulnerable pupils.

Aims

2.1 For all children and young persons living in the area and for all schools, the protocol is designed to:

- Acknowledge the real need of vulnerable young people who are not on the roll of any school to be dealt with quickly and sympathetically.
- Reduce the time that these "difficult to place" pupils spend out of school.
- Ensure that schools admit pupils with challenging educational needs on a turn-taking basis.
- Be fair and transparent, and to have the confidence of all schools.

3.1 The Protocol in Cheshire covers

- Pupils permanently excluded from other schools
- Looked after children (LAC) where even the current additional support for admission is unsuccessful in securing a school place
- Children who have been out of education for longer than one school term and where attempts at 'normal' admission including the appeals procedure have so far failed.
- Children of registered refugees and asylum seekers where previous attempts through normal admission have failed.
- Children returning from secure units or otherwise having serious offending issues where normal admission attempts have failed.
- Children in refuges, fleeing domestic violence where normal admission attempts have failed

3.2 LA has determined in their general admissions policy, that Looked After Children will be given first priority for admission to all community and voluntary controlled schools. Voluntary Aided Schools have, through their Diocesan Authority, received confirmation that these pupils should also be given priority in their school's admissions arrangements.

3.3 Looked After Children who require admission to a school outside the normal admissions round will normally be offered a place at the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy and given the right to appeal in the same way that all pupils who are refused a place. Under this protocol LAC can be considered as 'hard to place' and dealt with, if necessary, through the HTPP procedures.

3.4 Children with Statements of special educational need are not covered by these protocols as their needs are considered separately and are covered by specific legislation.

3.5 Although there is some evidence that at times other pupils not in the above list experience difficulties in attaining a school place, there is an agreed admissions policy that should be adhered to in all cases including an appeals system. ***This protocol is targeted at a very few pupils in specific situations and most of the pupils who find it hard to get admission will NOT be considered 'hard to place' under the terms of this protocol.***

3.6 The key point to remember is that the children covered by the protocol will be the ones who are vulnerable and hard to place in a school and for whom it is even more important that they be admitted to a school quickly. The general philosophy and agreements in this protocol apply to both secondary and primary schools.

Main Principles

4. Council expectation will be that all schools should admit pupils in line with the current published admission policy.

In addition, for pupils who meet the 'hard to place pupil criteria, these additional principles apply:

- All schools will take part.
- If a school is asked to admit a pupil under the scheme, even if the school is above PAN, 'hard to place pupils' will be given priority for admission over any others on a waiting list or awaiting an appeal.
- Schools must respond immediately to requests for admission so that the admission of the pupil is not unduly delayed.
- The LA will take account of any serious concerns about the admission, for example a previous irreconcilable breakdown in the relationship between the school and the family, or a strong aversion by the family to the religious ethos of the school. If there is the potential to make a choice between a pupil who has a denominational affiliation and one who does not, the "denominational pupil" would be offered to the denominational school.
- Parental preference will be taken into account if possible but this protocol is designed to ensure a speedy and appropriate placement where it is unlikely that the pupil would gain a place at school without this LA intervention. The protocol does not take away the parental right to appeal. However, after due consideration of all the circumstances the school place finally identified by

the LA under this protocol will be the place formally offered to the child. Any other alternative education provided by the LA will cease when an admission date is offered to the pupil.

How will the protocol work?

5.1 The issues for the implementation of the protocol, and the admission needs, of primary and secondary schools are different. The aims, principles and intended outcomes of this protocol are the same for both sectors but the practical management of it will differ.

The protocol as it applies to Primary Schools.

5.2 The framework within which the Authority has to work requires that all parents or carers apply directly to the school for places in year groups other than the year of entry. All primary admissions will be dealt with through the normal admissions procedures including any appeal system and in accordance with the statutory requirement to limit all infant classes to a maximum of 30 pupils with one qualified teacher.

5.3 Each school can accommodate pupils up to the Published Admission Number. Admission numbers are set with regard to the capacity assessment for the school and pupils should not be admitted above the published number unless 'exceptional circumstances' apply. If all available places in the year group requested have already been allocated, the parents'/carers' application is declined and they are offered the statutory right of appeal to an Independent Panel.

5.4 For primary pupils who meet the 'hard to place pupil' criteria and for whom the general admissions procedure has failed to identify a place, the Admissions Manager can agree an 'exceptional circumstance' and direct admission to a primary school using this protocol.

5.6 The process:

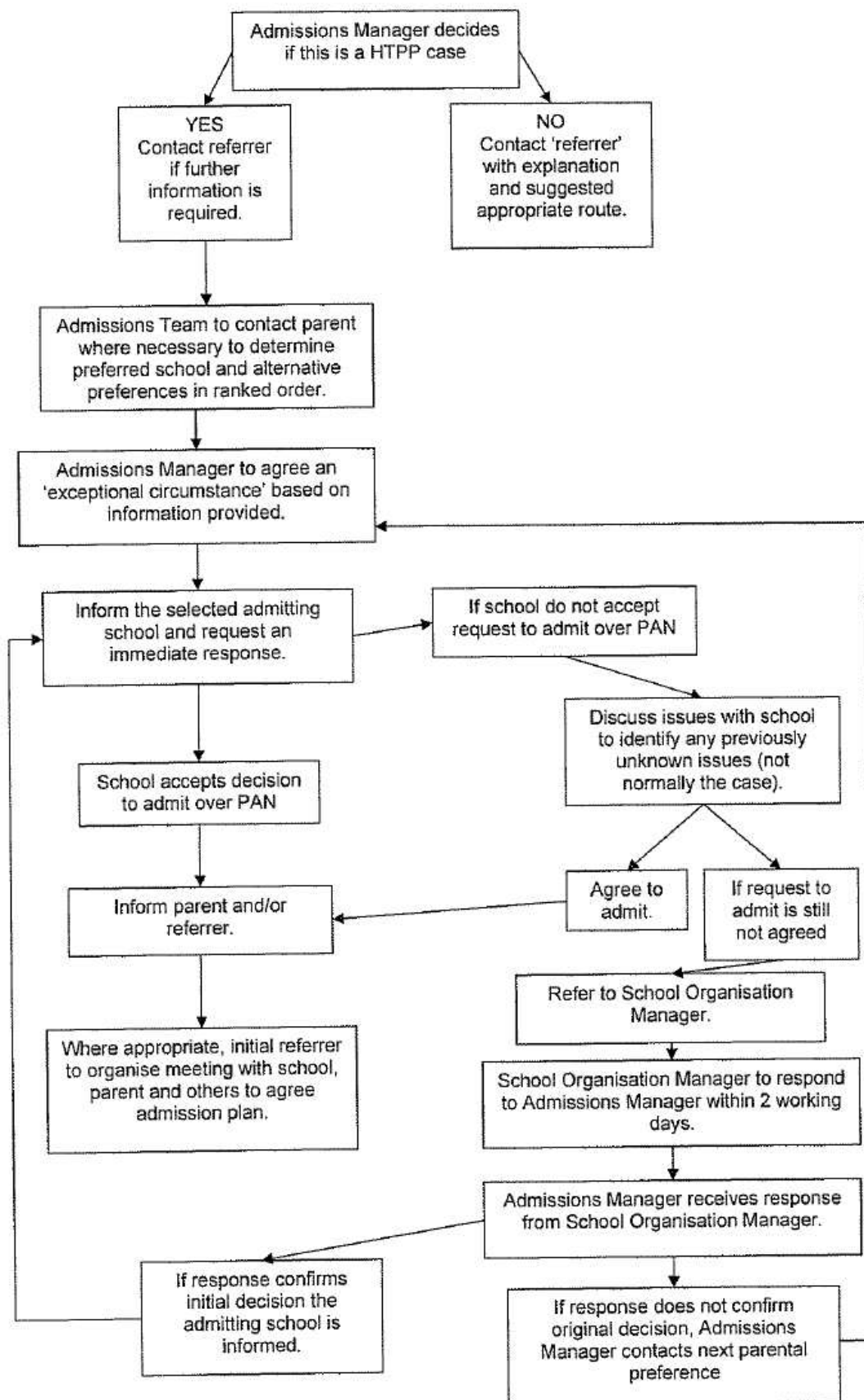
- The Local Authority will be notified (or already be aware) of a pupil who should be considered under the HTPPP.
- Where the school is 'full' and admission has been refused, details will be forwarded to the Admissions Manager who will confirm that the child is a 'Hard to Place Pupil' in accordance with the criteria listed in Section 3 of this Protocol and therefore whether the HTPPP should be applied.
- Where the decision is made to apply the HTPPP, the Admissions Manager will agree an 'exceptional circumstance'.
- The Head teacher will be informed of the decision and admittance as an 'exceptional circumstance' over the Published Admission Number will be agreed.
- A school contacted by the Admissions Manager and requested to admit under the HTPPP can appeal against the decision if for some reason it is felt the decision is not appropriate (this needs to be a serious concern and should be only used in extreme and unusual cases). To ensure that a speedy admission

can take place, it is suggested that the Admissions Manager forwards this immediately to the School Organisation Manager for consideration.

- The School Organisation Manager will consider the issues raised and will decide whether the initial decision to admit should be confirmed, or whether alternative arrangements should be made.
- In the rare event that the decision is made to make alternative arrangements, the Admissions Manager will be advised of this decision and an alternative school will be contacted in accordance with parental preference. All relevant parties will be notified of the decision
- In the event that the decision is made to decline the appeal, the Head teacher will be contacted by the Admissions Manager to agree admittance. The School Organisation Manager will direct admission using this protocol, if required.
- All relevant parties will be notified of the decision to admit over the Published Admission Number, in accordance with this Protocol.

See flow chart below for the protocol as it applies to primary aged pupils

Note: For pupils in Y6 who are considered under this protocol after the 1st March who do not already have a high school place, at the same time as identifying a primary school place, the procedure for identifying a secondary school place will be actioned by the admissions team. If parental preference cannot be accommodated (for example, if the preferred secondary school is oversubscribed in year 7), the protocol as it applies to secondary schools will be applied.



The protocol as it applies to Secondary Schools

6.1 A more formalised procedure has been developed for pupils of secondary age.

6.2 Some Local Authorities manage the admission of vulnerable pupils through a forum of Head teachers and others. Because of the time demands on Heads with this approach, and also the need for a quick decision (so, for example a monthly standing meeting to discuss cases would build in too much of a time delay), this protocol has been designed based on agreed criteria that can be administered and managed by a nominated officer on behalf of schools.

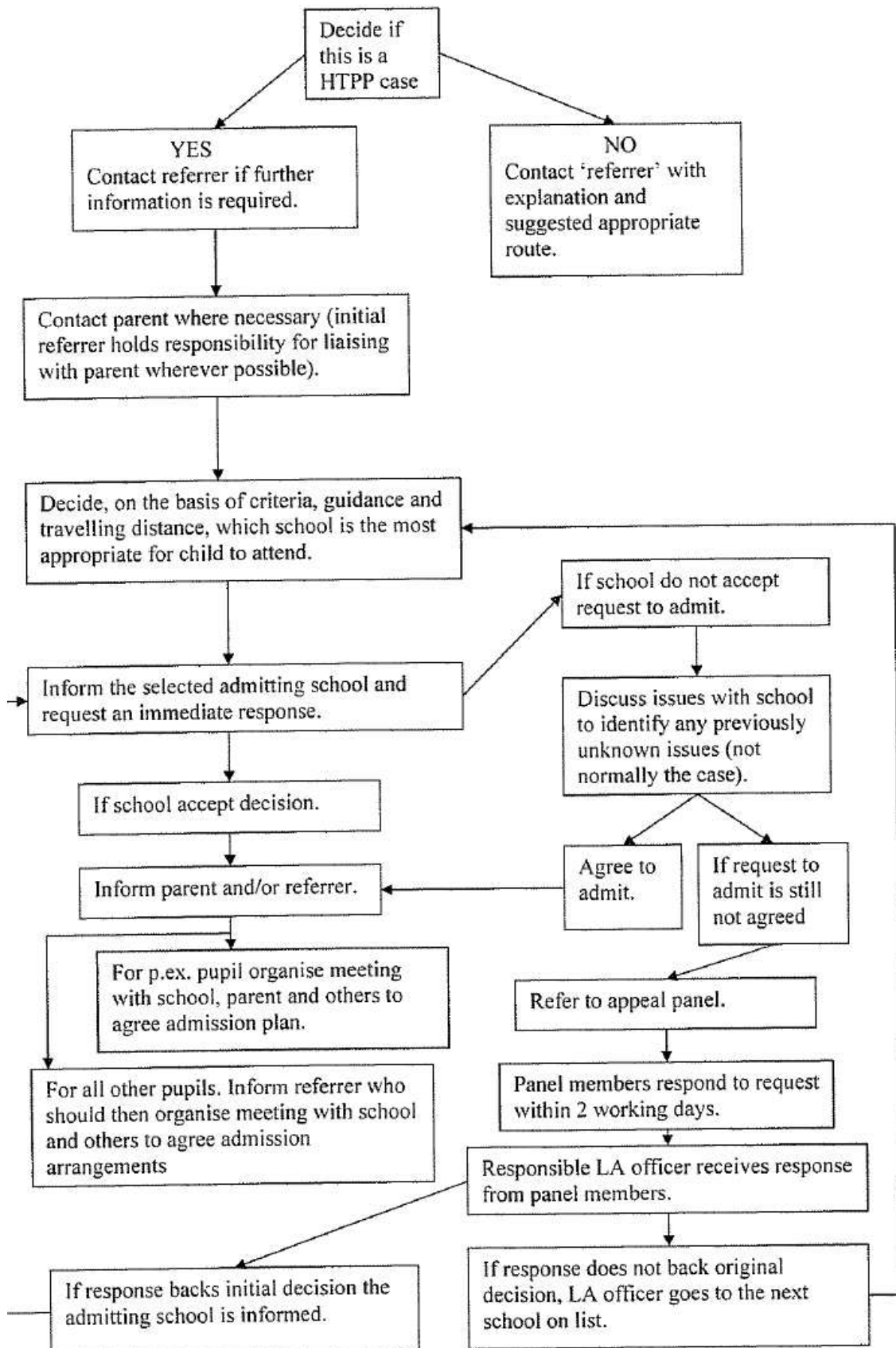
6.3 There will however, need to be an appeals process; this is described in paragraph 7.1 below.

How the Protocol will be managed (secondary)

6.4 The Local Authority will be notified (or already be aware) of a pupil who should be considered under the HTPPP. A decision will be taken by a nominated officer whether the child meets the criteria and therefore whether the HTPPP should be applied.

6.5 When a pupil needs to be placed under this protocol, the school at the top of the list for the area in which the pupil lives is approached. The list will be published so schools are aware of their position on the list and likelihood of receiving a pupil identified through this system (see paragraph 3.21 below for an explanation of the compilation of the list).

6.6 Upon initial receipt of notification of a 'hard to place' situation, the nominated officer will follow the procedure as outlined in the flowchart below:



School appeals procedure

7.1 A school contacted by the nominated officer and requested to admit under the HTPPP can appeal the decision if for some reason it is felt the decision is not appropriate (this needs to be a serious concern and should be only used in extreme and unusual cases). To ensure that a speedy admission can take place, it is suggested that this is managed electronically through e-mail by the nominated officer. An appeals group will be set up consisting of 9 members representing a range of support services as well as, Head teachers and Governors.

2 Head teachers

2 Governors

1 other pastoral staff from schools

1 Senior Education Welfare Officer

1 specialist Educational Psychologist for LAC

High School Behaviour Support Team Leader

Education Support Team leader

7.2 The appeal group would meet 'virtually' via e-mail to look at the 'decision dispute' form and decide from that whether the initial decision should be backed or another school chosen. This electronic 'paper' system will be facilitated by the nominated officer to allow a simple vote on the decision. It is suggested that 7 responses need to be received by the nominated officer and a majority vote will be accepted as the final decision for the officer to act upon.

How will the next appropriate Secondary school be chosen?

7.3 Various models have been designed by Local Authorities to 'rank' schools and identify the next in line for admission (for example, by categorising schools on a general needs profile including numbers of statemented pupils, percentage free school meals, numbers on school action plus, mobility levels etc). However, as each school is expected to take pupils on a rotational basis, it is felt that an overcomplicated profiling system will not necessarily add fairness or transparency to the protocol.

Criteria used to rank schools.

7.4 For the first compilation of the list, schools will be ranked using a points system based on the previous two years' figures. Each school will start with a nominal 0 points and their ranking score worked out as below.

Criteria	Points
For each pupil permanently excluded	Add 10
For each permanently excluded pupil admitted	Take 8
For each mainstream pupil with an EBD statement on roll	Take 4
For each LAC on roll	Take 2

7.5 The school with the most points will be at the top of the list and will be the first school to be approached to admit a child under this protocol. When a child is admitted under the protocol the school will receive a number of points to significantly move them down the list.

7.6 Following this initial ranking of schools, the list will be updated throughout the year based on the admission of children under the protocol and children permanently excluded from schools.

7.7 If a school permanently excludes a pupil who has been on their roll for more than two terms, their point score will be adjusted so that the school will automatically move to the top of the ranking list to receive the next appropriate pupil under the protocol.

Travelling distance

7.8 Account needs to be taken of the travelling distance a child would have as a result of the HTPPP. It is not sensible to suggest that a child should travel from one end of the to another. Some Local Authorities have models where schools are grouped into geographical clusters for these purposes. Whilst this could overcome some distance issues, inevitably the situation will arise where a child lives on the extreme of one group (close to a school grouped in another area) but be asked to travel long distances in another direction because of these artificial borders. Also, if one geographical cluster experiences much higher levels of need than another for admission under the protocol, 3 or 4 schools in one area could end up having to admit large numbers of HTPP whilst other schools in more 'favourable' clusters would not be asked to admit.

7.9 To overcome these problems, the Local Authority will have one complete list of schools but when a child needs to be admitted, only schools within five miles of the pupils home address will be considered. If fewer than six schools are within this distance then the distance will be increased until six schools are listed. The school at the top of this 'sub list' will then be approached.

7.10 No school will be expected to take more than two pupils in any one year group or more than five pupils in total in one academic year above the number permanently excluded.

7.11 Pupils who are placed under this policy will be considered for transport as if the school was their nearest school.

Admission for previously permanently excluded pupils (primary and secondary).

8. Because of the possible additional issues surrounding the admission of a previously permanently excluded pupil. Additional procedures will apply for this group of pupils.

For permanently excluded pupils the LA, in conjunction with the pupil, parents and school staff, will draw up an individual admission plan within 20 days of the permanent exclusion. Each plan will contain all agreed actions, including interim as well as long-term arrangements. Examples of content include:

- The name of the pupil
- A date for the pupil to start (this can be revised if necessary)
- Steps towards reintegration in the new school and how the LA , school and parents will support this
- A named LA officer responsible for supporting the pupil, parents and teachers
- Regular review dates for all activities in the plan.

8.1 The plan will also cover pastoral and educational objectives for reintegration and appropriate targets, and will be attached to the pupil's education plan and Pastoral Support Programme.

8.2 For some pupils a gradual return to mainstream school may be helpful building to full time attendance at the school. This will be discussed as part of the individual reintegration plan. It is also recognised that some pupils will be in a position to return to mainstream school quickly, and this will again be identified within the individual reintegration plan.

8.3 School based staff, together with the LA, will monitor the pupil's progress and reintegration.

Funding (secondary schools only)

9. It should be remembered that additional support, in money terms, is by no means always required for vulnerable pupils and there would continue to be support and advice from the appropriate services (e.g. TEMS, BSS, LAC, YOT, medical needs). If the pupils have special educational needs, support will be through the graduated response and SEN funding systems in the normal way. Statemented pupils will not be placed using this protocol.

9.1 A range of possible funding options were considered. Following consultation the following funding arrangement has been agreed. If a pupil is permanently excluded the AWPU 'follows the child' and helps fund any education provided by the Local Authority whilst the pupil is not on school roll. The receiving school receives pro rata AWPU following admission. As this protocol will facilitate a 'sharing' of vulnerable pupils and each school would have a maximum number of such admissions in any year, schools will not be "top sliced" (or given an exclusion penalty) but will "soak up" the cost if additional support is required by planning for the probability of in-year admissions of vulnerable pupils.

Monitoring and Review of the Protocol (primary and secondary)

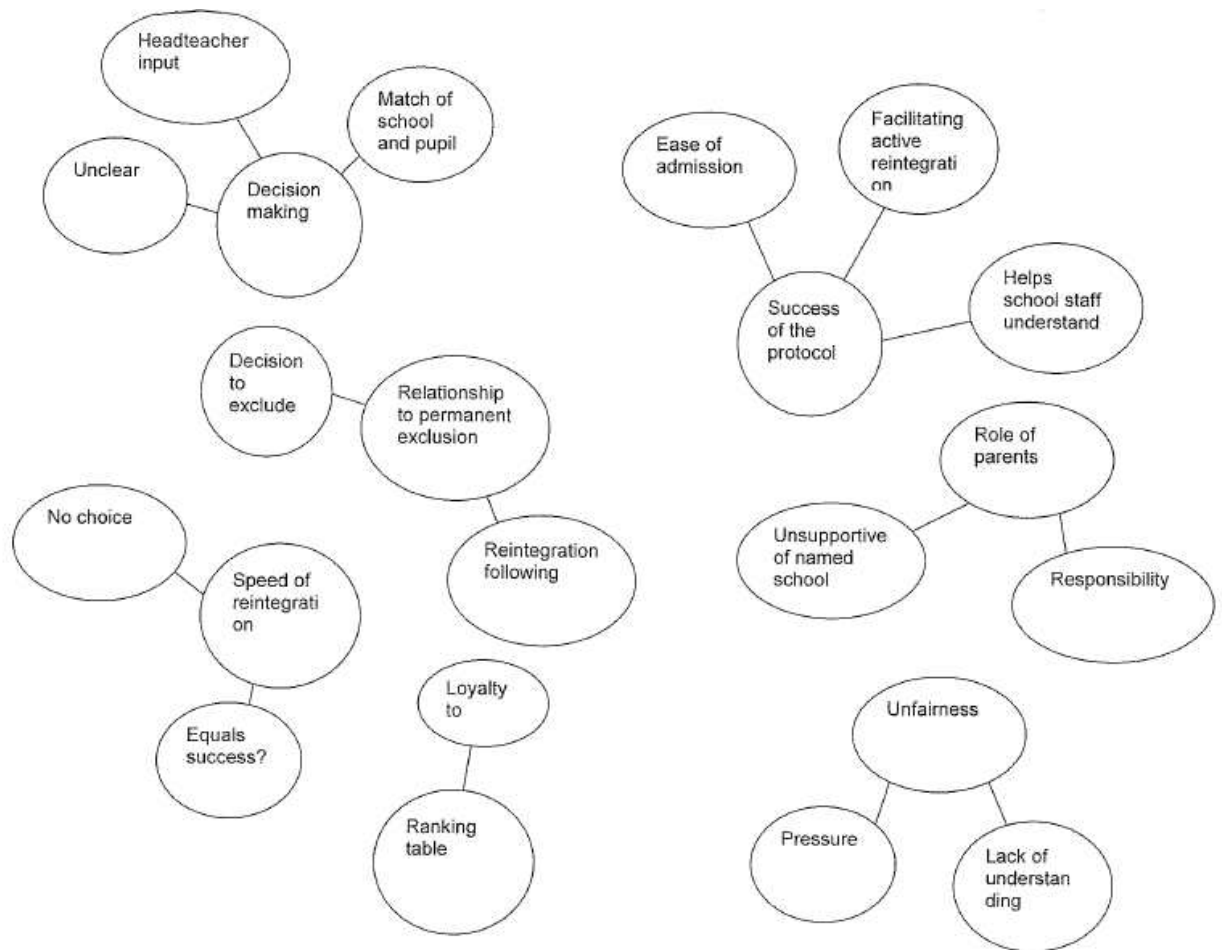
10 The responsible LA officers will monitor the scheme and provide reports to schools and others including survey and feedback from a range of stakeholders. They will report back to the Admissions Forum to allow for review of the system as required.

10.1 In accordance with the School Admissions Code of Practice (DfES 2003) the Admissions Forum is responsible for seeking to promote agreements on arrangements for dealing with difficult issues which include the allocation of places to children who have been excluded from school, so that all schools play their part in accommodating these children. The Admissions Forum will monitor how well these arrangements are working.

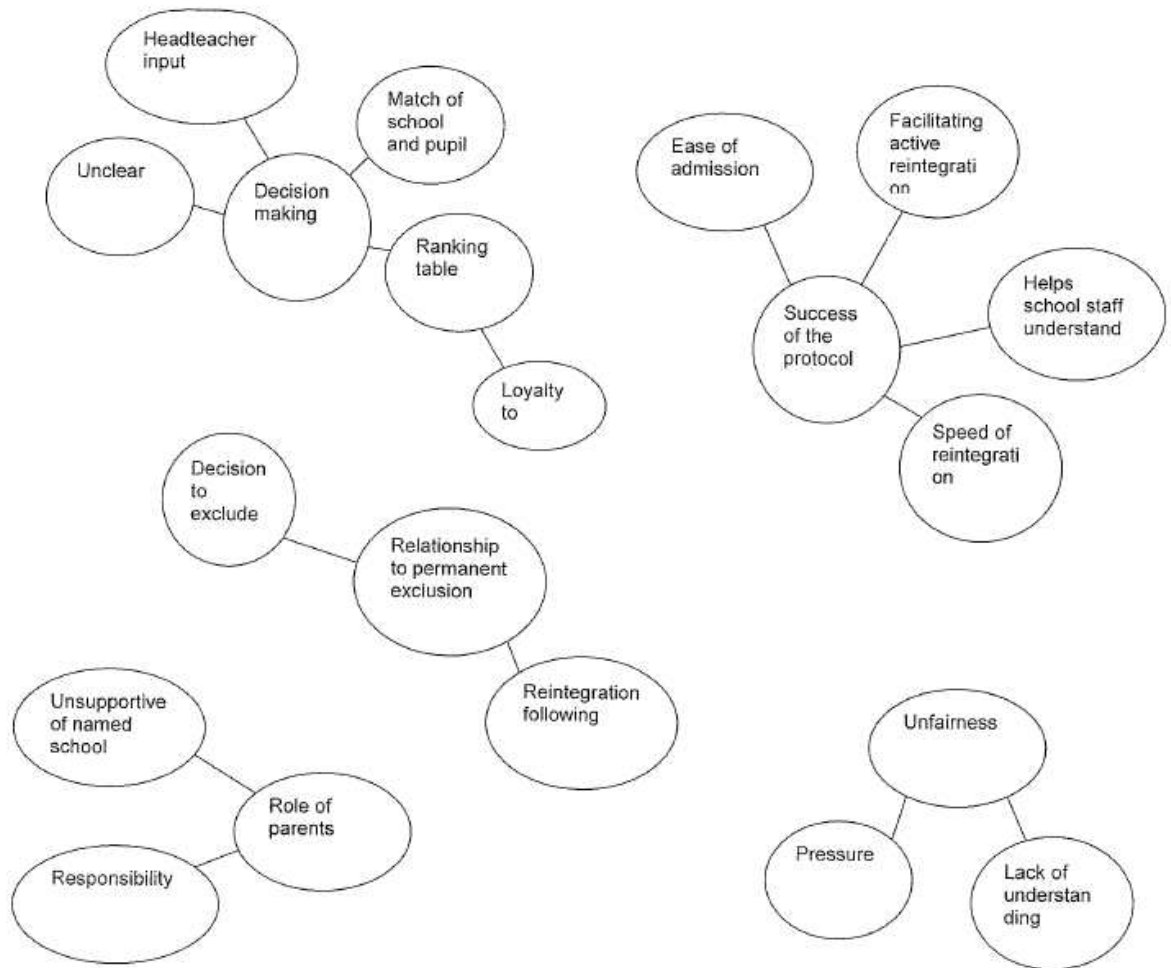
Appendix 25

Thematic Maps: RQ1

Stage 1



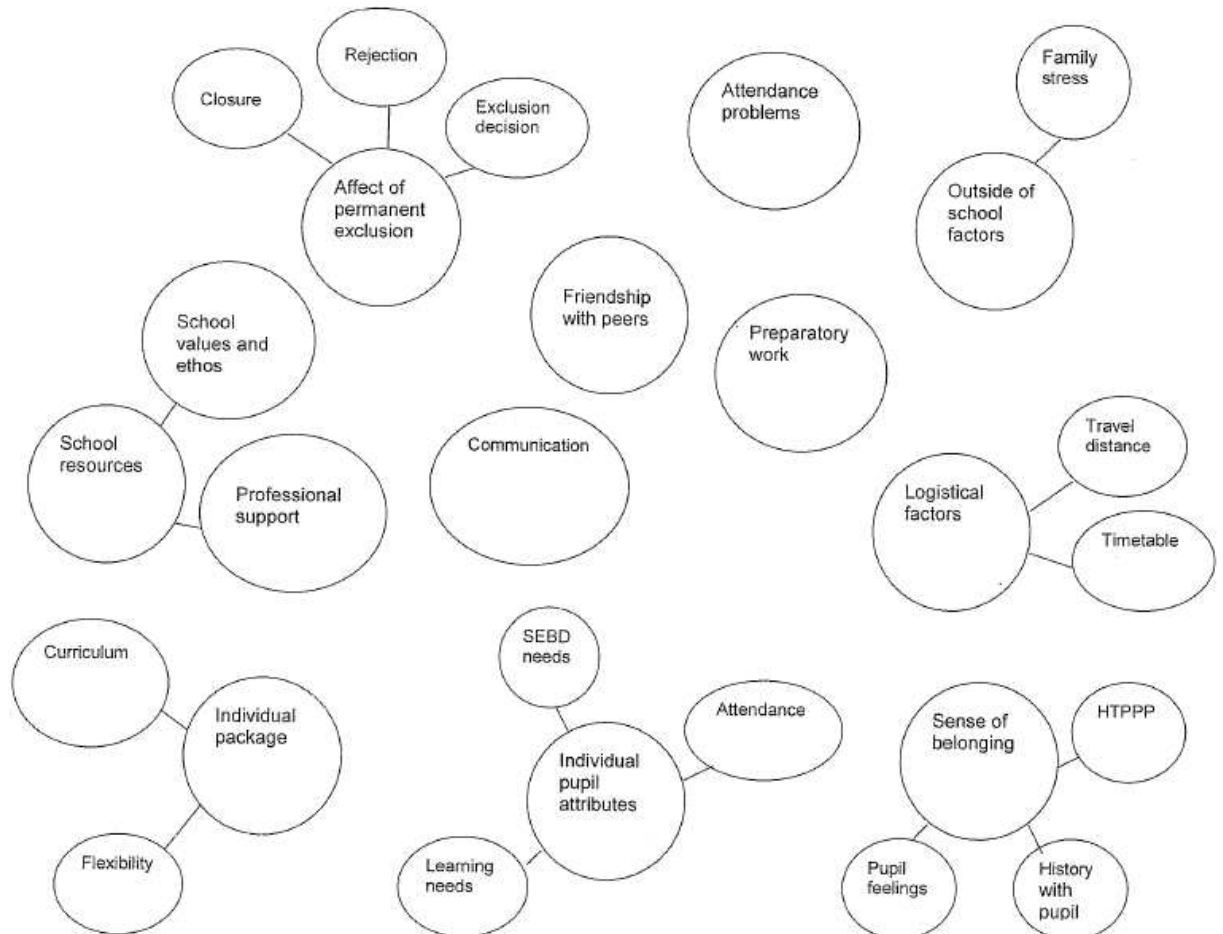
Stage 2



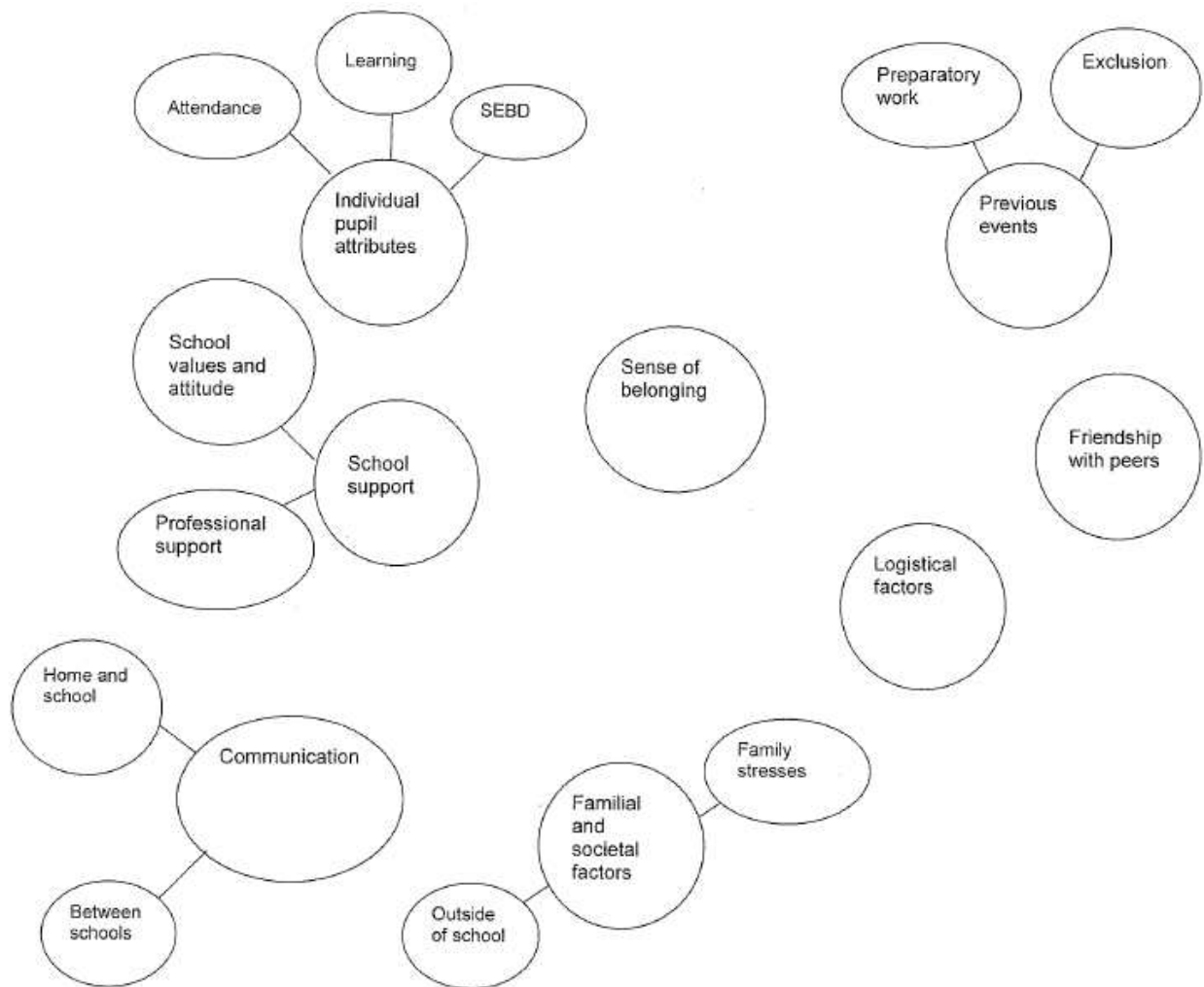
Appendix 26

Thematic Maps: RQ2

Stage 1



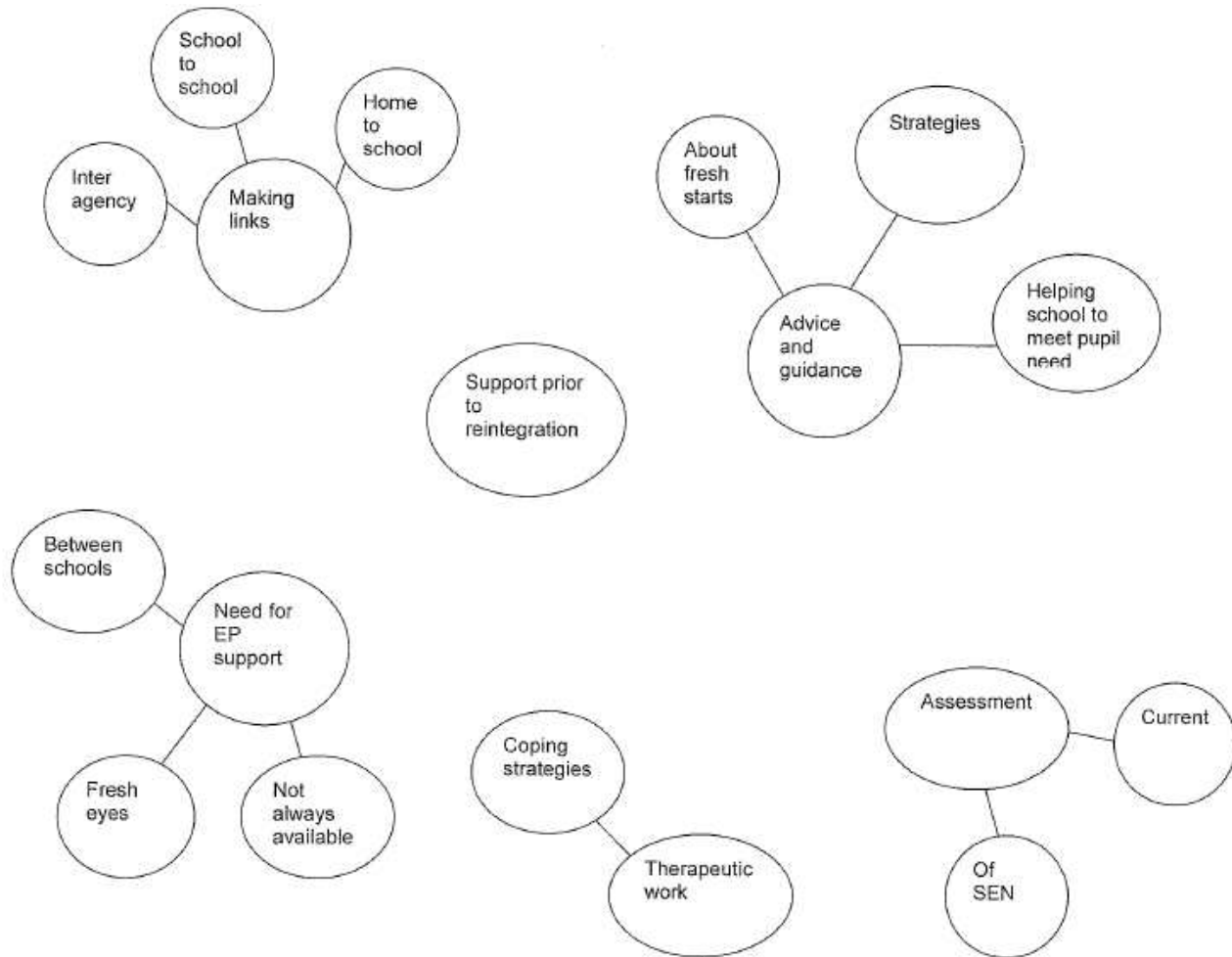
Stage 2



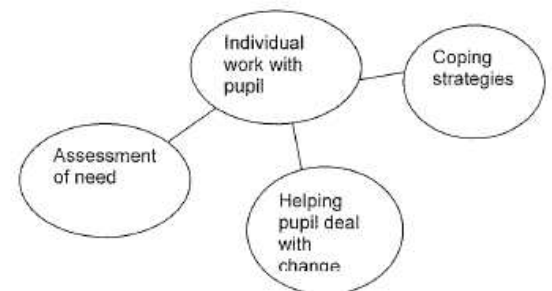
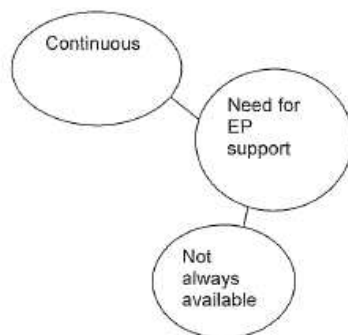
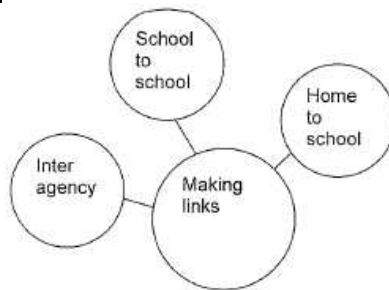
Appendix 27

Thematic Maps: RQ3

Stage 1



Stage 2



Appendix 28

Coding from the results to the discussion stage

Adapted from Strauss and Corbin (1990)

The process involves the following stages:

1. Explication of the story line
2. Relating subsidiary categories to the core category using the paradigm model
3. Relating categories at the dimensional level. This involves understanding the range of values that categories may have.
4. Validation of relationships against data
5. Further refinement of the storyline

Once this has been identified, the storyline is generated as a restatement of the project in a form that relates to the core category. Validation is done by generating hypothetical relationships between categories and using data from the field to test these hypotheses. Categories may be further refined and reclassified and the storyline may be further refined.

Within selective coding in grounded theory it is necessary to create a conditional and consequential matrix, an 'analytic device to stimulate analysts thinking about the relationships between macro and micro conditions/consequences both to each other and to the process' (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p.181). This matrix helps to frame a 'story' which is a key aspect in formulating the grounded theory. The story must be told at a conceptual level, relating subsidiary categories to the core category. After putting categories into sequence, a researcher can begin to cover the wide array of consequences of various conditions, giving the story specificity.

The sections of the discussion derived from the results section:

Challenges related to the school system

- Sense of belonging
- Communication
 - Home and school
 - Between schools
- Individual pupil attributes
 - Learning
 - SEBD
 - Attendance
- Match of school and pupil
- Role of parents
 - Unsupportive of named school

- Responsibility
- EP working with staff
 - Fresh perspective
 - Advice and guidance
 - Consultation pre and post reintegration
- Need for EP support

Perception of unfairness

- Unfairness
 - Pressure
 - Lack of understanding
- Decision making
 - Role of headteacher
- Individual work with pupil
 - Coping strategies
- Helping pupil deal with change
 - Preparatory work

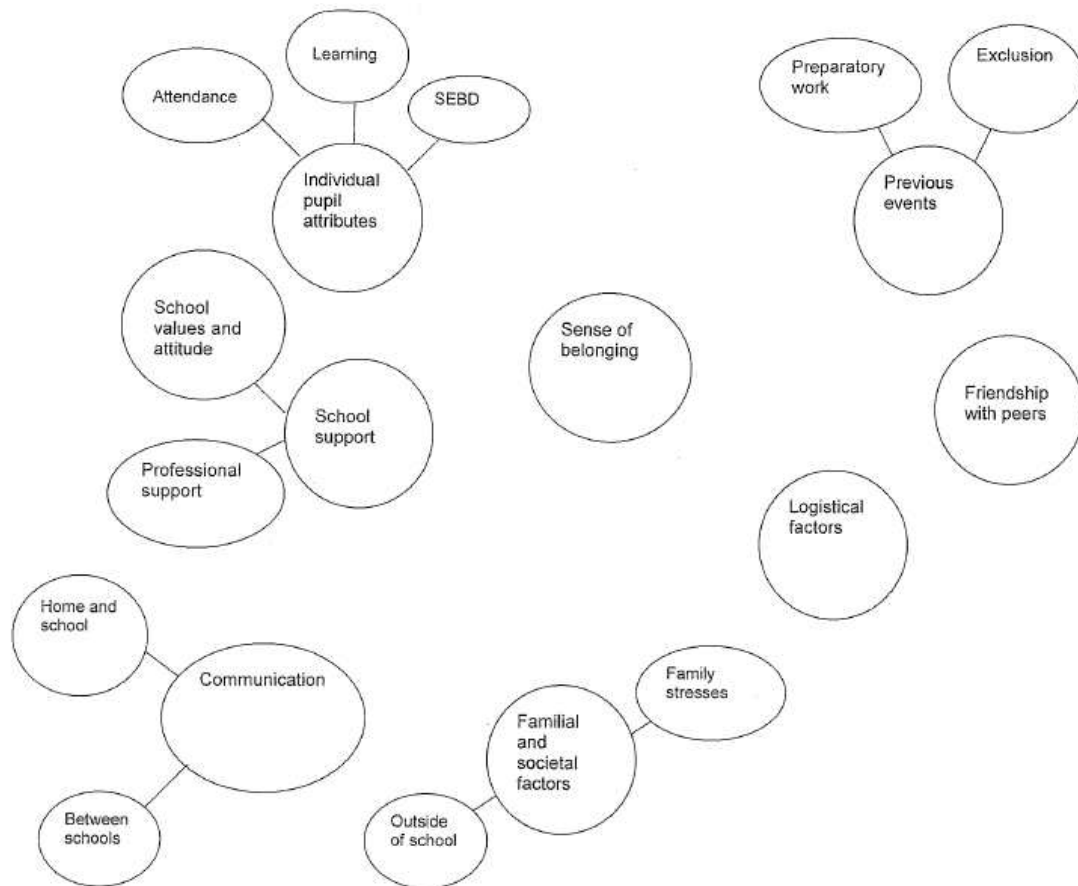
Vulnerability of pupils

- Assessment of need
 - Need for EP support
 - Not always available
- Previous events
- Preparatory work
- Familial and societal factors
 - Out of school
 - Family stresses
- Individual pupil attributes
 - Learning
 - SEBD
 - Attendance

Is reintegration right?

- Relationship to permanent exclusion
 - Decision to exclude
 - Reintegration following
- Match of school and pupil
- Helping pupil deal with change
- Assessment of need

Facilitators and barriers to the reintegration



Decision making

- Working with staff
 - Advice and guidance
 - Fresh perspectives
 - Consultation pre and post reintegration
- Decision making
 - Headteacher input
 - Unclear
 - Match of school and pupil
 - Ranking table – loyalty to
- Relationship to permanent exclusion
 - Decision to exclude
 - Reintegration following
- Logistical factors

The role of parents

- Familial and societal factors
 - Family stresses
 - Outside of school
- Communication
 - Home and school
 - Between schools
- Role of parents
 - Unsupportive of named school
 - Responsibility

Appendix 29

Seven characteristics that constitute good research

Henwood and Pidgeon (1992) - Adapted from Willig (2008) p. 150-151.

Willig (2008) describes that these are based on the assumption that the researcher and the researched, the knower and the known, are not independent entities and that therefore 'objectivity' or absence of bias are not meaningful criteria for judging qualitative research. These guidelines produced by Henwood and Pidgeon (1992) are concerned with ensuring rigour while acknowledging idiosyncrasy and creativity in the research process. They include:

1. The importance of fit: analytic categories generated by the researcher should fit the data well. To demonstrate good fit, the researcher is encouraged to write explicitly clear and comprehensible accounts of why phenomena have been labelled and categorised in particular ways.
2. Integration of theory: relationships between units of analysis should be clearly explicated and their integration at different levels of generality should be readily apparent. The analyst's memos should demonstrate the process of integration and its rationale.
3. Reflexivity: since the research process inevitably shapes the object of inquiry, the role of the researcher needs to be acknowledged in the documentation of the research.
4. Documentation: the researcher should provide an inclusive and comprehensive account of what was done and why throughout the research process.
5. Theoretical sampling and negative case analysis: the researcher should continuously seek to extend and modify emerging theory. To do this, she should explore cases that do not fit as well as those that are likely to generate new insights.
6. Sensitivity to negotiated realities: the researcher needs to attend to the ways in which the research is interpreted by the participants who generated the data in the first place. While participant validation is not always a requirement (people may disagree with the researcher's interpretation for all kinds of personal and social reasons), the researcher should at least be aware of participants' reactions and attempt to explain differences between her own interpretation and those of the participants.
7. Transferability: to allow the reader to explore that extent to which the study may, or may not, have applicability beyond the specific context within which the data were generated, the researchers should report the contextual features of the study in full.