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# **AN ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF CHILDREN'S SCHOOL EXPERIENCES AND EDUCATIONAL OUTCOME**

**Helen Stivaros**

**A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield in partial fulfilment of  
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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## **Abstract**

### **An Ecological Perspective of Children's School Experiences and Educational Outcome**

An exploration of schooling practices over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries reveals a number of 'fixed characteristics.' These continue to have a principle role in the organisation of schooling today and are underpinned by assumptions stemming from traditional psychological theory. Most prominent is the transmission-receiver model associated with behaviourism. This provides a simplistic view of the learning process, locating performance in the individual child or teacher. In this work, learning is re-conceptualised as experience and in doing so, any understanding is rendered much more complex than previously acknowledged. It becomes a wider phenomenon, distributed across agent, activity and world. Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model of human development is used to elucidate this notion. To enrich the analytical power of this model, additional perspectives have been integrated to further explore the complex web of proximal, distal and environmental influences serving to shape children's quotidian learning experiences and development; specifically, notions of metacognition and self-efficacy, Vygotskian psychology and the community of practice literature. In unison, these theoretical lenses seek to provide an explanation for learning on multiple levels: the role of the learner, the intricate mechanisms of the learning process itself and the wider conditions that surround learning.

Immersed in the primary school context, the researcher adopted the dual role of researcher and teaching assistant, carrying out ethnographic research over two school terms. Following the day-to-day lives of eight children in Year 6, the research records a multiplicity of factors impacting upon their learning experiences at school. The children's time in Year 6 is presented in story form and structured using the theories noted above. The research illuminates that the constellation of factors operating in the child's world is unique to him or her. These combine in idiosyncratic and non-predictable ways with the child's own repertoire of characteristics, resulting in a different learning trajectory for every child. However, analysis indicates that relationships and participation play a fundamental role in all learning journeys. Recommendations for managing children's experiences based on this understanding are discussed.

## **DEDICATION**

This research is dedicated to the Year 6 pupils and teaching staff at Roseberry Hill Primary School. Thank you for welcoming me into your everyday lives and helping me understand the intricacies of the teaching and learning relationship.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I am particularly indebted to my parents, Irene and Plato, and my partner, Alistair. Thank you for your ongoing encouragement, support and patience throughout this research journey. Together, you have been a tremendous tower of strength.

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# PREFACE

## RESEARCH JOURNEY AND AIMS

After being awarded my degree, I was keen to pursue research in the field of educational psychology. Whilst I had the qualifications to meet the requirements of research posts, I lacked the necessary experience of working with children. To address this, I worked in a voluntary capacity at a local primary school. Through my role as a classroom assistant, I became increasingly aware of the intricate web of factors in play shaping children's day-to-day learning. With my experience fuelling my motivation, I discussed the possibilities of conducting postgraduate research in this area with the course leader of my undergraduate educational psychology and childhood modules. She agreed that an exploration of the complexity of children's learning was a worthy research endeavour. Securing her interest as my principal research supervisor, consideration turned to the logistics of carrying out a potential study.

Wanting to utilise theoretical lenses which allowed me to explore and understand my initial observations in greater detail, I turned to Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development and Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory of learning. I had become familiar with both frameworks during my undergraduate studies and found them to be very insightful in terms of understanding the teaching and learning relationship in the classroom. Bronfenbrenner's conceptualisation of the child's world as a series of nested systems provided a coherent understanding of the complex environment in which every child resides. Serving as a powerful tool for illuminating the intricate web of factors impacting upon children's development, I positioned this as my core analytical framework. My experience in the classroom had also highlighted the particular importance played by relationships in the teaching and learning process, this behoved me to consider their role in greater detail. Whilst Bronfenbrenner's model acknowledged the importance of proximal processes in the child's microsystem, it provided little means of understanding their

role. Thus, I decided to situate within this wider framework, the work of Vygotsky, specifically his concept of the zone of proximal development. With a focus on the interplay between teacher and learner, this perspective enabled exploration of the intricate learning process itself. Whilst subsequent reading would see me integrate additional theoretical perspectives, at the outset, the combination of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model and Vygotsky's ZPD concept provided the foundations for the formulation of my research aims.

In September 2001, I registered for the research degree Master of Philosophy with the intention to transfer to a Doctor of Philosophy. My research project sought to illuminate the complexity of the learning process and was entitled '*An ecological perspective of children's school experiences and educational outcome.*' Underpinned by my experience in the classroom, I drew on the two theoretical perspectives outlined above, to identify my initial research aims:

- ◆ *To examine children's intra-psychological learning relationship*
- ◆ *To explore the role of micro- and meso- systems on learning*
- ◆ *To explore the role of exo- and macro- systems on learning*
- ◆ *To explore the interrelationships of the micro- and meso- processes in view of exo- and macro- systems*
- ◆ *To explore whether the literature available is applicable and helpful in understanding the themes arising from this research*
- ◆ *To develop a range of methodologies appropriate to the multi-level theoretical framework*

Deciding that a participatory ethnographic approach to my study would provide the greatest insight into the child's world as school, it was necessary to secure a classroom assistant post. This dual worker and researcher role enabled me to gather pertinent field data and address a number of my MPhil research aims. Through my immersion in the school and Year 6 community, I captured a fund of real life examples which pertained to the complexity of learning. Their strength lay in the recognition of factors operating in the inner systems of the ecological model and the agentic qualities of the children themselves. In order to ascertain a more holistic understanding of the children's quotidian experiences and address the

outstanding research aims, I recognised that I needed to supplement this material and undertake exploration of the myriad factors operating in the outer systems of the ecological model.

On transferring on to a PhD, this became the focus of my research. Exploration of these distal and environmental factors involved further data collection and the integration of additional theoretical perspectives. Whilst Bronfenbrenner and Vygotsky recognised that such wider influences played a crucial role in shaping developmental experiences, sufficient insight into the workings of these factors fell beyond the scope of their work. I was keen to identify or generate a theoretical framework which provided a holistic understanding of children's day-to-day learning experiences. In my search for a framework which elucidated the role and strength of these external factors in shaping children's learning experiences, I came across the Communities of Practice (CoPs) literature. With a focus on the complexities of participation, the CoPs framework offered insight into the factors operating within the child's mesosystem and exosystem. Specifically, it indicated that both distal and proximal factors in the child's world served to impinge on his/her inclusion and movement in the communities which surround him/her. The framework proposed that the nature of a child's participation in these communities of practice were key to understanding his/her learning experiences.

I was enthused to locate the CoPs framework; nonetheless, it served to illuminate yet another gap in my multi-theoretical approach. Whilst the CoPs framework acknowledged that the practices of surrounding social communities shape children's development and experiences, it was also the children as participants, who, via their actions and involvement, change the comprising practices of the communities. This perspective, like Bronfenbrenner's ecological model and Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory, acknowledged the active participation of children in their own learning. However, not one of the three theoretical lenses provided sufficient means to understand the child's role. Returning to the literature, a review of Bronfenbrenner's work revealed that his model had undergone further development. Revisions to the model, now termed bioecological, gave precedence to the role and nature of the developing child. It argued that the child's multi-tiered

environment interacted in idiosyncratic and dynamic ways with his/her repertoire of genetic, physiological, emotional, cognitive and social characteristics, shaping the child's development. Three aspects of the individual's biopsychological characteristics were deemed most influential in mediating the course of his/her future development through shaping proximal processes. Of these, the role of development dispositions caught my attention, in particular the domain of directive belief systems. I decided to undertake further reading in relation to the concepts of metacognition and self-efficacy. These were areas which I had become familiar with whilst undertaking my undergraduate studies in psychology and factors which I had given consideration to in understanding a number of my fieldwork observations.

In unison, I found that the above five theoretical perspectives served as a means to usefully explore the intricacies of factors operating both within the developing child and his/her wider environment. Situated within Bronfenbrenner's framework, they enabled me to account for learning on multiple levels: the wider conditions that surround learning, the intricate mechanisms of the learning process itself and the role of the learner. Whilst a theoretical framework for understanding children's quotidian experiences was useful, I also wanted to use this insight to propose actions for the management of learning, targeting educational policy and practice. Building on my MPhil work and transferring on to a PhD, the aims of my research thus became:

- ◆ *To examine children's intra-psychological learning relationship*
- ◆ *To explore the role of micro-, meso-, exo- and macro- systems on learning*
- ◆ *To explore the interrelationships of the micro- and meso- processes in view of exo- and macro- systems*
- ◆ *To explore whether the literature available is applicable and helpful in understanding the themes arising from this research*
- ◆ *To develop a range of methodologies appropriate to the multi-level theoretical framework*
- ◆ *To identify or generate a theoretical framework for understanding children's day-to-day learning experiences*

- ◆ *To inform practice and policy in relation to the teaching and learning relationship*

### **Elucidating the underpinning argument: the uniqueness of learning journeys**

In prescribing to a notion of education which is valuable to the development of people and wider society, this thesis seeks to promote an awareness of the inhibitory effects of current schooling organisation for children's development. Many school practices are predicated on traditional psychological models of learning, with the underpinning tenets of behaviourist theory most pervasive. Learning is characterized as a linear process in which the transfer of knowledge between teacher and pupil is perceived to be relatively unproblematic and unidirectional, with feasible explanations of learning performance located within either party. Challenging this over simplistic notion, my research re-conceptualises learning as experience and in doing so, renders any understanding of children's learning and development much more complex than previously acknowledged. The process of learning becomes a wider phenomenon, distributed across agent, activity and world. Using Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model to elucidate this re-characterisation of learning, I illuminate the intricate and unique web of proximal, distal and environmental factors shaping each child's day-to-day experiences. In that every child encounters his/her world in an idiosyncratic manner, development and learning trajectories are recognized to be diverse and specific to each child. In stark contrast to the uniform notions of child development and teaching delivery embodied in current policy and practice, this re-conceptualisation of learning has far reaching implications for the management of children's learning and the organization of schooling.

### **Thesis overview**

This thesis comprises seven chapters. It begins by painting the landscape in which this research is situated, furnishing the reader with an overview of the current education system in place throughout England today. Seeking to outline the inherent multi-level existence of schooling institutions in society, chapter one

applies multiple lenses which correspond with the nested contexts of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model. Starting at the macro-level, it reviews the emerging purpose and nature of school in our society. A number of 'fixed' educational practices are identified and argued to be implicitly underpinned by a number of psychological learning theories. In highlighting the important role assigned to schools in society, consideration is also given to the ramifications of school performance for children's life trajectories. Seeking to present a picture of children's learning experiences in Year 6, the chapter goes on to give consideration to school as part of the wider English school system controlled by Central Government. This permits exploration of exosystem context through discussion of policies and procedures which shape the primary school setting. Finally consideration is given to the school as a community in its own right, with prominence given to the experiences and perspectives of pupils and teachers as focal participants of the school community. In giving consideration to the existence of the school on these levels, it is proposed that a more holistic understanding of the teaching and learning process can be gained.

Challenging the underpinning traditional learning theories which continue to imbue current government policy and classroom practice, chapter two presents an alternative to the transmission-receiver model of learning associated with behaviourism. In it, learning is re-conceptualised as experience; a notion which renders any understanding of the process much more complex than previously proposed. With learning now distributed across agent, activity and world, multiple perspectives are used to theorise this proposition. Using Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model of human development as the core framework, additional lenses are integrated to increase the model's explanatory power: notions of metacognition and self-efficacy, Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory and communities of practice literature. In unison, these theoretical perspectives provide a useful framework for understanding the complexity of children's educational experiences and performance. Crucially, they posit a notion of development which is unique to each child.

In embracing the individuality and diversity of children's learning trajectories, chapter three discusses the value of qualitative ethnography as a suitable methodological approach to the exploration of children's unique encounters with their world. It gives consideration to the collection, recording, analyses and presentation of ethnographic data; highlighting that diversity of practice stems from practitioners' differing philosophical beliefs. Drawing on a number of educational ethnographic studies uncovered in the literature, an attempt is made to exemplify this. With the idiosyncratic nature of ethnographic practice in mind, chapter four unpacks my research journey. The reader is guided through the processes involved in carrying out this piece of research. From the shaping of my research proposal to the collection and recording of my data, I detail the decisions made and the actions taken. In an attempt to capture the messy reality which I experienced in the field, personal thoughts and dilemmas are peppered throughout the account provided.

Chapter five details the rationale and method for my analyses before going on to present the data gathered, in storied form. Readers are acquainted with Roseberry Hill Primary school and the Year 6 teaching staff before being introduced to eight focal children: Charlotte, Isabel, Jaleela, Roberto, Beth, Daniel, Leanne and Tariq. Led through the learning journey of each child in turn, the storied representations of their experiences are structured using the theories discussed in chapter two. These provide a necessary framework for understanding the complexity of learning and the development process. In unison, they permit the exploration of a multiplicity of factors shaping each child's learning experiences; both those operating in the child's immediate setting and those in his or her more distal environment. In that no two stories are the same, each serves as a vehicle to illuminate the highly intricate and unique learning trajectories of each child.

In chapter six, Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model of human development is used to contextualise the individual learning journeys of the eight children presented previously. Applying this pre-determined structure to the fabric of the children's stories, a number of threads are teased out. This approach permits illumination of the complexity of learning and performance. Using this understanding as a

platform, a number of recommendations for the management of children's learning in the form of educational policy and practice are outlined. Chapter seven provides an overview of this thesis. It reflects on the aims of the research and outlines the contributions it has made to the existing body of literature on children's learning.



# CHAPTER ONE

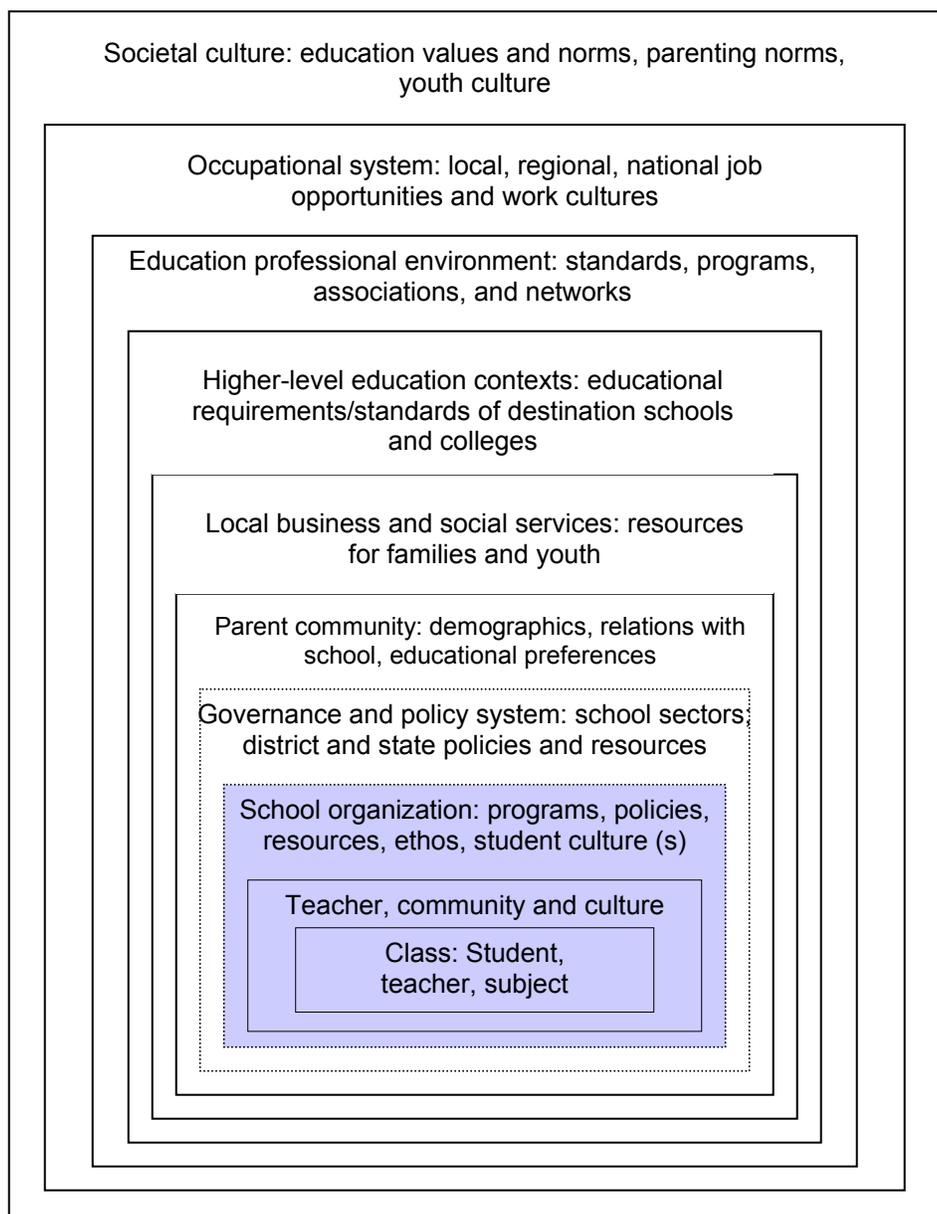
## THE EMBEDDED CONTEXTS OF SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

I believe that many in Western society today equate learning as that which takes place within the confines of the school building. Given the inherent role of formal educational establishments across time and place, this is unsurprising. As children, we have all experienced some form of schooling and as adults, we continue to be involved in some form, be it in the role of parent, teaching staff or rate payer. Irrespective of role, all parties have come to associate learning with school practices: classrooms, teachers, black or white boards, text books and homework exercises etc. Following this prevalent understanding, I position school as the backdrop to this research, which seeks to gain insight into the complexity of children's learning and performance. The work of Talbert and McLaughlin (1999) highlights that students' realities in school are inherently multilevel. In their conceptualisation of education (see figure 1.1), they situate students' learning experiences and outcomes in a multi-tiered environment comprising the immediate and broader school setting. Although founded on an American education system, many of the settings and contexts outlined are comparable to those in place in England. As such, their conception provides an interesting theoretical lens for understanding the complexity of children's school experiences.

Employing the broad distinctions outlined in Talbert and McLaughlin's framework, this chapter seeks to elucidate the inherent multi-level nature of school. It comprises three sections which together permit exploration of the immediate and more distal settings which shape children's day-to-day experiences in Year 6, the final rung of their primary school career and the focal point of interest in this research. The first section gives prominence to the existence of school on a macro-level. After establishing the purpose of school, I go on to look at the organisation of schooling in an attempt to make visible the core educational values and norms which underpin children's learning journeys. In dictating a 'normal' and

'expected' model of children's development and education, the reader can begin to comprehend the implications of wider societal attitudes for children's lived experiences at school.

**Figure 1.1:** The multiple and embedded contexts of education  
(Adapted from Talbert and McLaughlin 1999: 204)



- Key**
- School settings: social system conditions and proximal process
  - School administrative contexts: system policies, resources and structures
  - Institutional contexts: local community and broader educational environment

The second section gives consideration to the existence of school as part of the wider English school system, controlled by Central Government. Assigned a principle role in the management and advancement of children's learning, I outline a number of government policies and classroom practices which were in place when this research was conducted (2001/2). Exploration of these initiatives enables the reader to build upon the macro landscape provided previously, and begin to paint a picture of what happens in the Year 6 classroom in primary schools nationwide. The third section explores the school as a community in itself. As Stables (2003) points out, a school does not only exist as an edifice located in a particular geographical position, but crucially, also exists as a discursive space. He suggests that to understand the notion of school, it is necessary to give consideration to the perceptions and meanings of stakeholders, stating 'What is important about a school is how it is imagined by those who imagine it...' (page 895). In particular, he emphasises the experiences of those parties who comprise the school community as they possess more sophisticated understandings of local complexity compared with policy-makers, who 'are inevitably a tiny constituency with very limited terms of engagement' (ibid.). Accordingly, this final section focuses on the micro experiences and perspectives of the participants comprising the school community. In accessing the voice of pupils and teaching staff, the reader is able to fill in the more intricate aspects of life for pupils in Year 6.

### **The macro lens: elucidating core educational values and norms**

In modern day societies, the notion of learning has become a fundamental concern (Claxton 2002); we have sought ways to house and control its development. A means which allows us '... to cause learning, to take charge of it, direct it, accelerate it, demand it...' (Wenger 1998: 9). The result has been the establishment of formal educational institutions worldwide, spanning nursery through to university. These have been formed explicitly to address the notion of learning and its development within children and adults. Such institutions are not specific to dominant countries but are evident worldwide. Indeed, Ball (1983)

points out that the majority of Western countries had an established system of national education in place by 1870. Delving into their historical roots, one finds that the gradual emergence of specialised educational institutions stemmed from the evolving complexity of societal life and in turn, the need for more selective and effective means of learning increasingly complex knowledge and skills (Haralambos and Holborn 2004).

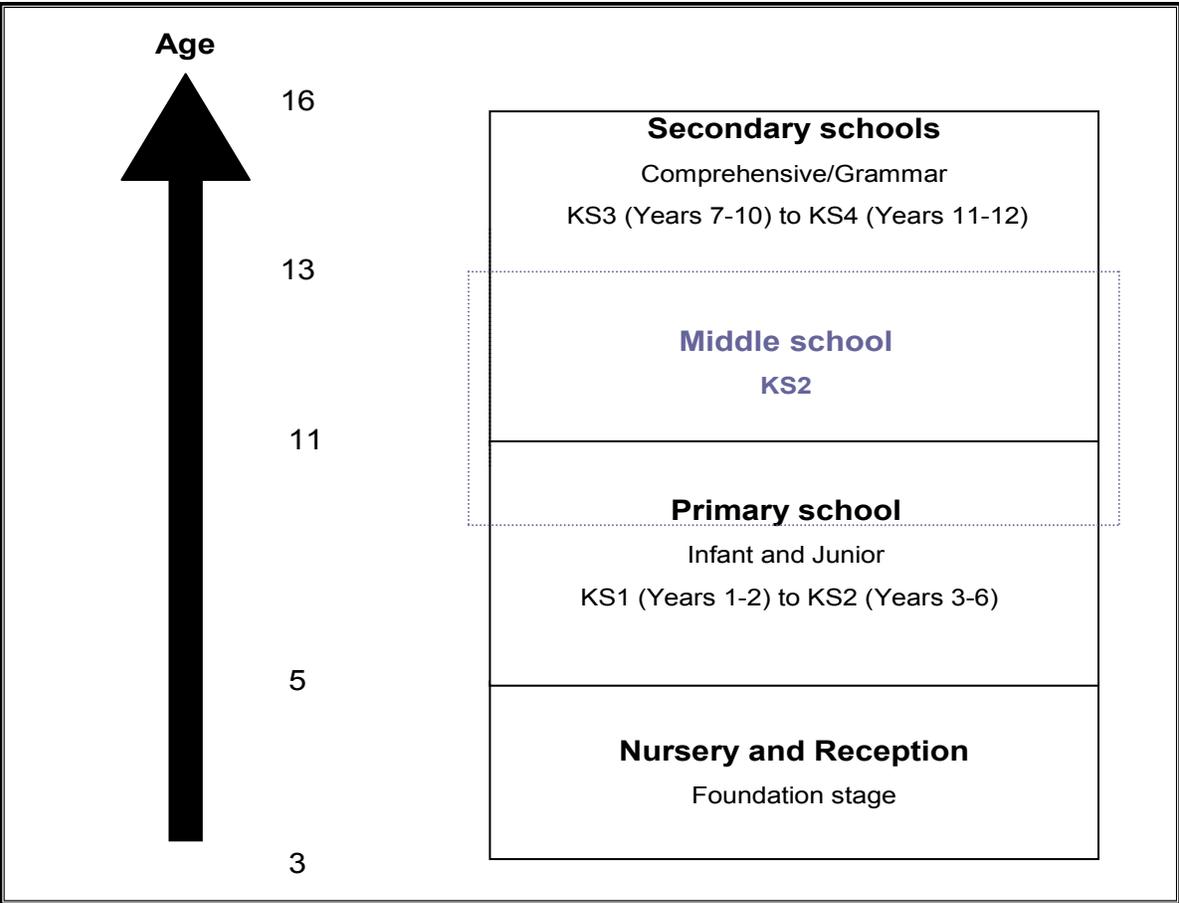
Prior to the advent of formal schooling institutions, children benefited from education. Albeit not the outcome of explicit practice, learning took place as children participated in the everyday activities of their communities with their elders and each other (Rogoff, Bartlett and Goodman Turkkanis 2001). For example, when England was an agrarian society, children would have participated in those activities which held importance for their immediate community (farming, fishing, weaving etc.) and in doing so, acquired the knowledge and skills to perform diverse activities. Whilst formal schooling provides a means of 'concentrated' learning for children today, it is important to acknowledge that children's learning continues beyond the school gates. For example, children learn through participating in practices at home: taking care of siblings or elderly members of the family, carrying out chores about the house and garden and in some instances, contributing towards their parents' or carers' trade or craft. Whilst less structured than the learning taking place in school, this nonetheless remains an important source of education. Conceived as such, learning is rendered an ubiquitous aspect of everyday life and one that has been ever-present since early civilisation.

Adopting a macro lens, this section explores the emergence, purpose and organisation of school in an attempt to make visible the core educational values and norms which underpin children's learning experiences. These have not been formed in a vacuum but have been and continue to be shaped by cultural, historical, social, economical and political forces. As such, these wider influences are of central concern in the discussion which ensues here.

**An overview of the education system in England today**

To begin, I paint the landscape in which this research is situated, furnishing the reader with an overview of the current education system in place throughout England today. Remaining legally and administratively separate from Scotland and Northern Ireland and only partially overlapping with Wales (Alexander 2000), this section is confined to a review of the educational practices in England rather than the UK. This research is concerned with the teaching and learning practices in Year 6, the final year of primary school education where children are aged 10 to 11 years. To contextualise this academic year within the broader educational framework, figure 1.2 outlines the path children follow through compulsory schooling in England. Whilst the statutory schooling ages are 5 to 16 years, many children enter the school system before this time and continue into further education.

**Figure 1.2:** An outline of compulsory schooling in England  
(Adapted from Alexander 2000)



Children’s primary school careers are shaped in part by an array of political agendas. This notion is addressed more fully in section two; however, for clarity of the discussion which ensues here, it is necessary to briefly outline the three core initiatives which impacted on children’s learning in Year 6 at the time of this research: the National Curriculum (NC), the KS2 National Curriculum tests and the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies (NLNS). Education in all maintained schools throughout England is managed and conducted within a statutory national framework: the NC. This framework sets out the minimum educational entitlement for all children of compulsory school age. It is organised on the basis of a series of Key Stages (KS) with children in Year 6 located in the final year of KS2 (see table 1.1). Whilst the NC sets out the content of children’s learning additional policy in the form of the NLNS imposes structure on teachers’ pedagogical style. These frameworks essentially provide further prescription for the content and delivery of teaching in English and mathematics. At the end of each KS, Children are required to undergo assessment of their knowledge and understanding in each of the core subjects comprising the NC. Located in the final year of KS2, all Year 6 pupils are required to sit mandatory national assessments in English, mathematics and science.

**Table 1.1:** An outline of governmentally defined Key Stages  
(Adapted from the Government website teachernet, accessed 22/03/05)

KEY STAGE	YEAR GROUP	AGE OF PUPIL
Foundation	Nursery, reception	3-5 years
KS1	1, 2	5 - 7 years
KS2	3, 4, 5, 6	7 - 11 years
KS3	7, 8, 9	11 -14 years
KS4 or GCSE	10, 11	14 -16 years

### ***The purpose of formal schooling***

The fundamental purpose of schooling is set out in international and state government policy. Underpinned by diverse legal systems and cultural traditions,

the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) is a universally agreed policy which details the minimum entitlements and freedoms of all children (<http://www.unicef.org/crc/>; accessed 14/11/06). Included in the core human rights which make up this policy, is every child's right to education and schooling. Articles 28 and 29 of the Convention sets out the minimum standards of schooling provision and, in addition, the overarching goals of this shared educational endeavour (see Appendix 1.A). In giving consideration to the latter, one witnesses the value of both the child's personal and social development. There is much emphasis on the particular 'world' in which the child resides and this is recognized as a central issue in shaping the nature of the education s/he will receive.

England has committed itself, under the direction of Central Government, to develop and undertake actions and policies in line with the Convention. Indeed, the explicit values and attitudes embodied in their document entitled 'The National Curriculum handbook for primary teachers in England' (1999) echo the overarching goals set out in Article 29. It declares, 'Education influences and reflects the values of society, and the kind of society we want to be. It is important, therefore, to recognise a broad set of common values and purpose that underpin the school curriculum and the work of schools' (page 10). The handbook goes on to advocate a positive role for education in the development of both the individual and wider society. It states, 'Foremost is a belief in education, at home and at school, as a route to the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, physical and mental development, and thus the well-being, of the individual. Education is also the route to equality of opportunity for all, a healthy and just democracy, a productive economy, and sustainable development,' (ibid.). In serving these purposes, it is proposed that education reflects a set of enduring values. 'These include valuing ourselves, our families and other relationships, the wider groups to which we belong, the diversity in our society and the environment in which we live. Education should also reaffirm our commitment to the virtues of trust, justice, honesty, trust and a sense of duty. At the same time, education must enable us to respond positively to the opportunities and challenges of the rapidly changing world in which we live and work. In particular, we need to be prepared to engage as individuals, parents, workers and citizens with economic, social and cultural change, including the

continued globalisation of the economy and society, with new work and leisure patterns and with the rapid expansion of communication technologies' (ibid.).

Whilst the above excerpt acknowledges the role of the child's home in shaping his/her learning journey, its mention seems somewhat perfunctory. The message emanating from current educational policy and practice infers that school is the driving seat of educational provision for the young, with home cast as the supporting role. This notion is puzzling when we consider how little time children actually spend in school. In a given year, excluding time for sleeping, children spend about 20% of their time in school; the remainder of their time is spent with carers and family, with friends and engaging in social activities (Stivaros, Tobbell and Lawthom 2002). Despite this discrepancy, the Government promotes the 'supporting role' of these outside parties, by stating that schools must work with families and groups in the local community to ensure fulfilment of the aforementioned purposes and the inculcation of the underpinning values. With the aid of these outside parties, schools should endeavour to attain two overarching aims through the curriculum they implement:

- ◆ To provide opportunities for all pupils to learn and to achieve.
- ◆ To promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life.

The curriculum clearly plays a pivotal role in shaping children's learning experiences. The Government have sought to facilitate the attainment of these overarching goals, by introducing a mandatory National Curriculum. This serves as the foundation for the wider school curriculum and is given greater consideration at a later point in this chapter.

The provisions and principles set out in international and government policy suggest that school has a benign influence for both the individual and society. Beyond these documents, I found it difficult to locate any material which discussed the fundamental purpose of school in society today. This infers that we implicitly assume that school is a worthy phenomenon. Perhaps this is founded on the historical role of schools throughout England. Their emergence is rooted in the arrival of Christianity (Gathorne-Hardy 1977). With it, came services, prayers and

songs in the Latin tongue. In absence of any familiarity with the Latin language, the establishment of schools became a necessity as the church sought out new recruits. Following their arrival, the literature reveals that as a function of time and changing societal conditions, the roles of school began to multiply. Spanning 1840 to 1870, the poor benefited from a basic education which sought to ensure they became good Christians and useful to society. In those areas where school provision remained deficient because of limited voluntary funds, many children in receipt of education attended private dame schools (Horn 1989). These were run by elderly men or women of varying ability and efficiency and essentially acted as mere child-minding institutions. Following the shift from a rural, agrarian economy to an urban, industrialised one in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, society became unsettled and there developed a need for peace and stability (ibid.). In turn, the school became an agency of social control, with elementary education a means of disciplining and socialising working class persons according to middle class values (Digby and Searby 1981). Mass schooling became valued as a corrective agency and a preventive of pauperism and crime (ibid.). With the environments of many working class families deemed unfit to socialise children, schools provided a means of counteracting the supposed pernicious influence of families upon their children.

Throughout the Victorian and Edwardian period, children suffered from exposure to epidemic diseases which posed threats to their lives and wellbeing (Horn 1989). Those from poorer backgrounds were particularly vulnerable due to living in an overcrowded, unsanitary home environment, with polluted water and inadequate diet. In an effort to improve children's health, selected schools began to provide needy children with free school meals, an incentive launched by a charity organisation in London in 1880 (ibid.). However, Horn writes that it was not until 1914 that all educational authorities were compelled to follow suit. Schools also became a vehicle for the delivery of health care. Medical inspection services were launched in 1907 and were from the outset, an obligation bestowed on local education authorities (ibid.). Incorporating multifold roles that worked for the 'good' of all citizens, schools increasingly became accepted as an integral component of society; a core value which continues to pervade life today.

## ***The nature of educational provision: illuminating the fixed characteristics of formal schooling***

In reviewing the literature which discusses the nature of schooling over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Digby and Searby 1981; Ball 1983; Aldrich 2002), it is apparent that the fundamental nature of formal school instruction has remained relatively stable. There are a number of characteristics which have become so deeply entrenched in our school practices that we no longer critically reflect on their rationale or their effectiveness in framing the teaching and learning relationship. I term these characteristics 'fixed':

- ✦ The establishment of a specific set of buildings in which to house the provision of education.
- ✦ Achieving the delivery of education on mass by grouping children according to their social class and birth dates.
- ✦ Solitary teacher supervision and instruction
- ✦ The prevalence of whole class unidirectional teacher instruction
- ✦ Teaching a specific body of knowledge prescribed by a minority to merit learning
- ✦ Assessment of learning via formal examination
- ✦ The role of external incentives as motivational aids

Despite originating over one hundred years ago, these characteristics continue to have a principle role in the current organisation of schooling. In bringing these to the fore, I identify the underpinning psychological theories of learning and development which have, and continue to, impact upon the management of the teaching and learning process. For the most part, the theoretical perspectives identified have not been used explicitly to inform the organisation of education today. Rather, schooling practices have been shaped by the surrounding social, cultural, economical and historical milieu with theory following and providing the necessary support. However, Hall (2000) notes that psychological models have also become decisive factors in the establishment of schooling practices, particularly during the course of the twentieth century at primary level.

### *Housing the provision of education*

Explicitly designed to provide formal and structured education, a series of schooling institutions have been formed worldwide. Designed to act as a 'hothouse' to development these dedicated spaces take control of the learning process. Herein lies the assumption that children's learning occurs best when segregated from the daily activities and practices of adults. The establishment of specialised institutions to house education can be traced back to the practices of early civilisation in Ancient Greece (Cooper 2001). Whilst these institutions were created for the formal instruction of young adult male students, the notion of an edifice in which to house education and segregate learning from everyday activities has prevailed. It is exemplified today in the organisation of formal educational institutions for children and adults alike. In giving consideration to the array of psychological theories which address the phenomenon of learning, it remains unclear to me which, if any, supports the segregation of learning from everyday activity.

### *Provision of mass education via the stratification of learners by social class and age*

Educational provision witnesses the stratification of learners by social class, age and in some cases, gender. Throughout its history, schooling and its root, education, have evolved as class controlled opportunities with status and money divisive markers of education (Digby and Searby 1981). Historically, education was an entitlement reserved for the elite: sons of the wealthy and future members of the clergy (ibid.). This was a consequence of the differing levels of innate intelligence that were thought to be apparent between the upper and working classes. Indeed, when education initially became an entitlement for the working masses, the nature of instruction was deliberately inferior. Deemed to possess limited capacity, its primary function was the inculcation of reading, writing and arithmetic skills (Horn 1989); with submissiveness and obedience amongst the lower classes, a widespread and socially expected occurrence.

Current schooling practices continue to echo the pervasive effects of social class upon the stratification of learners, albeit perhaps more covertly. Whilst all children aged 5 to 16 are compelled to attend school today, the nature of education they receive is not uniform. Broadly, the choice of schools available to pupils is largely determined by the financial circumstances of their parents/carers. Privately funded public and grammar schools are available predominantly for the upper and middle classes and maintained or state funded schools for the working classes. The nature of education provided by these schools varies markedly. Whilst the National Curriculum is statutory for all pupils of compulsory school age in community and foundation schools including those which are voluntary aided and controlled (NCH 1999); it is not mandatory in independent or private schools. Here, power remains with each particular school to shape the learning curriculum to the needs of pupils and of wider society. In Western society, many believe that the educational provision by fee paying public and grammar schools is superior to that available in state funded schools. As such, I believe those persons who have the opportunity to attend the former are often perceived to be in a more advantageous position, with success in the educational arena promising a more desirable lifestyle.

For children attending maintained and state funded schools throughout England, the Government has attempted to ensure equality of educational opportunity for all. This overarching goal has been addressed via the implementation of multiple policies over the years aimed at establishing uniformity on the content and delivery of learning (Cunningham 2002). Whilst laudable, the actions taken to attain equality of educational opportunity were perhaps too simplistic. Despite the Government's best intentions, nationally published school performance tables suggest that educational provision and pupil achievement varies widely across state funded schools. So much so that you often hear of parents moving home to ensure their children fall in the catchment area of 'good' state schools. However, the latter is only a viable option if financial circumstances permit and accordingly it becomes an option for a limited percentage of the population. Regardless of the type of school attended, formal education today arguably continues as a class controlled opportunity with status and money determining the extent and nature of

education one is permitted to receive. In these terms, it is understandable why education has become self-perpetuating: once an individual is brought up in accordance with one set of expectations, they learn to live by them and demand them of the next generation (Jewell 1998); only occasionally do people break from their mould.

Innate levels of intelligence (as historically marked by social class) also continue to imbue present day practices. Whilst terms such as genetic inferiority, bad blood and feeble-mindedness are no longer used in reference to children's intelligence and IQ, Gillborn and Youdell (2001) propose that they have been replaced by notions of ability; what they term 'the new IQism.' Evident in educational discourse including teacher talk and government policy, ability is perceived to be unevenly distributed amongst pupils. These practices infer that ability is fixed, measurable and generalised academic potential (ibid.).

In observing practices in place throughout the Western world, Rogoff (2003) notes that age has become a core organizing principle for people's lives; with education no exception. Regardless of the type of school attended, age stratification serves as the overarching method to facilitate the delivery of mass education. Davis (2004) suggests that this practice is rooted in the introduction of the classroom, a feature of schools in late sixteenth and early seventeenth century England. However, Rogoff et al (2001) claim that that age grading did not become an established practice until the nineteenth century. They propose that the use of gradations in European schools during the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries were founded on students' progress in learning rather than chronological age since birth. In addition, they assert that following the launch of age-grading, it was typical to find an age range of six years amongst the children in any class.

The stratification of learners by age continues to be a dominant characteristic of school organisation today. Structured by Key Stage and school year, the NC permits the delivery of education to be achieved on mass through framing instruction in step-by-step increments. This fixation on age-related competencies reflects much of the mainstream work conducted in the field of developmental

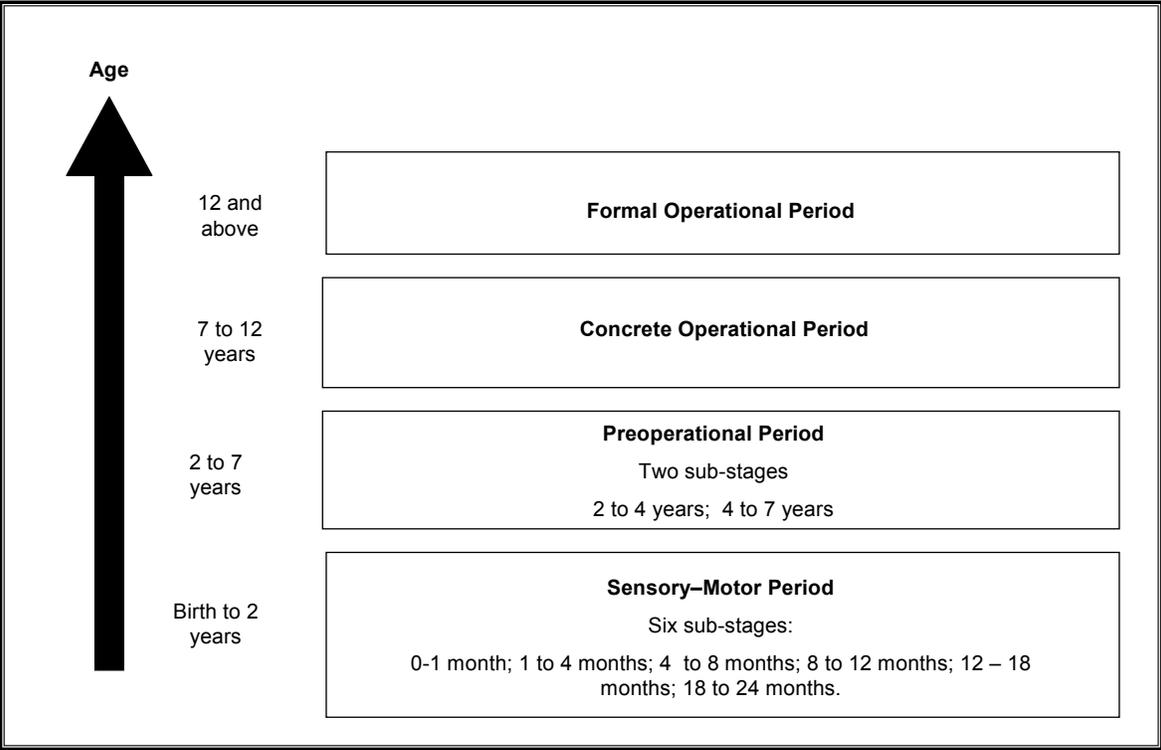
psychology, where practitioners seek to understand the process of change in the psychological functioning of individuals with respect to their age (Hogan 2005). Attainment of the age-related qualities set out in the NC infers that a child is making his/her way on the 'safe passage' to competency and positive functioning in adulthood. However, the power of this core policy rests on the assumption that there exists a universal model of child development; a position challenged in chapter two. Nevertheless, the notion of a uniform path of development, stressing the role of ages and stages, can arguably be traced back to the work of Jean Piaget.

Within Western theory, Piaget is widely acknowledged to be the father of constructivism and a review of developmental and educational literature suggests that despite a substantive body of discrediting evidence, the influence of his work, albeit implicit, is pervasive (Aldridge, Sexton, Goldman, Booker and Werner 1997). Although not an education reformer, Piaget pioneered a theory of cognitive (or intellectual) development which has maintained near hegemonic influence in Britain over the past several decades (Graue and Walsh 1998). Given that much of Piaget's theory focuses on the changes in children's thinking from birth to twelve years, his work has had strong implications for the formal education of primary age children (Oakley 2004). This became apparent throughout England during the 1960's, where many shifts in primary schooling practice stemmed from Piagetian theory (Hall 2000).

Piaget's theory of intellectual development asserts that a child's cognitive abilities develop in accordance with a sequence of four continuous stages (see figure 1.3). Each stage evolves out of the previous one and is characterised by qualitatively different thinking processes which reflect successively more complex levels of cognitive development (Glassman and Hadad 2004). This principle is mirrored in the structure of the NC for primary education, where the knowledge, skills and understanding developed in KS1 is consolidated and further developed in KS2. Considered to be invariant, universal and all-encompassing, the stages operate independently of culture and context. Whilst Piaget acknowledged that children could progress through the stages at varying speeds and to differing levels of

competency, the sequence remained uniform for all. These notions are again echoed in the structure of the NC. Although the integration of level descriptors allow for variance in pupil competency, the sequence of the Key Stages remains uniform for all.

**Figure 1.3:** Summary of Piaget’s theory of cognitive development  
Adapted from Pulaski (1980)



The periods and stages comprising Piaget’s theory of cognitive development correspond with a child’s chronological age, suggesting he perceived the learning process to be the inexorable unfolding of a genetic blueprint; one that was spatially and temporally fixed. For example, with reference to figure 1.3, Piaget proposed that cognitive development ‘finished’ at about the age children enter secondary school, at which point they are located in the final stage typified by adult intelligence. Drawing on my own experience and that of those around me, this notion seems quite problematic. Learning and development is clearly not an age dependent concept. Whilst the NC does not propose that learning ceases after the completion of all Key Stages, given the explicit focus on children’s chronological age, it may be inferred that it is founded on the assumption that learning is indeed the

result of a predetermined developmental path and as such also reflects a genetic epistemology.

Many of the ideas underpinning this theory have not gone unchallenged, with research studies indicating that Piaget underestimated the ages at which children are able to demonstrate many competencies (Oakley 2004). It is argued that if the problems posed make 'human sense,' children do exhibit competencies earlier than the ages Piaget suggested (Donaldson 1978). Clearly, the notion of human sense is socially and culturally defined; as a participant of recognisable practices one child might be able to comprehend a problem quite easily. However, as an outsider, another may struggle to gain access. This notion may relate to the findings of Rogoff (2003), who noted that there was great variability in the performance of Piagetian tasks amongst similar aged persons of different cultural backgrounds. Moreover, Rogoff (1984) suggests that the supporting body of evidence for the existence of the stages comprising Piaget's theory was founded on a small sample of task situations. These primarily relied on the use of clinical methodology, often incorporating unrealistic situations. This was pointed out by Bronfenbrenner (1977a: 513) who stated, '...much of contemporary developmental psychology is the science of the strange behavior of children in strange situations with strange adults for the briefest possible periods of time.' Despite the strong body of evidence which refutes much of Piaget's theory, his ideas continue to imbue societal beliefs about child development and educational progress, in turn shaping the teaching-learning process in the classroom. Whilst the stratification of learners according to age was a practice established long before the ideas of Piaget, his model of cognitive development has provided powerful support to this widespread practice. Pragmatically, the practice of dividing pupils up according to age and social class enables mass education possible and instruction of pupils more manageable.

### *The solitary nature of teacher supervision and instruction*

Since the onset of schooling in England, it has been widespread practice for a single adult to be charged with the supervision and instruction of a large group of children in an isolated space. Unhindered by the numerous trends in the nature of formal instruction over the years, this arrangement has been pervasive. It persisted in the aftermath of The Plowden Report in 1967, when notions of individualization, the use of an integrated curriculum and learning by discovery and experience were endorsed and legitimated (Alexander 2000). And it continues today despite the current emphasis on interactive whole class teaching in the NLNS. The decision to place power with a solitary teacher in the supervision and instruction of large numbers of pupils perhaps stems from behaviourist models of learning. Here, it is assumed that the transfer of knowledge and skills between teacher and pupil is accomplished via explicit teaching, a process which is thought to be relatively unproblematic and unidirectional. Indeed, this organisation is evident in practices spanning nursery to university. Herein lies the assumption that solitary teacher supervision and instruction is the most effective means of inculcating education in children and adults alike.

Support in the classroom was available to teachers following the upsurge in the provision of elementary education after the Industrial Revolution (Digby and Searby 1981). The increase in the number of pupils, the absence of methods for regulating simultaneous whole class activity and the disorder and confusion that stemmed from this made it necessary to put in place a system of supervision (Foucault 1977). Borrowed from factory organisation, schools introduced hierarchical, continuous and functional supervision. In the over sized and scarcely resourced schoolroom, the monitorial system was a means of inculcating basic education more widely amongst children than had previously seemed possible (Ball 1983). This system saw selected older children or monitors, instruct small groups of fellow scholars under the supervision of a single teacher (Digby and Searby 1981). More often than not, this solitary single adult or 'teacher' had received little if any training and as such, instruction from both teacher and monitor became a monotonous routine of rote learning (Ball 1983). Over recent years,

teachers have benefited from the assistance of one or more support staff (learning mentors, classroom assistants and support workers etc.) in their instruction and supervision of children. Despite the level of support teachers receive in the classroom, the onus remains with the teacher in the overall management of pupils' behaviour and learning in the classroom.

Underpinning the solitary nature of teacher supervision and instruction is the powerful notion of teacher as authoritative figure. Historically, children have been positioned as subordinate in modern Western societies (James, Jenks and Prout 1998), a notion echoed in the organisation of schooling and the nature of adult-child relations in the classroom. As Devine (2003) points out, explicit school practices are largely constructed and administered for children by adults. The power dynamics in the classroom are weighted towards the teacher as expert and the pupil as other, where the teacher is the knowledge holder, the permission granter and the rule setter for children. In school, adults exercise power and control over pupils' learning, behaviour, space, time and activities. In a world in which the parameters are set by adults, there is limited opportunity for children to assert their autonomy (Punch 2001). Such circumstances inevitably serve to impact negatively on children's perception of themselves as active shapers of the schooling process (Devine 2002) and moreover, the learning relationship.

In giving consideration to the dominant teacher and subordinate pupil relationship, the work of Paulo Freire is particularly illuminating. Whilst stemming from his work with Brazilian working classes, Freire's philosophy provides a powerful interpretation of the fundamentally oppressive nature of prevalent teaching and learning practices in the school context. This is elucidated in his banking concept of education (1996): positioned as expert, the task of the teacher as s/he delivers one particular world view is to fill the students as if they were mere containers or receptacles. 'The more completely she fills the receptacles, the better the teacher she is. The more meekly the receptacles permit themselves to be filled, the better students they are' (Freire 1996: 53). He argues that education has become an act of depositing where the teacher is depositor and the students depositories. Positioned as passive and docile objects in the teaching and learning process, the

scope of student action is limited to receiving, filing and storing any deposits from the teacher. Committed to liberation of the education system, Freire rejects the banking concept of education in which both teacher and student simply accept the stated as true. Instead, the pedagogy he advocates is forged between both parties and is founded on dialogical exchange and problem solving. Seeking to transcend the aforementioned monotonous and dogmatic tradition, where teacher is perceived to know all and the student, nothing, Freire's educational method is conceptualised as a mutuality benefiting both parties. He argues for critical and liberating dialogue (page 47) between educator and educand, with both parties becoming 'critical co-investigators' (page 62) in the generation of thought, explanations and understandings. In that teaching is no longer conceived as mere knowledge transmission, the notion of the teacher as expert becomes obsolete. Rather than 'pseudo-participation' (page 51) the student is fully involved as s/he learns about learning (Freire 1994). With both parties acknowledging they are simultaneously teachers and students, the learning process is thus shaped by the knowledge, ideas and assumptions that both bring to the situation.

Using Freire's philosophy to inform our understanding of primary schooling practices, we can infer that schools could aim to reflect the students and teachers who inhabit them; however, this is clearly not the case. With the array of government policies put in place to manage teaching and learning practices nationwide, schools throughout England reflect the values of Central Government. Educational control resides with those who comprise this elite group; they act as an oppressive ruling class. For example, in issuing a politically imposed National Curriculum, Central Government determines what knowledge and skills are learned in school and in turn, what society internalizes as valuable to learn (Tobbell 2000). In order for education to maximize opportunities for learning and achievement and prepare children for adulthood, one could argue that education needs to be taken out of the political arena.

### *The prevalence of whole class unidirectional teacher instruction*

Formal schooling throughout England has relied extensively on unidirectional teacher instruction as the principle means of transmitting information. The origins of this method stem from a shortage of books in the classroom which gave rise to rote learning (Gathorne-Hardy 1977). Despite the advent of print, the practice of unidirectional teacher instruction has remained. I maintain that it continues today in the guise of whole class teaching, which is advocated as the most effective means of instruction in both the NLNS. A review of the corresponding frameworks reveals that for a predominant part of both the literacy and numeracy hour, teachers are advised to organise pupils as a whole class to ensure that every child will benefit from sustained periods of direct teaching and interaction. For example, the NNS Framework for Teaching (1999) states 'High-quality direct teaching is oral, interactive and lively. It is not achieved by adopting a simplistic formula of 'drill and practice' and lecturing the class, or by expecting pupils to teach themselves from books. It is a two-way process in which pupils are expected to play an active part by answering questions, contributing points to discussions, and explaining and demonstrating their methods to the class' (page 11). Outwardly, this is a laudable move from the Government. We are coaxed into thinking that the teaching and learning process in the classroom is two way, involving the participation of both teacher and pupil, notions far removed from unidirectional teacher delivery and didactic instruction.

Although not the explicit intention of the Government, closer examination reveals that the practice of whole class teaching is in fact principally reliant on the one way delivery of instruction from teacher to pupil. Many of the characteristics of 'good' direct teaching described in the FTN infer a prominent didactic role for the teacher: directing, instructing, demonstrating, explaining and illustrating, evaluating pupil responses and summarising. In contrast, space permitted for pupil interaction is limited to teacher initiated questioning and discussion or consolidation (ibid.). Similarly, whilst the FTL states that 'pupil contributions are encouraged, expected and extended' (page 8), many of the teaching strategies put forward as a means of establishing this practice echo the unilateral processes found in traditional forms of

instruction. Whilst teachers are advised to employ direction, demonstration, modelling and explanation to clarify; pupil participation is confined to teacher initiated and guided: questioning, discussion and exploration (ibid.). In both frameworks, pupil interaction is limited by teacher discretion and predicated on the confidence of children to join in. As I outline in chapter two, notions of participation are highly complex (Wenger 1998), a fact overlooked by continued allegiance to the whole class instructional approach.

Research notes that classroom practices have undergone little change since the introduction of the NLNS, a claim at odds with government reports. Whilst a major thrust of both the literacy and numeracy hour reform is the use of interactive whole class teaching, research indicates that traditional patterns of whole class teaching continue to pervade classroom discourse (Hardman, Smith, Mroz and Wall 2003). Studies document that teacher led recitation dominates both the literacy hour (Mroz, Smith and Hardman 2000) and the numeracy hour (Ryan, Kassem and Sarland 2003). This is echoed in an excerpt taken from the OfSTED publication entitled *'The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and the Primary Curriculum'* (2003) which states, 'In too many lessons, teachers' talk dominates and there are too few opportunities for pupils to talk and collaborate to enhance their learning' (page 3). The notion of pupils actively and extensively participating in the teaching-learning approach is further quashed by reports that the competing demands of the literacy hour format have in fact reduced opportunities for extended teacher-pupil interaction and discussion (English, Hargreaves and Hislam 2002). This is confirmed by Hardman, Smith and Wall (2003) in their analysis of the impact of the Literacy Hour upon classroom practices. The authors state, 'Far from encouraging and extending pupil contributions to promote higher levels of interaction and cognitive engagement, the majority of the time teachers' questions are closed and often require convergent factual answers and pupil display of (presumably) known information. This style of teacher questioning therefore seeks predictable correct answers and only rarely are teachers' questions used to assist pupils to more complete or elaborated ideas' (page 212). These conclusions validate the idea that unidirectional teacher instruction has indeed become a deeply entrenched practice in our organisation of schooling.

The use and endorsement of unidirectional whole class teaching practices are founded on a several implicit assumptions which pertain to: the process of learning, the nature of knowledge and the relationship between the teacher and learner. Many of the ideas inherent in these assumptions stem from behaviourist theory. Proponents of this perspective position the child as a passive recipient of knowledge and actions rather than an active participant in his/her own development. Regarded to be a product of their reinforcement history or prevailing stimulus conditions, children are at the mercy of the environment they inhabit and the host of socialisation agents they encounter throughout their lives. The child is viewed as a carbon copy of his/her environment rather than an individual with his/her own meanings and interpretations. Thus, a child will acquire the specific knowledge, behaviours and skills stressed in his/her past and present environmental conditions.

Similarly, in the English education system children are viewed as a repository of knowledge, a vessel to be filled with the core knowledge encapsulated in the National Curriculum. Learning is posited as an acquisition model and is predominantly characterised as the internalisation of knowledge principally delivered by the teacher or read in books. For teaching to be considered a process of transmission, it is assumed that knowledge is something tangible that can be conveyed. This is pervasive in the images and metaphors which we commonly use to discuss it (Davis, Sumara and Luce-Kapler 2000). Woven into our language, we depict knowledge as an object that exists independent and external to the learner; this has ramifications for our understanding of the teaching-learning process. In terms of learning, knowledge is something that can be acquired, grasped, held, possessed, absorbed, exchanged or wielded (see figure 1.4); teaching, is in turn, understood in terms of delivering, instructing, training, relaying and transmitting.

Dominant 'chalk and talk' teaching practices characteristic of our education system, stem from the belief that children learn by virtue of direct instruction and knowledge transmission. Such classroom practices suggest that the transfer of knowledge between teacher and pupil is a relatively unproblematic and unidirectional process

(Lave and Wenger 1991). That is, the child enters the classroom, sits down, listens to the teacher and engages in prescribed activities and in turn, acquires expertise in the material and skills specified in the NC for his/her age group. This over-simplistic representation of learning is challenged by the collection of stories presented in the analysis section of this research. Essentially, these illuminate the social complexity of pupils' learning environments and experiences.

**Figure 1.4:** Conceptions of knowledge as an object  
(Adapted from Davis et al 2000)



### *Teaching a specific body of knowledge*

In educational institutions worldwide, teaching and learning is shaped by a curriculum which essentially details the purpose, content, method, organisation and evaluation of education which students will undergo (Bennett and Le Compte 1990). In many schools, the learning content covers a set of subject domains, in

which mathematics and native language feature unequivocally (White 2004). Since August 2002, the NC at KS2 has comprised three core subjects (English, mathematics and science) and seven foundation subjects (design and technology, information and communication technology, history, geography, art and design, music and physical education). Only through learning and using this core knowledge can children experience educational success. Indeed, as Tobbell (2006) points out, in the very act of valuing some knowledge as 'core' there is a concomitant act of devaluing knowledge which falls outside this categorisation, resulting in certain knowledge sets becoming privileged over others.

The literature provides no justifying rationale for the inclusion of the above subject domains (White 2004), which for the exception of ICT, have featured since its implementation (Department of Education and Science 1989). The handbook simply states 'Getting the National Curriculum right presents difficult choices and balances. It must be robust enough to define and defend the core of knowledge and cultural experience...' (NCH 1999: 3). This claim assumes that a 'core knowledge and cultural experience' has been identified and agreed upon (Tobbell 2006). But with Western society undergoing rapid social, technological, economical and political change and moreover, comprising diverse cultures with huge variations amongst the persons therein, how can this 'core' be so readily assumed?

Despite multiple literature searches, it is difficult to locate many voices which dispute the content of the NC. Perhaps as a society we have merely internalised the content as that which is valuable to learn because the powerful have deemed it so. Davis (2004) proposes that current curricula can at times be considered anachronistic. He states 'Through centuries of schooling, many notions and competencies that were indeed basic to life in a newly industrialized society some 300 or 400 years ago have become locked into current thinking as necessary knowledge – even if that knowledge is only necessary for success in school.' (Davis 2004: 81). In exemplifying his point, Davis draws on the example of mathematics in the school context and in particular the concept of long division. He notes that advancements in technology render long division of little use outside

the classroom walls. Nonetheless, suggestions that the time spent developing competency in this skill could be given over to other topics, are rarely entertained.

Tobbell (2006) points out that the national framework is based on a notion of learning which removes knowledge and performance from context. Given the notion of situated cognition discussed in chapter two, context plays a pivotal role in learning. To highlight the principles of this perspective, I draw on the following example: Nunes, Schliemann and Carracher (1993) investigated mathematical practices in schools and on the street in Brazil and found that whilst some children struggle to undertake mathematical activities in the school context, they nonetheless were able to frequently perform quite complex calculations outside this domain. They focused on children who carried out transactions, typically without use of paper and pencil, on street market stores in Brazil, selling snack foods such as roasted peanuts, popcorn, corn on the cob and coconut milk etc. The calculations which children mentally performed generally involved one or more of the following mathematical operations: multiplication, addition, subtraction and division. Whilst the same skills are integral to school mathematics, the children experienced difficulty applying them in the classroom.

Thus, transference of knowledge, skills and understanding across domains is not an automatic or unproblematic process. Mathematics at school and mathematics on the street are context bound; they involve calculations which are 'carried out under the constraints of social, empirical and logical rules' (Nunes et al 1993: 153) specific to each situation. However, the National Curriculum assumes that once children have a grasp of the basic mathematical operations noted above, alongside that of currency, they are able to calculate the answer to multiple hypothetical scenarios: the increase in bus fare, the change from a telephone call, savings made in a book sale, the difference in money taken by a toy shop between November and December, the cost of boat hire, the cost for a group to visit the waxworks and the cost of guide books (KS2 mathematics SATs papers 2001, Tests A and B, Levels 3-5). Transference is not deemed problematic but automatic.

Carr and Claxton (2002) suggest that in order to furnish future generations with the knowledge, skills and understanding they will need to function well in adult life, educators should seek to facilitate the development of people's capacity and confidence to engage in life long learning. Indeed, the Government seeks to accomplish just that via the NC. They state a focus of the policy is '...to give teachers discretion to find the best ways to inspire in their pupils a joy and commitment to learning that will last a lifetime' (NCH 1999: 3). But is the Government just paying lip service to the notion of lifelong learning? Carr and Claxton propose that the current format of education is inadequate for achieving this overarching goal. They argue that the focus of education needs to shift to the development of aptitudes and attitudes that will equip persons to function effectively and respond to the demands of a dynamic and fluid world.

#### *Assessment of learning via formal examination*

Assessment of learning has had a prominent place in the history of English education. The Revised Code of 1862 introduced the 'payment by results' initiative, in which children's test performance and attendance levels determined the state funds secured by schools (Digby and Searby 1981). With teacher salaries dependent on the grants which schools received, teachers naturally had a strong desire for pupils to perform successfully on the tests (Ball 1983). Indeed, the yearly examination was reportedly an ordeal for both teachers and pupils with mock tests held for weeks beforehand (Horn 1989). This vision is reminiscent of the formal methods of assessment in place at the time of this research, where pupils are required to sit national tests at key points in their primary and secondary school careers. In pursuit of a long standing aim to raise standards of learning achieved through formal education, testing has clearly become one of the Government's core instruments. The pressure placed on Year 6 teachers and pupils today are redolent of the aforementioned 'payment by results' ordeal. Literature reports that much of the teaching and learning during this academic year is framed around the end of year tests (Sturman 2003; Christensen and James

2001) with children required to sit practice papers in the weeks preceding the tests (Tobbell 2006; QCA 2004).

In the act of relying on tests as the principle method to examine and record a child's performance and status as learner, learning has been reduced to individual mental activity. Progress is defined by the quantity or quality of knowledge acquired and reproduced. Testing practices are based on behaviourist principles: the extent of a child's learning is only evident via objective measurement of overt behaviour, namely a child's written answers to preset test questions. As Wenger (1998) writes, 'To assess learning we use tests with which students struggle in one-on-one combat, where knowledge must be demonstrated out of context, and where collaborating is considered cheating' (page 3). The prominence given to the individual's performance in isolation seems somewhat incongruous when we consider our endeavours outside the educational domain. Here, it is our performance in conjunction with others which is encouraged and valued; for example, conducting a successful relationship, spending time with friends, living alongside family members, working with colleagues etc. Despite this, the Government continues to pledge its allegiance to formal examinations as the most effective means of assessing a child's level of learning.

#### *The role of external incentives as motivational aids*

The literature indicates that the use of external incentives as motivational aids for improved behaviour and/or learning accomplishment has been evident in schools for a prolonged period of time. For example, Edwardian and Victorian schoolchildren were rewarded with medals and prizes for improved school attendance (Horn 1989). Today, schools are utilising reward structures to a greater extent, with pupils benefiting from material rewards for successful exam results and improvements in behaviour. This has come to the fore through media reports. For example, in a bid to tackle rising levels of truancy, an inner city high school offered pupils MP3 players, digital cameras and personal computers for improved class attendance (Osuh 2005). Elsewhere, a programme termed

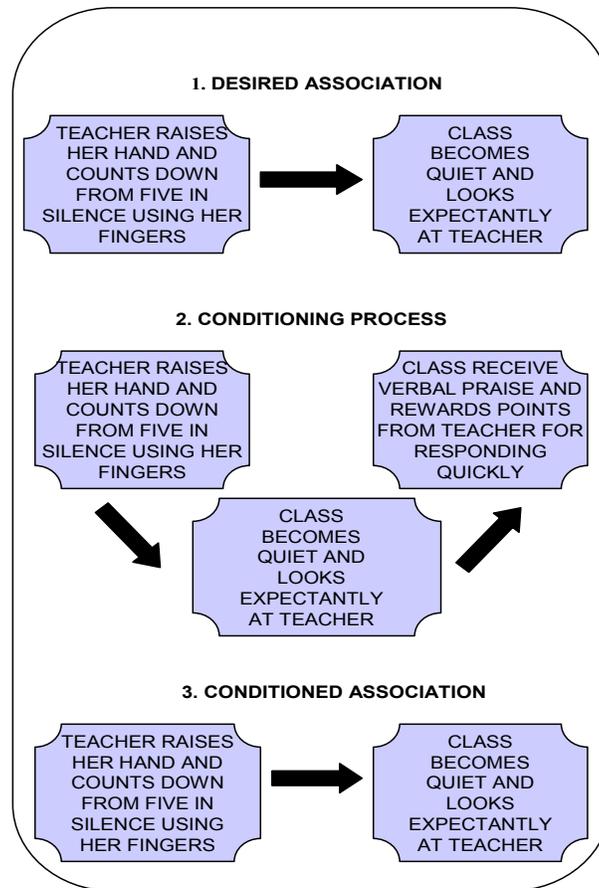
COMPACT has been introduced to raise the achievement of children in care; here, children are given a financial incentive of £100.00 for sitting their GCSE exams (Oxfordshire 2005). The notion of using external incentives as motivational aids for inculcating appropriate or desirable behaviour stems from behaviourist theory.

Proponents of behaviourist theory argue that the overt structures of reward and punishment surrounding the child, play a crucial role in shaping his/her endeavours. The aim of the approach is to identify and train associations between particular events and particular behaviours using methods of classical and operant conditioning. Through careful administration of rewards and punishments, or indeed the promise of the former and the threat of the latter, it is argued teachers can shape a learner's activities and behaviour. As noted by Skinner (1993), positive and negative contingencies can be arranged 'to create interests, provide encouragement, instil incentives or purposes, or raise consciousness in another...' (page 200). This premise is illustrated in figure 1.5, where in a classroom setting, reward can be used by the teacher to get the attention of the class and ensure they display appropriate behaviour. However, it is often the case that children fail to successfully perform such conditioned associations on every occasion. Thus, whilst the implicit cause-effect logic underpinning this principle can be effective for training children in simplistic behavioural change, it is insufficient to account for children's behaviour at all times.

In the experience I gained as a primary classroom assistant prior to undertaking this research, I observed the use of behaviourist principles to manage children's learning and behaviour. Positive reinforcement in the form of personal, table and class points were used as the predominant form of reward and were awarded to those pupils who performed successfully in lessons or for those who displayed appropriate behaviour. The points acted as a form of secondary reinforcement; once pupils had accumulated a given number of points they were exchanged for a direct reward, the primary reinforcement. Fundamental to the operant conditioning principle, is that appropriate and desirable behaviours are shaped and strengthened only if rewards are presented immediately and administered in a systematic and consistent manner (Glassman and Hadad 2004). Such practices

can be problematic in a school setting where classes are frequently in excess of thirty pupils. Punishment in the form of verbal warnings, exclusion and Head teacher intervention were also drawn upon by teaching staff to suppress or eliminate any undesirable behaviour displayed by children.

**Figure 1.5:** Operant conditioning in the classroom context  
Adapted from Davis et al (2000)



Reward and punishment practices have been evident in schools for an extended period of time and in fact predate behaviourist learning theory (Davis et al 2000). Nonetheless, the core principles of this framework have provided the necessary scientific structure for using external incentives as motivational aids for learning and improved behaviour. A potential pitfall in the educational context is that pupils begin to associate successful learning and good behaviour with material or financial gain, rather than a process which we undertake for life that can be personally rewarding. Whilst behaviourist principles do hold some power they are

insufficient in themselves to account for all learning events, particularly those in which more complex behaviour is evident. As discussed in chapter two of the literature review, the processes of learning and development are highly complex, with human beings more spontaneous and dynamic than this theory acknowledges.

### ***The importance of schools in modern day society***

Education and its associated phenomenon constitute a massive area of current research in the fields of psychology and education. This is exemplified in the journal titles illustrated in table 1.2.

**Table 1.2:** Journal titles surrounding the phenomenon of education

<b>KEY WORD</b>	<b>JOURNAL TITLE</b>
Education	British Educational Research Journal; British Journal of Educational Studies; British Journal of Special Education; Cambridge Journal of Education; Educational Theory, Educational Research; Educational Review; Educational Studies; Issues in Education; Research Papers in Education; Westminster Studies in Education; Race, Ethnicity and Education
The role of theory	British Journal of Education Psychology; Contemporary Educational Psychology; Educational Psychology; Educational Psychology in Practice; Educational Psychology Review; Educational Philosophy and Theory
Learning	British Journal of Learning Disabilities; Learning and Instruction; Learning and Motivation; Learning and Individual Differences; Learning Disabilities: Research and Practice
Curriculum	Curriculum Inquiry; The Curriculum Journal; Journal of Curriculum Studies
Teaching	Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education; Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice; Teaching and Teacher Education; Pedagogy; Journal of Education for teaching: International Research and Pedagogy; Mentoring and Tutoring; teaching Education
Children	Early Childhood Educational Journal; Early Childhood Research Quarterly; Early Years: Journal of International Research and Development
School	School Leadership and Management; School Organisation; Journal of School Psychology; Children and Schools
Assessment	Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy and Practice; Assessment and Evaluation in higher Education; Assessing Writing

Whilst by no means an exhaustive list, it provides a glimpse of the extensive resources ploughed into the study of education and learning. But for what reasons has education become a primary concern for academics, policymakers, teachers, parents and carers alike? Let us consider the status of school in modern day society. In England, formal education has been assigned a prominent role. We have developed schooling systems and a plethora of educational policies which strive to take charge of and advance children's learning. Laws have been introduced by the Government which compel children to attend compulsory schooling from the age of five for an enforced period of approximately ten years. For some, the duration of compulsory schooling is an enjoyable experience, socialising with peers, engaging in activities and pursuing knowledge ardently; whilst for others, it is an enforced, lonely period of arduous work. Nonetheless, modern day society places great emphasis on educational achievement.

Conveyed to all, is the implicit message that success within the educational arena promises happiness, fulfilment, increased opportunities, a choice of superior employment and a more affluent and desirable lifestyle. In contrast, those who fail are perceived to be at a great disadvantage. After fulfilling a long period of 'national service' they leave school to seek employment feeling defeated, discontent and aggrieved by the limited opportunities available to them. As Donaldson pointed out '...when we consider what has happened by the time children reach adolescence, we are forced to recognise that the promise of the early years frequently remains unfulfilled. Large numbers leave school with the bitter taste of defeat in them, not having mastered even moderately well the basic skills which society demands, much less having become people who rejoice in the exercise of creative intelligence.' (1978: 13-14). Indeed, research has indicated that failure in the school system is associated with certain life trajectories (Halsey, Lauder, Brown and Wells 1997). Without formal qualifications, choices are reduced and life chances are shaped in particular ways. Thus the power of the school to shape the lives of children extends into adulthood. Because of the strong influence school exerts on children's life trajectories, both negative and positive; it is understandable that stakeholders bear an overwhelming desire for children to succeed at school.

## ***Section summary***

The integral role of schools in our society is founded on the supposition that they have an all-encompassing benign influence. On a macro level, it is believed that they work for the greater good of the individual and wider society. Societal values are also inherent in the current provision of education. Historically, a number of 'fixed' characterises have played a principle role in the organisation of schooling and their inclusion continues today. The assumptions which underpin these deeply entrenched practices are upheld by traditional psychological theory. Most pervasive are the principles of behaviourist learning theory. This characterises learning as a mechanical linear process that involves the mastery of isolated knowledge and competencies which are linearly sequenced and delivered by the teacher. Whilst I would suggest that this represents an over simplistic understanding of the teaching and learning relationship, the initiatives in place reflect this format. Structured by KS and subject domain, the NC sets out the knowledge, skills and understanding that pupils should be taught and specifies the contexts, activities, areas of study and range of experience through which this should be accomplished (NCH 1999). Planning grids contained in the NLNS Frameworks require teachers to structure imagined lessons into discrete sections and specify their own and pupils' activities in detail. At each KS, learning objectives are clearly stated and follow a prescribed linear sequence. Attainment of these is deemed measurable via objective assessment of children's overt behaviour. Performance levels act as well defined reward structures, with the 'successful' Year 6 pupil achieving at least level four on all end of year tests. School discipline and behaviour management practices also employ strict reward and punishment schedules to enforce rigid standards of behaviour.

Perhaps the success of behaviourist theory in the organisation and nature of schooling is due to the fact that it fits well with the notion of school as a factory. There is widespread acknowledgement in the literature that schools were at one time deliberately modelled on factories (for example, Lillard 2005; Bennett and Le Compte 1990; Callahan 1962). In England, this practice dates back to the aftermath of the Industrial Revolution, where developments in the nature of

elementary education and an upsurge in its provision was witnessed (Digby and Searby 1981). With efficient operation a high priority, factory structure was deemed the solution to mass schooling. Despite the changes that have taken place in society since this time, schools resemblance to factories continues today. Rogoff et al (2001) sum this up succinctly: 'A great deal of the organization of formal schooling has stemmed from the effort to treat school instruction as an efficient factory. This legacy has led schooled people to think of learning as a result of adults' teaching – transmitting knowledge as if children were receptacles and knowledge were an object. In the factory model, teachers package knowledge by breaking tasks into small units and motivate students by applying incentives (or threatening punishment) for students to get through the teacher's tasks. The learner has little to do besides allowing themselves to be filled with the knowledge provided by teachers and texts' (page 6). The obsession with factory efficiency is further apparent in the Government's use of performance tables. These effectively rank schools nationwide according to levels of efficiency. To be deemed effective, teachers must teach and children must learn the specific body of knowledge which comprises the NC.

Today, structures implemented to manage children's education posit an acquisition model of learning. Founded on the assumption that the transfer of knowledge and skills between teacher and pupil is a relatively unproblematic, unidirectional process and the result of explicit teaching (telling and demonstrating) alone; learning involves the acquisition of knowledge set out in the NC. Conceptualised as a time limited event, the learning process takes place in the confines of the classroom where children must apply knowledge and show performance out of context. Perceived to have a beginning and an end state, the location of the learner on his/her journey is indicated by the extent to which s/he has covered the constituent material in the NC and the standard to which s/he can independently reproduce that knowledge on statutory assessments. With schools mirroring the Government's continual allegiance to tests and targets, learning has been reduced to mental capacity or activity (Lave 1996) and progress defined by quantity and quality of knowledge acquired and retained. Whilst this was not the intention of stakeholders, it has arguably become the outcome. Feasible explanations of

learning success and failure have become located within either the individual child or teacher. With differing levels of children's attainment explained by reference to individual factors, including innate intelligence or ability, motivational levels, attention span, good behaviour or the quality of teaching.

The above notions embody a view of learning that infers the activity and context in which learning takes place have merely an ancillary role (Brown, Collins and Duguid 1989). Learning is perceived to be an individual activity, separable from and in many cases, independent of social engagement. This viewpoint is powerfully challenged in chapter two, where I employ the use of sociocultural theory to elucidate the importance of the child's social context in shaping his/her developmental journey. Learning and competence are distributed over relationships and the environment, with the unit of analysis comprising agent, activity and world.

### **The political landscape of schooling in England**

With the reader now furnished with the macro landscape of schooling, the aim of the remainder of this chapter is to provide sufficient detail to enable a picture of children's learning experiences in Year 6 to be formed. To accomplish this, I begin by giving consideration to the existence of the school as part of the wider English school system, controlled by Central Government. Children's school careers are shaped in part, by multiple political agendas. These include those initiatives put forward by those in power at the time of this research: the Labour Government (for example, the NLNS), alongside decisions made over the past few decades by a Conservative Government (for example, national curricula and standardised national testing). With educational policies casting a wide net, children's experiences in the classroom can be influenced directly, for example via teaching and learning strategies or indirectly through environmental changes such as school or teacher culture. To gain insight into the quotidian learning experiences of Year 6 children, I will outline several government initiatives pertinent to primary education at the time of this research. Assigned a principle role in the

management and advancement of children's learning, in detail: the NC, standardised testing and the NLNS. Mentioned previously, albeit in great brevity, these initiatives essentially dictate classroom practice through establishing uniformity on the content of children's learning and teacher's pedagogical style (Cunningham 2002). Discussion of these frameworks will thus assist in painting a picture of what it means to be a Year 6 pupil: the activities they engage in, the expectations placed on them and the principle messages regarding learning that are conveyed to them.

### ***The National Curriculum***

The NC was introduced under the Education Reform Act of 1988 and implemented in all state primary and secondary schools throughout England in 1989. Prior to its implementation, power was vested in schools and teachers to make decisions about their own curricula and the aims underpinning them. This resulted in markedly different provisions between schools (White 2004). The NC framework was introduced in an attempt to make education a level playing field for all children. It was designed to maintain continuity and coherence in pupils' learning of a balanced, broadly based curriculum and sought to secure higher standards of achievement throughout the education system in England (Department of Education and Science 1989). In detailing these aims, one can infer that prior to the framework's implementation, the content of children's learning lacked uniformity, was narrow in focus and produced standards of educational attainment that were unacceptably low. The message emanating from this particular government policy seems clear: in following the prescriptive content of the NC, teachers will become more effective in their instruction and children will become better educated.

The National Curriculum for England is maintained and developed by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). As they state on their website: 'we develop the national curriculum, which defines the knowledge, understanding and skills to which children and young people are entitled. We keep it under review, to

evaluate its appropriateness and relevance to the changing needs of learners and society' (<http://www.qca.org.uk/3657.html>; accessed 19/06/06). Clearly, this authority plays a pivotal role in setting and maintaining the standards for children's learning throughout their compulsory school career. But how independent is the QCA body? Their website states: 'QCA is a non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). It is governed by a board, whose members are appointed by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, and managed on a day-to-day basis by an executive team' (<http://www.qca.org.uk/7.html>; accessed 19/06/06). Whilst QCA is seen on the surface to have a degree of autonomy, this excerpt indicates that any decisions or actions made, have to concur with current government values.

In setting out a clear, collective body of 'core knowledge and cultural experience,' the NC for KS2 comprises three core and seven foundation subjects; the majority of which have been constituent elements since its inception. In addition, statutory subjects at this level, include religious education (content on the whole, determined by Local Education Authorities) and sex education (in relation to school governing body policies). Non-statutory areas of education at KS2 include modern foreign languages and personal, social and health education and citizenship (<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachinginengland/detail.cfm?id=259>; accessed 22/03/05). Consultation of the NC alone enables me to form a profile of the capabilities that every pupil, aged eleven, should possess by the end of Year 6. This is achieved through reference to the two key areas which comprise the NC: ([http://www.nc.uk.net/prog\\_study.html](http://www.nc.uk.net/prog_study.html); accessed 22/03/05):

- ◆ *Programmes of study (PoS)* set out the particular body of knowledge and skills that pupils should be taught in each subject domain and provide the basis for teacher planning. However, individual primary schools do maintain control over the organization of their school curriculum to include these prescribed PoS.
- ◆ *Attainment targets and level description:* attainment targets consist of a series of eight level descriptions of increasing difficulty which detail the 'knowledge, skills and understanding which pupils of different abilities and maturities are expected to have by the end of each key stage' (Education Act 1996, section 353a: <http://www.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts1996/1996056.htm#aofs>). Each of the

eight level descriptions outline the types and range of performance pupils working at that level should characteristically demonstrate and are used to classify a child's educational progression throughout their primary school career.

At the time of this research, it was a government expectation that children located in KS2 would be working within the level descriptions of 2 to 5, achieving at least a level 4 by the completion of KS2 at the end of Year 6. To give a flavour of the expectations for Year 6 pupil performance, I provide an overview of the programmes of study (PoS) for each core and foundation subject domain in the KS2 curriculum, alongside an example of the attainment targets (AT) focusing on those characterised as level 4 (see Appendix 1.B). This content details the learning expectations for Year 6 pupils. In consulting the PoS as a single source of information, the reader is left with a somewhat general overview of children's learning endeavours. They stress independent work alongside collaborative ventures, with children encouraged to draw on multiple sources of information to inform investigations. The perspective of the other is also emphasised with children instructed to adapt their presentations and work to suit the needs of the audience, purpose and situation. An increasing use of technology is evident, with all subject domains highlighting a role for computer use. The exception is mathematics, where the mental mode is given principle position.

However, many of the objectives listed in the PoS do lack contextualisation. For example, the PoS for KS2 accentuate that pupils are expected to learn a 'range' or 'wider range' of knowledge and/or skills, but what might constitute these are not actually specified. In English, we learn that pupils are expected to 'read a range of texts'; in mathematics, they are expected to 'develop their measuring skills in a range of contexts'; in science, they are expected to 'learn about a wider range of living things, material and phenomena' etc. As such, the PoS alone are of limited use. Greater detail is provided in the form of the attainment level descriptions, which enable the reader to gain greater insight into the expected knowledge, skills and understanding of Year 6 pupils in each subject domain. For example, in reading the attainment level four description for writing, I observe that Year 6 pupils

are required to write cursively rather than printing separate individual letters. In addition, they are expected to demonstrate correct use of punctuation in their writing. None of this detail is provided in the English PoS excerpt. Indeed, if the attainment level four descriptions for all elements of English (speaking and listening, reading and writing) are consulted, the reader is provided with greater awareness of the expectations dictating Year 6 children's learning (see Appendix 1.C).

Whilst attainment level descriptions do enable a more detailed picture to be formed, specifics are still lacking. I am still left wondering about its content: what might constitute the range of contexts and purposes that children are required to respond to (speaking and listening) or the range of texts they are asked to work with (reading). Moreover, one could argue that the interpretation of multiple terms noted in the attainment level descriptions is highly subjective. In the AT for writing, what makes a piece of work lively or thoughtful? In what way must ideas be presented in order to be characterised as interesting? What makes the use of vocabulary adventurous? These decisions are made entirely at the discretion of the individual teacher or assessor. Although based on just a small sample of the material comprising the NC for KS2, the above analysis highlights the massive challenge we present to both pupil and teacher as participants of this national educational framework.

The KS format of the curriculum can be understood as a rigid and logical organisation of ideas, where PoS are organised around key topics which constitute what the Government define as 'core knowledge'. If we consider that KS2 begins in Year 3 and is examined in Year 6, this infers that the objectives listed in the PoS for each of the core and foundation subject domains must be met within 160 weeks of school term time (on average each year, term time consists of 40 weeks with school holidays allotted 12 weeks). This permits 16 weeks per subject domain or based on an average day where contact time is typically 4.5 hours, 360 hours per subject domain. Furthermore, in light of the NLNS (discussed at a later point in this section), two hours of every school day are to be dedicated to teaching literacy and mathematics in every primary school nationwide. In terms of the above time

constraints, this means that only 2.5 hours per day are left to cover the eight remaining subject domains, with each allocated only 200 hours over the four academic years. Working as a Year 6 teaching assistant prior to this research, I observed the demands which the NC placed on teachers' time and resources. I question whether it is feasible for us to expect a series of teachers to effectively cover the PoS for every subject domain within this allotted contact time. Children pass through four academic years during this time, typically experiencing a change in (at least) four class teachers. There appears to be an implicit assumption that movement between academic years is a relatively problem free process and that the establishment of a safe and positive classroom environment and the fostering of an effective working relationship between teacher and pupil is a given. Moreover, by its very design, children and teachers are expected to experience nothing but continuity in the curriculum, but this of course assumes that the teaching and learning requirements of previous years have all been fulfilled.

The introduction and continued implementation of the NC can be viewed as a legitimate attempt by the Government to ensure equality of educational opportunity for all. Its use as a principle tool to achieve this overarching aim is founded on three assumptions: a universal model of child development that remains uniform for all regardless of personal circumstance; the existence of a clear, collective body of 'core knowledge and cultural experience'; a notion of learning which removes knowledge and performance from context. Each of these underpinning beliefs has been challenged, rendering the NC less powerful as a means of managing children's learning. Although the Government's intentions were laudable, they were perhaps naïve in their attempts to make education a level playing field.

It remains that only a small pocket of the population are making decisions about the nature of education, and interestingly, these are not either of the principle parties involved in the teaching-learning relationship. Previously, responsibility was given to teachers and schools to make decisions about what constitutes the overarching aims of education and its constituent curricula (White 2004). Despite any expertise such parties may possess in the practice of teaching and learning, their decisions were deemed insufficient and as a result, education became a

macro issue. Alongside military affairs, health, law and order, education was taken out of professional control, becoming part of the political remit. Education is now under the control of Central Government. Whilst the Government comprises the political party which the public democratically vote in via general elections (only 61% of people voted in the last general election held in May 2005: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elections\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_Kingdom#Low\\_Turnout](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elections_in_the_United_Kingdom#Low_Turnout)), the choice of political parties and/or representatives available to vote for in the first place is limited. With the array of government policies put in place to shape teaching and learning practices nationwide, children's educational trajectories are guided by the elite group which comprises Central Government.

### ***The KS2 SATs***

As outlined previously, pupils are required to sit mandatory national assessments at the end of each KS. Officially termed Standards Attainment Tests and/or Tasks, these are constructed to assess their knowledge and understanding of the core subjects in the NC. Commonly referred to by pupils, parents and teachers as SATs, they have become an established part of the primary educational landscape, with the KS2 tests introduced by the Conservative Government in 1995 (Smithers 2003). The KS2 tests assess the prescribed knowledge, skills and understanding set out by the NC for the core subjects during years 3, 4, 5 and 6. There is insufficient space here to include a section on the structure and nature of the KS2 assessment papers. However, I have included a summary of these aspects in Appendix 1.D. Founded on a numerical score, pupils' results on the KS2 assessments are expressed as NC levels. As illustrated in table 1.3, there is an expectation for Year 6 pupils to attain level four in all three subject domains. Issued by government policy, this criterion has become an integral concern for teacher, pupil and parent/carer (Christensen and James 2001). This expectation of attainment has had significant ramifications for the teaching and learning practices in Year 6.

**Table 1.3:** Test attainment levels for KS2 pupils  
 (Adapted from the DfES website, accessed 12/08/04)  
[http://www.dfes.gov.uk/performance/primary\\_03/p3.shtml](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/performance/primary_03/p3.shtml)

Attainment level	Performance characterisation
Level 5	Beyond expectation
Level 4	At level expected
Level 3	Below expectations
Level 2	Below expectations
Level 1	Unclassified

*The role of the SATs in shaping the teaching and learning process*

Although the KS2 SATs take place nationally during one designated week in the month of May, Sturman (2003) cites that preparation for them permeates the teaching and learning process throughout the academic year. A review of the literature reveals multiple pieces of research lend support to this claim. Brown, Askew, Millet and Rhodes (2003) noted that test preparation typically dominated the Year 6 curriculum from January, although in some cases it began earlier. This is echoed in the findings of a report by the QCA (2004) who revealed that 75% of primary schools dedicated a proportion of Year 6 teaching time to practicing for the KS2 assessments. The majority of primary schools were reported to begin the focused test preparation in the spring term, with some schools indicating that they began in the second half of the autumn term. In an ethnographic study carried out by Christensen and James (2001), Year 6 teachers commented that the KS2 tests were the focus of work for both themselves and their pupils throughout the year. As a consequence of the huge emphasis placed on testing and standards by the Government, they remarked that teaching had become: a matter of getting 'children to jump through narrow hoops,' 'teaching for the SATs' and 'teaching how to attain high marks.' Teachers pointed out that children's performance on the tests had ramifications not only for individual but the primary school too. Results indicated how well individual pupils were doing and impacted on how secondary schools viewed pupils moving into Year 7. Results were also deemed important in

terms of the school's standing in the local community. Thus, test performance was a principle concern of teachers, pupils and their parents/carers, with teachers and pupils put under increasing pressure to achieve.

The prominence of SATs preparation is also evident in the work of Tobbell (2006), who explored children's transition from primary to secondary school. She illuminates that teachers had two approaches to teaching in Year 6: SATs and non-SATs. In the primary school, she began her data collection two weeks prior to the SATs taking place. She was told by the class teacher that the two weeks leading up to the SATs were atypical as they concentrated exclusively on preparing children for the SATs. But, the children informed her 'that they had done nothing but SATs since February and heard nothing but SATs since the beginning of the school year' (page 206). The children's comments were supported by the lack of work found in children's foundation subject exercise books, the last entries dating back to early February. In the two week period leading up to the SATs, Tobbell states that 'the teaching concentrated on reiterating the procedures which they (the teachers) judged would translate into the best test results, they talked and the children listened. The children worked alone and took work home. Achievement was measured in numbers' (page 280). But once the tests had been completed, the nature of teaching and learning took on a dramatic transformation: 'As soon as the SATs had ended they abandoned this approach. Learning became more communal, a wider range of activities were introduced' (ibid.). The power of the SATs in dictating teaching and learning practice throughout Year 6 is further echoed in numerous media reports each year (for example, Crace 2003).

In these terms, we can observe that learning for the Year 6 pupil is about the acquisition and application of knowledge deemed important by the NC at KS2 for English, mathematics and science. Learning success or otherwise is measured by pupils performance on the SATs. Whilst not explicit, the Year 6 teacher becomes a trainer, his/her role is about preparing pupils for the tests. S/he must endeavour to ensure that each pupil is in the strongest position to succeed. The high value placed on SATs performance means that the tests powerfully impact on the experiences of both teacher and pupil in the Year 6 classroom; they shape the

goals of both parties. Although reflecting on the experiences of secondary students, the conclusion of Cullingford (2002) can be considered equally applicable to those of Year 6 pupils: 'Nothing could make clearer the implicit purpose of schooling – to pass exams, to have a satisfactory outcome. The teaching itself is not the point. All that matters is the big test. The concentration on the importance of examinations has the inevitable consequences of diminishing the significance of other years – and other practices – that do not contribute directly to the tests (page 66).

The emphasis placed on the SATs in Year 6 inevitably diminishes the time available for covering foundation subjects and any extra curricular activities. In the research carried out by Christensen and James (2001), teachers revealed that the provision of a rounded education for pupils had been overridden by aims to secure the particular standards of literacy and numeracy set out by the Government. This is mirrored by the findings of the QCA (2004), who have conceded that as a result of schools' and teachers' efforts to boost attainment scores on National Curriculum tests, non-assessed subjects have suffered and children have experienced a narrowing of the curriculum as a result. Indeed, in the work of Wallace (2005), one Year 6 teacher remarked that following the KS2 assessments, she took her pupils out 'for as many new and rich experiences as she can cram in before they are gone, compensating in part for the narrow focus in English, maths and science that is necessary in all schools the weeks before the SATs' (page 134).

#### *SATs performance: what does it indicate?*

Although not the Government's stated intention of the assessments, the research cited illuminates the power of the KS2 SATs in dictating teaching and learning practices in the Year 6 classroom. But why is children's performance in the KS2 SATs of such concern? What messages do their attainment levels convey? The data yielded from the national assessments are compiled by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and since 1997, have been presented in the annual publication of primary school performance tables, commonly referred to in the

press as national league tables. Although new measures are added to the tables each year (Gillborn and Youdell 2001), the dominant criterion remains the same: the percentage of children in each school who attained level four in English, mathematics and science (for it is these children who are deemed to have experienced success in line with government expectations).

The tables published by the DfES list the performance of every school alphabetically under LEA district. But these are transformed by the media into league tables, with 'best' and 'worst' performing labels attached to individual schools. Because the emphasis is on the proportion of children attaining one or more level four passes in the SATs, the performance tables assist in presenting an over simplistic view of educational experience and attainment. Notions of success or otherwise in learning are conceptualised as black and white phenomenon. Perhaps the complexity of the learning process would be more readily captured if the tables provided greater contextual information. This may include: the efforts of children attaining level three and below; pupils' personal circumstances (for example discontinuity in schooling, family difficulties, teacher-pupil relationships etc.); the number of pupils in each class; teachers' written assessments (in which teachers are required to categorize each child's progress in the form of an attainment target for each of the three subject domains); whether the schools are maintained or private; the extent of teacher experience etc.

As they stand, the primary school performance tables maintain enormous influence and are used to inform stakeholders on a number of levels, outlined below:

- ◆ *Pupils*: the attainment level assigned to a child's test performance denotes either success or failure and, I would argue, fuels children to think of themselves as such from early on in their academic life. These notions are further aided by widespread comparison amongst class members provoked by the huge emphasis placed on test results by all parties.
- ◆ *Parents/carers*: SATs results show how well their child has performed in comparison to his/her class peers, schools in the local community and national levels of attainment. Again, widespread discussion and competition amongst the parent/carer community ensues.

- ◆ *Teachers*: assessment results provide an indication of how well pupils in their class have performed in comparison to the other Year 6 classes in the same school, schools in the local community and national levels of attainment. In acknowledging that pupils' SATs results underpin the position of the school on the performance tables, they also illuminate a particular teacher's ability to deliver the national curriculum effectively.
- ◆ *The primary school*: measurement of pupils' test performance enables schools to compare their own standards of achievement over the years and examine how the school is performing against others locally and nationally.
- ◆ *Official educational bodies*: test results act as key indicators of children's academic abilities within a specific Local Educational Authority (LEA), a particular area of England and within England as a nation.
- ◆ *All stakeholders*: evidence of rising (or falling) standards and the promotion of a positive (or negative) perception of the efficacy of government education policies.

Thus, whilst SATs results explicitly characterise the performance of the individual pupil and his/her level of academic success, the above indicates that they also reflect, albeit tacitly, the input of multiple parties operating external to the pupil. It conveys messages about proximal persons (teachers, parents/careers) but also those adopting a more distal role (the primary school, the LEA, the Government). As Wragg (2004) points out, 'Heads and teachers are terrified they may drop down the league tables. Parents fret that the quality of their family's genetic capital will be questioned. Children themselves feel the stress, worried lest they in turn disappoint their parents. The nation is engulfed by tidal waves of guilt' (page 53). In that children's performance on the SATs conveys powerful messages regarding the input of multiple parties, we can begin to understand why their success has become of mutual paramount concern. Because the Year 6 pupil and teacher are at the centre of this campaign, they find themselves under immense pressure to succeed. Should attainment levels fall short of government expectations, it is the actions and behaviour of these parties' which typically fall under the spotlight. As Wragg (2004) notes, there exists a 'blame hierarchy' in the education system;

teachers possess the least power in a very long chain of command in education and thus, frequently find themselves the scapegoats.

The Government places increasing reliance on tests, targets and performance tables as a means to raise educational standards (see table 1.4). This means that for many, ‘the pleasure of teaching, the excitement in children’s learning seem to be eroded. Instead of the creative endeavour of free exploration, the primary duty of a teacher appears to be to protect themselves, and to a lesser extent, their pupils from failure’ (Cullingford and Oliver 2001: 12). Indeed, Gillborn and Youdell (2001) note that the needs of some pupils may be sacrificed because teachers are under increasing pressure to raise overall pupil attainment in league table statistics. In using these as the core tools of our education system, the Government are presenting a simplistic view of educational attainment and the teaching and learning process. The partial understanding which they communicate is instrumental in creating feelings of triumph or defeat in both pupil and teacher and places both parties under immense pressure to succeed.

**Table 1.4:** The Government’s perceived role of tests, targets and performance tables  
(Adapted from the National Primary Strategy: chapter two, page 20; accessed 12/04/05)

<b>Key tools drawn on by the Government to raise standards</b>
<i>Tests</i> enable the progress of every child to be tracked. They further assist in identifying those pupils who require additional support alongside those who would benefit from extension work.
<i>Targets</i> provide an important means of measuring progress and improvement in education. They provide a clear focus for schools, teachers and pupils and clearly indicate expected standards of achievement.
<i>Performance tables</i> act as a highly accessible source of information which allows stakeholders to assess the performance of individual schools in the three core subjects. They provide ‘solid proof and real recognition of what teachers are achieving’. In addition, they form an important aspect of the wide ranging material consulted by parents in making a choice of school for their child.

### ***The National Strategies: raising standards in literacy and numeracy***

Despite the implementation of the NC and corresponding statutory assessments, low standards of attainment in literacy and numeracy continued; accentuated by international comparisons and reports of failing primary schooling (Ofsted 2002). Concern was voiced that the extensive demands of the NC prohibited children's development of basic skills in English and mathematics. In a bid to ensure delivery of their electoral pledge and raise standards in literacy and numeracy, the then recently elected Labour Government, responded with the launch of additional educational policy: the NLNS (Alexander 2000). Implemented alongside the NC, these sought to impose uniformity on teaching methods and lesson frameworks. Although heralded as non-statutory, the Government has placed state schools under immense pressure to adopt the teaching practices set out in the NLNS unless able to demonstrate that their own approach is at least as effective in raising standards (Dadds 2001; Beard 1999). As such, many primary schools have been required to adapt their teaching and curriculum to accommodate the content and methods comprising these additional policies (Ofsted 2002). An integral aspect of life in Year 6 for both pupil and teacher, examination of the NLNS helps shed light on the quotidian experiences of both parties. Each of the strategies demand one hour of dedicated teaching time per school day and through the inclusion of a framework for teaching document, detail how literacy and numeracy should be taught in primary education, from reception through to Year 6.

Since implementing the national strategies, the Labour Government has maintained its bid to raise standards in literacy and numeracy, steadily increasing KS2 targets over the years. These indicate the increasing expectation placed on Year 6 children. For example, the national targets set by the Labour Government in 2002 (when this research was undertaken) demanded that 80% of Year 6 pupils achieve at least level 4 in the NC tests for English, and 75% achieve at least level 4 in the tests for mathematics. In 2004, the national targets rose, requiring 85% of Year 6 pupils to attain level 4 in English and mathematics, and 35% to achieve the advanced level 5 in each subject (Government's Green Paper entitled '*Schools: building on success*' 2001: 28).

## *The National Literacy Strategy*

The NLS was implemented in primary schools throughout England in 1998. It arose out of the work of a Literacy Task Force and was designed to raise standards in literacy over a five to ten year period (Beard 2000). At the core of the NLS is a Framework for Teaching Literacy (FTL) document. This is derived from materials developed in the National Literacy Project, which was set up and successfully implemented by the previous Conservative Government in a bid to raise standards across fifteen LEAs (Beard 2000). The FTL:

- ◆ Details a series of teaching objectives for a child's journey through primary education
- ◆ Sets out an advocated structure for the implementation of the daily Literacy Hour (LH)
- ◆ Includes guidance notes pertaining to: mixed-year classes and small schools; reception age children; pupils for whom English is an additional language; and children with special educational needs.

In seeking to gain insight into the day-to-day classroom practices of Year 6 parties, the discussion which ensues here focuses on the first and second elements listed above.

The FTL sets out the teaching and learning objectives for a child's journey from Reception to Year 6. These are structured by term (autumn, spring, summer) and school year. Designed to enable every child to become fully literate, the objectives accentuate reading and writing skills. Whilst the exclusion of speaking and listening skills within the objectives infers their lesser importance, the FTL does acknowledge them to be essential to the development of reading and writing skills. Each term's work is focused on a particular range of reading and writing and the respective objectives cover three interrelated strands: word level (phonics, spelling and vocabulary), sentence level (grammar and punctuation) and text level (comprehension and composition). An example of the termly objectives detailed in the FTL document for Year 6, is detailed in Appendix 1.E. This excerpt sets out the vast range of knowledge, skills, and understanding which must be covered during spring term literacy lessons in Year 6. Inherent here is the assumption of

unproblematic linear learning. In acknowledging that the duration of a term is typically six weeks at one hour per day, this would equate to a total of thirty hours of literacy time in which the teacher is expected to deliver, and the child to acquire, the aforementioned prescribed knowledge set. Even if it is assumed that the teaching and learning process is unproblematic, time is at a premium and will remain so regardless of the teaching methods utilised. This seems particularly pertinent when teachers and pupils are required to revise and consolidate work covered in Year 5 alongside that in Year 6 (for instance, see objective four of word level strand). Despite the dedicated literacy time, I suspect that the objectives-led framework presents a challenge for both Year 6 teacher and pupil.

Referring to the content in the aforementioned excerpt, we can observe what knowledge the Government deems children should possess to become 'fully literate.' For example, a casual review of the objectives reveals that children should be taught the meanings and origins of proverbs. It might be argued that proverbs, whilst once being a prominent method for passing on moral education and common wisdom, have now become outmoded. Although the messages conveyed by the proverbs remain pertinent to life today, the metaphors used are dissociated from children's everyday experiences. Moreover, despite the weight given to the coherence of pupils learning experiences, there appears to be a lack of continuity amongst some objectives. For example, whilst much emphasis is placed on studying the diversity of poetry under the text level strand, pupils are not actually required to compose any, a matter which seems at odds with governmental claims.

Nonetheless, being literate is integral to successful participation in UK society today and as such, logically forms a principle goal of schooling. As Beard (1999) points out, such skills increase opportunities for personal growth and affect society as a whole, for example through shaping the economic workforce. However, one cannot assume the high value we place on literacy is shared by all countries globally. In some cultures, the ability to read and write may not be held in such high regard, as they are not deemed a prerequisite for effective participation in a given community. In these terms, it seems that the particular body of knowledge,

skills and understanding which are useful to everyday life, varies as a function of person, activity and context. Indeed, even within the UK, there will be different emphasis placed on types of literacy. For example, whilst the primary school class teacher may focus on competence in story writing, a child's peer group may value the ability to use text messaging, whilst his/her parents' primary concern, may be the child's overall level of articulation.

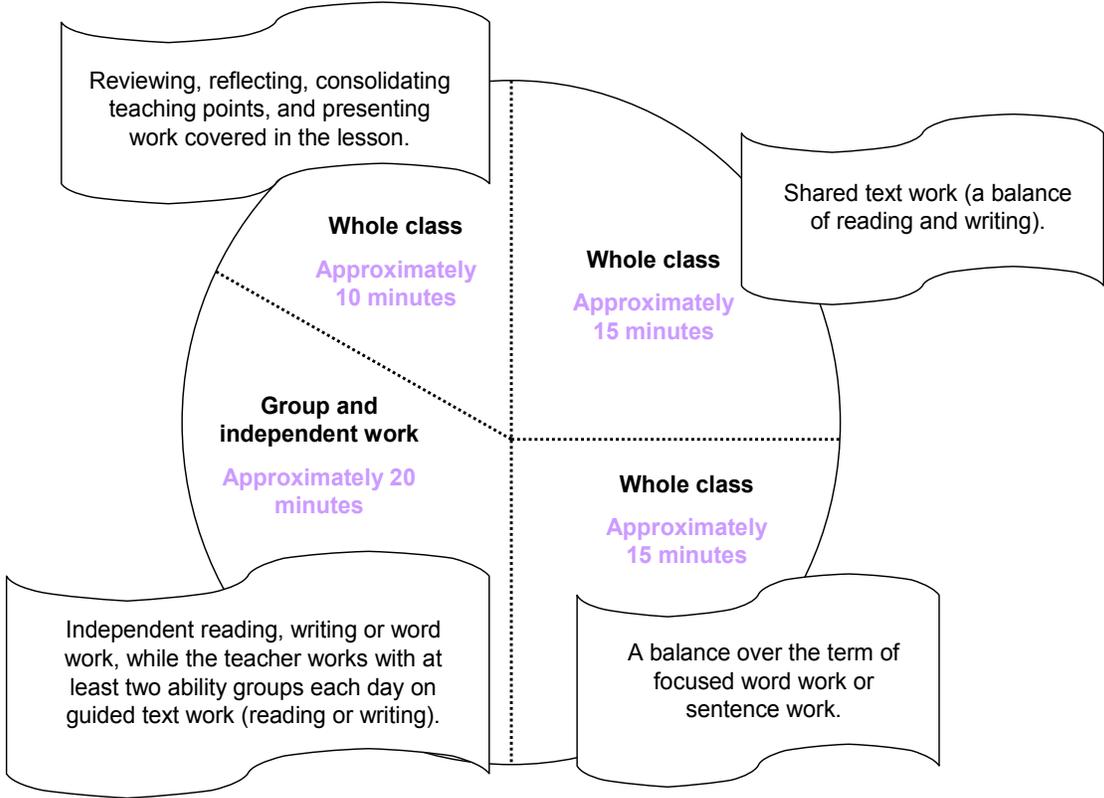
The work of Lave (1990) also demonstrates the importance of activity and context in relation to mathematical ability. She notes that in any given situation which calls for mathematical activity, the knowledge, skills and understanding we employ varies in accordance with the task at hand. This is evident when we consider our mathematical activity in multiple contexts. For example, shopping in the supermarket, following a weight watcher programme in the kitchen, taking part in lessons in the school classroom, calculating the volume of paint required to decorate a bedroom or measuring the length of fence needed to enclose the garden etc. Rather than utilising a uniform approach in undertaking all these tasks, we typically employ those aspects of our mathematical repertoire which are most applicable. In asserting that the value of knowledge, skills and understanding is bound by person, activity and context, we can infer that the qualities needed to triumph in the classroom and attain on the SATs, are not necessarily those required to experience success outside this domain. In these terms, the existence of a 'core' body of knowledge as embodied by the NC is called into question.

Whilst the content of *what* should be taught is set out in the FTL, teachers are supposedly permitted some scope as to *when* and *how* the objectives should be taught. Teachers are encouraged to use the planning sheets supplied in the FTL to achieve this. Medium-term planning is used to address when to teach material, with teachers required to distribute the teaching objectives amongst the three school terms and ensure their coverage. Short-term weekly planning is used to address the how of the teaching process; with teachers required to devise tasks, activities and strategies to meet the objectives within the allocated five hours of literacy time. However, I would argue that the inclusion of planning sheets in the FTL appears to be a somewhat superficial act of indicating flexibility in teaching;

after all, it sets out specific academic terms in which the objectives should be taught and lists numerous activities which are tied in with the objectives. As such, it would seem that the notion of teacher scope appears to be at best, somewhat restricted.

The FTL also includes information pertaining to the LH, a daily period of dedicated literacy teaching time for all pupils. Guidance for the implementation of this takes the form of detailed plans which underpin teaching practices and cover allocation of time, structure of lessons and identification of class activities. It is suggested that an hourly literacy session be divided up as indicated in figure 1.6.

**Figure 1.6:** Structure of the literacy hour  
(FTL: section one, page 9)



Each of the four allotted time frames is further broken down and instructions are provided for teachers as to how to fill each slot. For example, with regard to the first fifteen minutes of each literacy hour: ‘Shared reading is a class activity using a common text e.g. a ‘big book’, a poetry poster or text extract... At Key Stage 2

shared reading is used to extend reading skills in line with the objectives in the text level column of the Framework. Teachers should also use this work as a context for teaching and reinforcing grammar, punctuation and vocabulary work' (FTL: section one, page 11). Again, the notion of teacher scope amongst such high levels of pedagogic prescription is a moot issue.

Perhaps it is useful here to address notions of prescription within government policy as it may seem that the shortcomings I have presently noted are inconsistent with earlier comments. Previously, in discussion of the NC, I proposed that the constituent PoS and attainment level descriptions lacked specificity in terms of their content and assessment measures. I concluded that consultation of both sources furnished the reader with an overall picture of children's expected learning path in Year 6, but failed to provide specific details. Here, in reviewing the FTL, I have suggested that the policy is somewhat overly prescriptive, positioning the teacher not as an expert but merely as a transmitter of knowledge and skills. Indeed, there seems to be a huge discrepancy in the level of prescription within the two initiatives.

Introduced as a recipe to raise standards of attainment nationwide, these policies have sought to establish uniformity on the content of children's learning and teacher's pedagogical style (Cunningham 2002). I believe however, that they have served to actually inhibit the active participation of both parties in the teaching-learning process. Whilst teacher's workload and accountability has increased, their level of autonomy and authority has diminished. In these terms, the role of the teacher has been redefined by factors operating beyond their immediate control, in the form of government policy. In this newly prescribed role, the teacher has limited control over the teaching and learning process, an issue which may adversely affect his/her level of engagement and interest in his/her work. In this scenario, the teacher is in a difficult position to inspire children when they themselves have become disenchanted. Perhaps what is really needed is a policy which provides some form of guidance in relation to the content of children's learning, but which crucially also permits teachers space to actively adopt the role of 'expert.' It is feeling empowered in this role that I believe teachers are most

likely to ignite children's passion for learning and restore their own enthusiasm for teaching.

### *The National Numeracy Strategy*

In a bid to improve standards in numeracy nationwide, the Government launched the NNS throughout English primary schools in 1999. The overarching goal of this initiative was to provide a secure foundation for children's developing skills in numeracy; characterised as '...proficiency which involves confidence and competence with numbers and measures. It requires an understanding of the number system, a repertoire of computational skills and an inclination and ability to solve number problems in a variety of contexts. Numeracy also demands practical understanding of the ways in which information is gathered by counting and measuring, and is presented in graphs, diagrams, charts and tables' (FTM: section one, page 4). Here, I give consideration to the NNS which 'signalled a significant change in approach to the teaching of mathematics, both in terms of its focus... and its pedagogical practice' (Pratt 2006: 221).

Again, the Framework for Teaching Mathematics (FTM) represents a key element of the training materials provided by the Government to support the implementation of the NNS. It is underpinned by four core principles deemed to characterise an effective approach to teaching: a dedicated mathematics lesson every day; direct teaching and interactive oral work with the whole class and groups; an emphasis on mental calculation; controlled differentiation, with all pupils engaged in mathematics relating to a common theme (FTM: section one, page 11). The bulk of the Framework is composed of a series of yearly teaching PoS. These set out the teaching objectives for each academic year and are designed to correspond with the material specified in the NC. All teaching objectives are listed under five integrated strands: numbers and the number system; calculations; solving problems; measures, shape and space; handling data. These are then further broken down into specific areas of study. Amongst the plethora of teaching objectives in the PoS, are key objectives which teachers are instructed to give

priority to because they constitute the knowledge and skills children will be assessed on at the end of each Key Stage. The Year 6 key objectives for all five mathematical strands are set out in Appendix 1.F.

To meet particular teaching objectives, Unit Plans are included in the FTM. As argued with the FTL previously, although these are claimed to provide mere 'guidance,' the detail leaves little scope for teacher initiative or practice. To exemplify this point, I include an example of a Unit Plan (see Appendix 1.G). This whole unit is designed to span five lessons; the excerpt provided pertains to just one. Reflecting on the content of this lesson plan, several issues are apparent to me. Firstly, in order for pupils to understand the interrelations between fractions, decimals and percentages, prior knowledge of all three phenomena is required. With the apparent continuity and coherence in children's learning provided by the NC and the NNS, it is clearly assumed pupils have acquired the necessary knowledge in previous years. However, gaps in pupil knowledge and/or understanding are inevitable and the plan permits no time nor outlines any coping strategies to deal with this situation should it arise.

In addition, the teaching activities advocate a whole class teaching approach for the most part of the lesson and as a consequence those children who lack basic understanding of any of the three phenomena or their relationship will struggle to access the lesson content. Moreover, in comparing the size of fractions, many of the teaching activities require skill in multiplication and division to enable pupils to convert fractions so they have the same denominator. Those who struggle with this aspect of numeracy (for example, if they do not know the timetables by rote) will also experience difficulty participating in the activities and achieving the lesson objectives. As Davis (2001) points out, all mathematical concepts are inextricably linked; no single concept can be thoroughly grasped without reference to another. To exemplify this, he uses the analogy of a chessboard and suggests that whilst the position of a rook has no meaning on its own, its identity is derived from its relationships with the other pieces on the board. A casual analysis of this unit plan has raised several issues surrounding children's level of understanding and

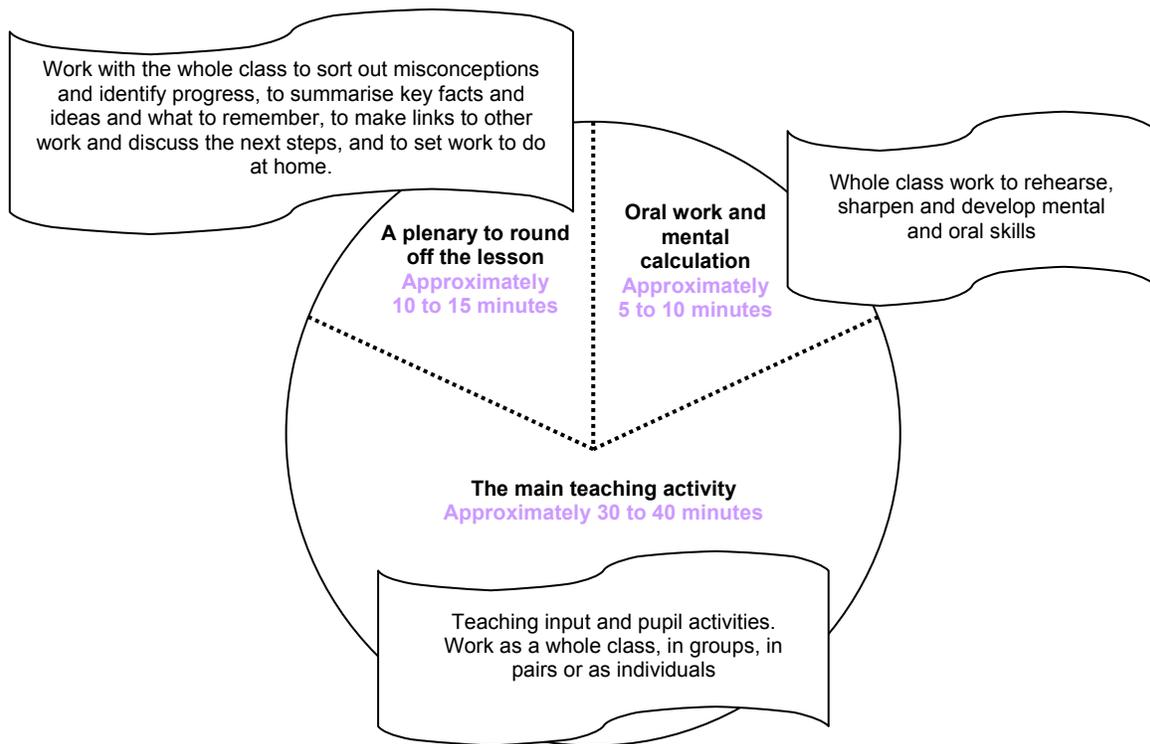
participation in the lesson and it may be that this is indicative of Year 6 pupils' learning experience.

Following the format of the NLS launched a year earlier, the NNS details the inclusion of a compulsory 'Numeracy Hour' which permits the necessary time for teachers and pupils to cover the yearly teaching and key objectives. All primary year groups are obliged to participate in structured mathematics lessons on a daily basis, lasting approximately forty five minutes at Key Stage 1 and fifty to sixty minutes at Key Stage 2. Alongside this, teachers are required to provide further opportunities for pupils to continue to develop and apply their mathematical skills across other subject domains. The FTM recommends that a typical numeracy lesson, regardless of the primary school year, follows the template illustrated in figure 1.7. Given its uniform structure it is proposed within the FTM that this will promote discussion of lessons and encourage a forum for developing ideas and sharing best practice. However, through specifying the structure of the Numeracy Hour and the manner in which it should be executed, it leaves little scope for teachers to be autonomous and exercise their initiative in the day-to-day planning and teaching of their class.

During the course of the numeracy hour, teachers are instructed to adopt an active role and engage in direct teaching and questioning of the whole class, a group of pupils or individuals for as much time as feasibly possible. Organising pupils as a whole class is the preferred format in the FTM as it ensures every child will benefit from sustained periods of direct teaching and interaction. This structure, which stresses whole class interaction, is reported to contrast sharply with that of traditional classrooms (Pratt 2006). These were characterised by 'teacher-dominated conversation' and 'teacher instigated routine paper and pencil work' (Desforges and Cockburn 1987: 139). Whilst the move towards recognizing the necessary participation of both parties in the learning process is indeed laudable, notions of participation are highly complex. Pupil participation in class lessons can be restricted or prohibited by many factors (see chapter two). Moreover, as I pointed out previously, research evaluating the impact of this strategy upon

classroom practices indicates that the trend for traditional patterns of whole class teaching continues (Hardman et al 2003).

**Figure 1.7:** Structure of the numeracy hour  
(FTM: section one, page 13)



Reflecting on my observations as a teaching assistant, it is a somewhat idealistic notion to expect class teachers to engage in discussion with every pupil using differentiated levels of questioning and simultaneously maintain the interest of another twenty nine pupils during the course of any one lesson. With many individual needs being only briefly addressed or at worst remaining unrecognised, whole class direct teaching is arguably not the optimum format for all pupils. This is bolstered by educational and psychological literature which draws on Vygotskian theory. In characterising learning and development as the result of the meanings a child negotiates through his/her experiences, research cites the potential value of pair and small group work for extending children's learning. This format permits both learner and more experienced other to bring their own experiences and understandings to a situation and use them in any interpretations made (for example, Rowell 2002; Tudge 1990).

It seems that the management of the teaching and learning process has in effect been taken away from teachers and superseded by the intricacies of policy. This is further indicated by the provision of termly planning grids within the FTM, which, designed to assist teachers with effective lesson planning, illustrate how individuality and flexibility in teaching has been stunted by government documentation. The grid sets out the topics which are to be taught and the recommended number of lessons the teacher should use for the completion of each unit with time built in for half-termly assessment and review. The FTM states that teachers are permitted to teach the units in any order, although extra time given to one unit means teachers will need to decrease the time allotted to another. The suggested allocation of time detailed in the planning grids is based on the following premise: 'Overall, the units of work for each of Years 1 to 6 require 175 days of the school year, leaving about one week in each term for extra reinforcement or revision, making cross-curriculum links or more extended problem solving' (FTM: section one, page 38). Such a tight schedule again denotes a problem free teaching-learning journey throughout primary schooling and leaves little room for teachers to address any difficulties pupils may experience during each taught unit. Difficulties in integrating new mathematical concepts inevitably arise due to gaps in pupil knowledge and/or understanding. This may be a consequence of absence, problems retaining and/or applying information, or shortcomings in previous coverage of teaching objectives. If teachers are not permitted the time to address such issues, they will persist and over a period of years magnify, until the child finding him/herself in Year 6, struggles to keep up with the work being covered in class and in turn, fails achieve the nationally expected levels of attainment.

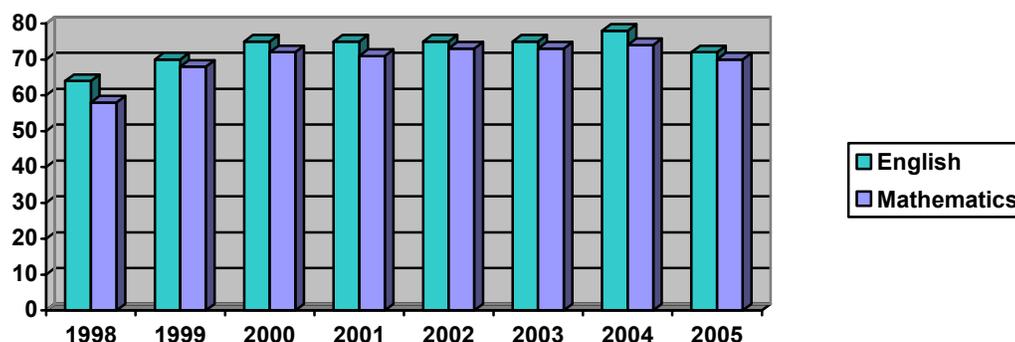
As core elements of the NLNS, both the FTL and the FTM are primarily designed as a practical tool to aid teaching on a day-to-day basis. Teaching objectives serve as a guide to understand how pupils should progress throughout their time at primary school and ensure 'appropriately' high expectations of pupil achievement are sought. In addition, it is also recognised they are a crucial tool for headteachers and governors in their facilitation and management of improved literacy and numeracy standards.

## Evaluating the National Strategies

The 2003 Primary National Strategy Document claims that *all* those who have evaluated the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have found them to be ‘strikingly successful at improving the quality of teaching and raising standards in primary schools’ (page 27). Indeed, looking at the marked rise in literacy and numeracy attainment since their implementation (see figure 1.8); some may accept this black and white view uncritically. However, in reviewing the literature, it would seem that the Government paints a somewhat over-romanticised view in their evaluation of the strategies upon primary education in England. Consultation of research illuminates mixed reviews on the success of the strategies in raising standards of teaching and learning for all pupils; this is exemplified in the overview of research presented below.

**Figure 1.8:** Bar chart to illustrate the rising levels of pupil attainment on KS2 English and Mathematics SATs across England (indicating the number of pupils achieving level 4 and above)

(Adapted from information accessed at <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/performance/tables/>; 21/04/05)



The Government claims that the strategies are effective because performance on end of KS2 NC tests have improved. In the immediate years following the introduction of the strategies (1998/1999) the performance on the KS2 SATs indicated a steady rise in standards of literacy and numeracy. From 2000 onwards, the rise in attainment started to peter out. Given the high value placed on KS2 statutory test results, this data is extremely powerful in promoting a positive perception of the efficacy of government policies amongst stakeholders nationally

and internationally (Tymms 2004). However, it cannot be assumed the strategies provide a better education for children merely because SATs results have increased. The rise in attainment may be symptomatic of a number of factors.

Firstly, given the prescriptive nature of the learning objectives detailed in the NLNS, it could be that the content of children's learning and that of the national tests increasingly began to mirror each other. A standard practice of the QCA is to ensure that the tests reflect the content of the curriculum as it is currently conceived and delivered (Shorrocks-Taylor, Curry, Swinnerton and Nelson 2003). Prior to the implementation of the NLNS, test design would have been based on the more general specifications of the NC, but the arrival of the strategies outlined an increasingly prescriptive nature of learning content. Thus, a rise in SATs results does not necessarily imply that children are learning a greater range and depth of knowledge or that their learning experiences are any better. It could be that children learned equally well prior to the introduction of the strategies but that the content of their learning fell short of the national test agenda.

Tymms (2004) also questions the adequacy of the statutory test data as a means of monitoring standards over time. He proposes that the rise in performance attainment following the implementation of the strategies must, in part, be due to children becoming more adept at taking tests. Given the ramifications of SATs results for schools, teachers and pupils, the immense pressure to perform will inevitably mean that 'test technique' and 'teaching to the test' are characteristic features of school practice. Moreover, in comparing official results with data collected in independent studies, Tymms found variance between reported levels of attainment. He suggests it would be more informative if results for English and Numeracy were deconstructed into their constituent areas rather than presented as a whole.

The research of Earl, Watson and Torrance (2002), who were commissioned by the DfES to evaluate both strategies, is often cited as a source of support. They report that the implementation of the NLNS across primary schools countrywide has been successful and that the strategies 'have made significant changes in

primary education throughout England in a remarkably short period of time' (page 35). Yet, rather than addressing learning outcomes, their research focuses on the implementation of change and the process of large scale reform: Can it succeed? What does it involve? Can it be sustained? In addition, it may also be pointed out that their finding that classroom and school practice has changed does not in itself engender an improvement in children's learning experiences and potential to achieve. Whilst the studies reviewed above are but a small sample of those published, one cannot help but be left with the distinct impression, that the Government overstated their claim for unequivocal support of the strategies in raising standards nationwide.

What effects have the NLNS had upon classroom practice? Whilst the introduction of the strategies signalled extensive change in pedagogical practice (Pratt 2006), a review of the literature reveals that this 'change' did not ensue in the classroom. Nevertheless, the day-to-day use of the Frameworks amongst some pockets of the teacher population has been noted. Basit (2003) reports that the NNS is viewed in a positive light by many student teachers, who find the prescriptive nature of the framework helpful for developing a sense of 'professional expertise in an area where they have often experienced some anxiety' (page 61). Rather than perceiving teaching objectives and a lesson template as restrictions on pedagogical innovation and versatility, the trainee teachers appreciate the reduced responsibilities they experience. For trainee teachers, it would seem that the frameworks are invaluable tools for assisting the individual to deconstruct his/her role in the classroom. Are the NLNS received so favourably by experienced teachers? Crawford (2003) conducted a small scale questionnaire study to investigate the view of teachers in the first three years of the NLS implementation. She concluded that attitudes towards the strategy had become increasingly positive as teachers had developed greater knowledge and familiarity with the framework. However, a concern continued to be voiced over the literacy hour template. Many felt the prescribed duration was problematic given the difficulties some pupils experienced in sustaining concentration. This was particularly pertinent to those pupils who were considered 'more able' and those with special educational needs.

The strategy frameworks place a huge emphasis on whole class teaching as the principle method of delivery in both the literacy and numeracy hours as it is thought to promote increased levels of inclusion and ensure that all pupils benefit from sustained direct teaching regardless of their location on the ability spectrum. However, research suggests the effectiveness of this model is limited. In a review of children's perspectives on the literacy hour in one junior school, Wall (2004) noted that the whole-class teaching approach was ill-received. The thirty minute session at the start of the LH was a prolonged period of inactivity for many children. Teachers in a study carried out by Smith and Hardman (2000), expressed concern over a possible polarisation effect following the implementation of the NLS, with the more able pupils succeeding at a higher level and the pupils identified with special educational needs, failing further behind. These findings are bolstered by multiple studies which indicate that the whole class teaching model does not lend itself to addressing the needs of those children experiencing difficulties with literacy or those labelled with special educational needs (for example: Lingard 2000; Wearmouth and Soler 2001; Crawford 2003). As pointed out by Wyse (2003) 'there is still no research which has sought to assess the merits of particular teaching methods of the FFT in contrast to others. Assertions that gains have been made in statutory tests are not enough to justify the neglect of the fact that better teaching methods could produce higher grades' (page 913).

With specific focus on the NLS and its principle document the FTL, Wyse (2003) questions the three sources of evidence frequently cited in support of the initiative. These are cited in the Government commissioned *NLS: Review of Research and other Related Evidence* (Beard 1999), which remains the most assertive empirical defence of the strategy since its implementation. Wyse claims that the inspection evidence drawn on to support the pedagogy of the NLS should not be treated as unproblematic. Tracing the changes in the recommended approaches to teaching reading and writing in primary education, he challenges the reliability and validity of evidence from school inspections, reporting that they are methodologically weak. In addition, he notes that in terms of school effectiveness research there is a considerable lack of evidence to support the objective-led conceptualisation of learning set out in the FTL Programmes of Study. Wyse further argues that there

is no evidence from the child development literature to support the model of teaching that the strategy offers. Whilst the Government is congratulating itself on the success of the NLNS, the research community clearly remains divided about the benefits.

### ***Section summary***

This section has discussed the prominent role of government policy in shaping the teaching and learning process in the Year 6 classroom. I have outlined those government initiatives which were assigned a principle role in the management and advancement of children's learning at the time of this research. In unison, these policies provide the underpinning structure for the experiences of the teacher and pupil in the Year 6 classroom. From the standpoint of the teacher, they set out: the body of knowledge, skills and understanding that must be taught; the order and timeframe in which it should be delivered; the means of instruction that should be used; and the valued methods of ensuring this prescribed body of knowledge, skills and understanding has been successfully transmitted. From the standpoint of the pupil, the policies detail: the body of knowledge, skills and understanding that must be acquired in order to experience educational success in the school system; the order and point of his/her school career at which it must be learnt; and the means by which this information will be received. Acquisition of the prescribed body of knowledge, skills and understanding is ensured via continual monitoring and assessment, with the valued level of attainment fixed and uniform for all. To ensure teachers and pupils fulfil their designated role in this framework, the success or otherwise of their respective teaching and learning performance is indicated for all to see and judge in the National primary school performance tables.

Because the teaching and learning process is underpinned by government policy, consultation of educational initiatives can furnish readers with an overview of Year 6 classroom practices in schools nationwide. However, the picture formed can only ever be a partial representation as it lacks the intricacies of pupils' and

teachers' lived experiences. To gain this richness and add depth to the picture, it thus behoves stakeholders to take into consideration the perspectives and understandings of these parties. In doing so, the spotlight is moved away from an appreciation of the primary school as part of the wider English school system controlled by Central Government, and towards an understanding of it as a community in itself. This is the focus of the next section, where the experiences of pupil and teacher become the foreground.

### **The primary experience: illuminating the voice of pupil and teacher**

The opening preface of both the NC and NLNS illuminates the Government's insistence on the principle role of education for the success of current and future generations. This is mirrored by a wealth of literature on curricula and pedagogy in schools, which endeavours to set out the optimum conditions for children's learning. Indeed, a perusal of the bookshelves in any branch of Waterstones or Borders etc. will find advice for the head teacher, class teacher, support staff, parent and pupil. The message emanating from these publications is clear: educational attainment is of integral value in societal life today. However, much of this aforementioned literature negates the perspective of the child learner; rarely do researchers ask pupils about their educational experience (Riley and Docking 2004). Rather, it is the voices of adult stakeholders which are accentuated in the literature; typically, those of caregivers or teachers (Christensen and Prout 2002). As I point out in chapter three, this practice is underpinned by behaviourist theory and sees the child positioned as an object. Viewed as a passive recipient of all knowledge and actions, recognition is given solely to the role of others acting upon the child. In negating the voice of the child, we, as researchers and stakeholders, are reinforcing the notion that 'adults know best' (Sherman 1996). Devoid of the child's own perspective as learner, any understanding of the schooling process is inevitably limited. Whilst not any more true than the accounts of teachers or parents etc. the child's perspective is a critical element of gaining a more holistic picture. Indeed, research has indicated that very young children can articulate their feelings about school and learning in a complex way (Bearne 2002;

McCallum, Hargreaves and Gipps 2000). Accordingly, the onus is on the researcher to take account of their views alongside those of adults. As participants of the teaching and learning process in the classroom, this section seeks to give prominence to the voice of pupil and teacher.

### *Detailing the lived experiences of pupils and teachers in the classroom*

Multiple literature searches spanning the past decade have found very few research papers which actually discuss Year 6 pupils' and teachers' experiences of school. Rather, much of the literature which pertains to Year 6 focuses on one of two areas: the impact of government policy and the multiplicity of issues surrounding pupils' forthcoming transition to secondary school. In terms of the former, there is a preoccupation amongst researchers with the impact of government policy upon: standards of attainment (for example, Davis and Brember 1999; Davis 1999; Conti-Ramsden, Knox, Botting and Simkin 2002) and classroom practices (for example, Hardman et al 2003; Earl et al 2002). In contrast, the transition literature spans a vast array of issues, including: the drop in learning performance experienced by a significant number of pupils between Years 6 and 7 (Galton, Morrison and Pell 2000); continuities and discontinuities in teaching and learning practices between primary and secondary schools (Huggins and Knight 1997; Williams and Jephcote 1993); identity (Renold 2003); friendships (Pratt and George 2005) and bullying (Pellegrini and Long 2002). However, a review of this literature does not enable the reader to elaborate upon the picture of the Year 6 classroom formed in relation to the policies outlined in section two. In my search, I have also located the work of three prominent authors which claim to look at primary school practice: Maurice Galton, Robin Alexander and Andrew Pollard. However, much of their research is now dated and because of the additional and amended policy in place at the time of this research, their findings would arguably be of little use in understanding the present day Year 6 classroom.

### *Gaining further insight: the perspectives of pupils and teachers*

To gain insight into the quotidian experiences of pupils and teachers I now turn to the literature which explores both parties' perceptions of schooling and the learning process. Their quotidian experiences and understanding of this process highlights a complexity overlooked by the concrete guidelines set out in the government policies outlined in section two. Of the limited Year 6 literature available, there are few studies which seek to 'give voice' to pupils. As such, I supplement the few studies which I have been able to locate, with research carried out alongside children attending primary school and the early years of secondary school.

Using an ethnographic approach, Christensen and James (2001) explored the perceived purpose of school and the views of learning amongst Year 6 pupils and their teachers in three primary schools, located in the North of England. The data collected highlighted children's awareness of the instrumental role which school played in mapping out their life trajectories. The pupils reported that the overarching purpose of school was to ensure they got a good education which in turn, would secure their future employment. Attending primary school was deemed to be an important first stage in their working career. Pupils believed it was in their own benefit to work hard at primary school as it meant they were better prepared upon entering secondary education. Whilst they appreciated that some forms of employment required further study at university, completion of secondary education was perceived a necessary step to secure a 'good' job, with children pointing out that a better job resulted in increased financial award. The great proportion of time spent on English and mathematics in school was regarded as necessary preparation for their future lives, with skills deemed crucial for the world of work. In contrast, art and technology were perceived to be less useful in terms of their value to later life, but nonetheless enjoyable in the context of school. Given the strategic importance assigned to school performance in their life plan, it is interesting to note that children's accounts of the schooling process were littered with concerns over the social aspects of learning. For example, conversations were dominated by talk of friendships in school, setting placements in the

classroom and the suitability of partners allocated for collaborative work ventures (ibid.).

The data gathered in the ethnographic study also witnessed Year 6 teachers maintaining the overarching value of primary school education for children's future lives. In their role, teachers believed it was important to create opportunities for children through early exposure to a wealth of different experiences. However, the Year 6 teachers also acknowledged that in the current climate of increasing restriction and control this goal was difficult to achieve. Given the multiplicity of messages conveyed by SATs results, performance on these tests had become a shared central concern for the school, teacher, pupil and parent. Placed under increasing pressure to perform, teachers revealed that work throughout the academic year focused on the SATs. Seeking to ensure all children achieved their targets, teachers reported a preoccupation with effective allocation of time and space. Children were grouped in accordance with teachers' perceptions of their academic abilities, with specific pupils seated to ensure they received a greater proportion of teacher attention. Teachers admitted that in striving to achieve the literacy and numeracy standards set out by the Government, the desire to provide a more general, rounded education was overridden. Moreover, they believed that the huge emphasis placed on standards and tests had led to a deterioration in their relations with pupils. They had impacted on the nature and structure of lessons, with no time available to run with the ideas children initiated in class.

The principle role of the SATs in dictating teaching and learning practice in the Year 6 classroom is also evident in the work of Sturman (2003). In acknowledging the growing culture of test preparation, Sturman gathered questionnaire data from teachers in sixty four primary schools throughout England regarding their classroom practice in the core subject domain of science. Teachers revealed that widespread preparation for the statutory tests began at the start of the academic year or in January, after the Christmas holiday and continued until the start of the testing week. Teachers also outlined that much preparation for the tests centred around pencil and paper tasks, with science activities including much experimental and investigative work, left until after completion of the tests.

Sherman (1996) interviewed children in the first year of their school career, seeking to ascertain their perspectives on schooling. As demonstrated in the following excerpts, Sherman found that aged five, children were already cognizant of school as a preparation for the work place: 'We need to go to school to do some learning and working and if we don't so that then we will never get to the bigger school'; 'because I need to work and find out how to do work and then I will be able to go to the proper work' (page 91). Children regarded school attendance as central to the development of work skills which were necessary for their future success. Without the experience of school, children believed they would be 'dumb,' 'not know how to write,' 'not do our numbers' and 'not be very clever' (ibid.). Sherman remarks that much of the children's talk 'seemed a crude distillation of their parents and teachers projected beliefs about school and its value to children' (page 3). Children were aware that attending school was compulsory and an accepted practice of socialization, but they varied in their opinion as to who made them go. Whilst parents and carers were the prominent authority figures who ensured their attendance, the head teacher, class teacher and god were also mentioned. Some children were also aware of a larger authority ensuring they went to school, with one child remarking he attended to ensure his parents were not sent to jail.

Children's perceptions about school as a positive or negative experience were fluid and ever changing, determined by the recent activities they had engaged in. In terms of the content of their learning, children made a distinction between work and play activities. The former was characterized as those curriculum activities assigned by the teacher: writing, reading, numbers, paints, art and craft activities. These were typically deemed less enjoyable than play activities, which implied free choice and involved water, sand, clay, puzzles, choo's (trains) and house. Only those pupils identified by the teacher as 'successful' found work tasks enjoyable and would choose them over play activities given the choice. Children's comments revealed they were aware of their own capabilities and those of their peers, which in part, they interpreted through teacher assigned work.

The body of knowledge, skills and understanding enshrined by the NC was conceived by the children as an object, physically transmitted by the teacher or

written word: 'through the eyes, through the fingers, up your arms and into your brain'; 'by swirling all around your head and then going into your ears'; 'by opening a box in your brain and once the information is in there, putting the lid back on it' (page 46). Children believed that the process of acquiring this material was facilitated by quiet concentration and perseverance. Classroom practices dictate that talking is detrimental to the learning process and progress; it is actively discouraged at work time but permitted during play activities. In following this routine, children inevitably fail to appreciate the value that discussion and reflection can have upon learning. Rather, the only dialogue that is deemed beneficial is that between teacher and pupil, which, as demonstrated in the first section of this chapter, is found to be predominantly one way. Moreover, children maintained that school was the true place of learning, as performing tasks at home with parents, such as domestic chores, was not on the whole, perceived to be a learning opportunity. It was quite disconcerting to read the children's articulated understandings of the learning process. Aged five, their beliefs and practices already reflect a number of the deep seated assumptions that our schooling system is founded on.

McCallum et al (2000) interviewed a sample of forty four pupils from Year 2 (age 6 to 7) and Year 6 (age 10 to 11) from multiple primary schools in and around London. They found them to be explicit in their understanding of what enabled learning and the specific strategies and processes they utilised individually to undertake learning tasks in classroom context. The conditions identified as conducive to learning related to both the individual (physical state, frame of mind, attitude, age, ability) and the learning environment (classroom climate, teaching strategies, organisational arrangements). Pupils recognised that it was important to be alert in order to maintain focus on learning tasks, a state which could be adversely affected by general tiredness or if a previous lesson was found to be particularly difficult and draining. They suggested that in order to learn well it was important to feel confident and have a positive attitude, to be willing and determined rather than over complacent. Pupils were aware that they learnt more when they enjoyed the lesson and, if bored in class, were liable to be easily

distracted. They outlined the importance of a relaxed and happy environment in which they felt valued.

Pupils highlighted the importance of ensuring they were given space and encouragement to approach the teacher for help individually as it was potentially embarrassing to admit lack of knowledge or understanding in front of the rest of the class. Pupils discussed the importance of the teacher's role, pointing out the benefit of warm up activities (for example short mental arithmetic exercises) to get them into the right frame of mind and summaries of the previous lesson's content were regarded helpful. They believed that teachers should be explicit in highlighting when something new was being learnt. Pupils indicated a preference for mixed ability groups to enhance learning, recognising that they learnt more if paired with 'someone on one's own level or sometimes that little bit better' (page 282); however, a ceiling limit of five was placed on group size.

Year 6 pupils viewed their learning journey as their own responsibility. They were aware that learning could be a struggle at times and accentuated the role of talk as critical for the learning process. Ongoing discussion with peers and teacher provided a means to access new information, confirm personal interpretations and clarify any misunderstandings. Pupils cited a wide range of strategies and processes they utilised in their approach to learning, these included visualizing, memorizing, empathizing, interpreting, solving, brainstorming, discussing, listening, observing, reading and active participation in undertaking practical tasks.

In exploring the transition from KS1 to KS2 and pupils corresponding dip in academic performance, Bearne (2002) carried out a series of interviews with Year 3 children of mixed ability to explore their understanding of the learning phenomenon. Children's contributions illuminated the importance of three main aspects of learning: friendships, groupings and independent learning. Whilst teachers viewed friendships amongst children as potentially anti-learning, children stressed the importance of friendships for successful learning. They voiced that the company of their friends made them feel more confident in learning and undertaking tasks. Because teachers perceived friendships to have negative

implications for learning progress, it influenced any decisions they made about groupings in lessons. However, the interview data highlighted that the children themselves had a perceptive understanding of who they worked with best; they were able to identify which peers engaged in supportive collaboration and which peers served as a distraction.

In those grouping that were formed according to ability, children also had an awareness of whether they belonged to a 'more able' or 'less able' group. However, some teachers were critical of this practice and instead chose to employ mixed ability groupings across all or specific subject domains; highlighting that parties of all ability levels benefited from this grouping format. The notion of independent learning was perceived differently amongst teachers; some believed it to be the ability to undertake work without ongoing adult supervision and others thought of it in terms of offering greater choice and autonomy to children in their learning. Interestingly, for children the concept of independent learning was markedly different. They interpreted it as a time not to bother the teacher and to be quiet when undertaking work tasks. Children's views of responsibility in the learning process varied. In those schools which placed an emphasis on discussing the learning process and where the teacher explained and modelled, the children took greater responsibility for their own learning and for their behaviour in the school.

Investigating students' and teachers' perceptions of school life, Riley and Docking (2004) distributed questionnaires to both parties across primary and secondary schools in the South of England. The questionnaire comprised two broad sections. The first drew on a Likert scale format and asked respondents to indicate how they felt about items pertaining to: rules and discipline; teacher and student relationships; parental support; and standards of student behaviour. The second section was open-ended and gave space for teachers and students (specifically Years 6, 8 and 10) to voice their own concerns. The majority of pupils reported schooling to be a worthwhile endeavour; they highlighted the ongoing support and interest expressed by their carers and valued teachers' efforts to set high standards of work and behaviour. On the whole, Year 6 pupils gave the

impression that their schooling experience was satisfactory. Many judged school work to be 'okay' and the school's disciplinary style 'about right' (page 171). They felt they received praise from teachers and were regularly informed about the extent of progress they were making. Those pupils who spoke more favourably about school, talked about the opportunities to actively participate in lessons through discussion and practical activity and the chance to socialise with peers. They also reported positive relations with teachers, highlighting the personal qualities of teachers which they valued.

However, secondary pupils in Year 8 and particularly those in Year 10, consistently reported greater criticism of lessons, disciplinary issues and student-teacher relations. The overabundance of school rules received particular criticism, with students questioning their relevance as they were deemed irrelevant to learning effectively. For example, one student commented: 'The teachers think that having your shirt tucked in will help you work well.' Another stated: 'As long as we're learning, what does it matter what colour hair band we wear?' (Id. at 176). Nonetheless, students' perceptions of lessons, teacher and student relationships and the rhetoric and practice of rules and discipline varied considerably between schools. Riley and Docking (2004) further note that the teachers overestimated the extent to which children enjoyed school and the interest they took in their studies and underestimated the value pupils placed on completing their school work and the ramifications of bullying.

Investigating perceptions of school underachievement, Duffield, Allen, Turner and Morris (2000) conducted focus group interviews with pupils in their early years of secondary school in Scotland. The interview data revealed that pupils placed greater emphasis on the social rather than pedagogical nature of school. The authors 'found a constructed social world, its complexity contrasting with the simplistic approach of government documents' (page 270).

## **Section summary**

Seeking to gain insight into the lived experiences of pupils and teachers in the classroom, this section has brought to the foreground their perspectives as principle parties involved in the teaching and learning relationship. In the studies reviewed here, teachers were primarily concerned with ensuring they fulfilled the expectations set out by government policy; this remained the case despite any personal reservations they held. In contrast, much of the children's discourse in the literature reviewed deconstructs the process of learning and emphasises the social nature of school. The perspective of the pupil provides us with insight into the learning and schooling experiences which remains unacknowledged by those of the teacher or policy maker. As Cullingford (2002) writes, 'the experience of school that emerges from what the pupils themselves tell us creates a different picture from that of the rhetoric of policy makers and their publicists (page 191). Whilst Cullingford is reflecting here on his research which looked at the daily experiences of secondary school Year 10 and 11 pupils, his words are equally applicable to the research reviewed in this section. Whilst the social aspects of schooling are clearly integral to the experiences of the child, they are not recognised to be valuable by the teacher or the Government.

## **Chapter summary**

Employing the broad distinctions outlined in the framework of Talbert and McLaughlin (1999), this chapter has sought to elucidate the inherent multi-level nature of school. Giving prominence to the existence of school on a macro-level, it has explored wider societal values towards education and child development and illuminated how these implicitly underpin children's experiences in the classroom. Imbued in government educational policy, I have looked at a number of core initiatives assigned a principle role in the management and advancement of children's learning. Whilst consultation of these has provided readers with an overview of Year 6 classroom practices in schools nationwide, the picture ascertained fails to take account of the intricacies of pupils' and teachers' lived

experiences. To gain this richness, I brought the perspectives of these parties to the fore. Although the principle participants of the schooling process, it is these people who have least say in how educational provision is organised. In giving consideration to the immediate and more distal settings of school, I believe I have communicated a more holistic understanding of those factors which shape children's day-to-day experiences in Year 6.

In the next chapter, I continue my allegiance to multilevel frameworks and employ ecological theory to elucidate the intricacies of children's learning journeys. I argue that any attempt at reaching a full understanding of learning and development must give consideration to the role of the child and his/her social context. The process of learning is not individual as traditional psychological theories presuppose, but is a wider phenomenon, distributed across agent, activity and world. In presenting this alternative, I seek to prompt the reader to acknowledge that learning is much more complex than is readily assumed in the current acquisition model of education. Clearly, the elimination of entrenched behaviourist ideas which underpin this model will be a long and difficult process, but only once the complexity of learning is acknowledged can we begin to consider alternatives to present day educational practices.

## CHAPTER TWO

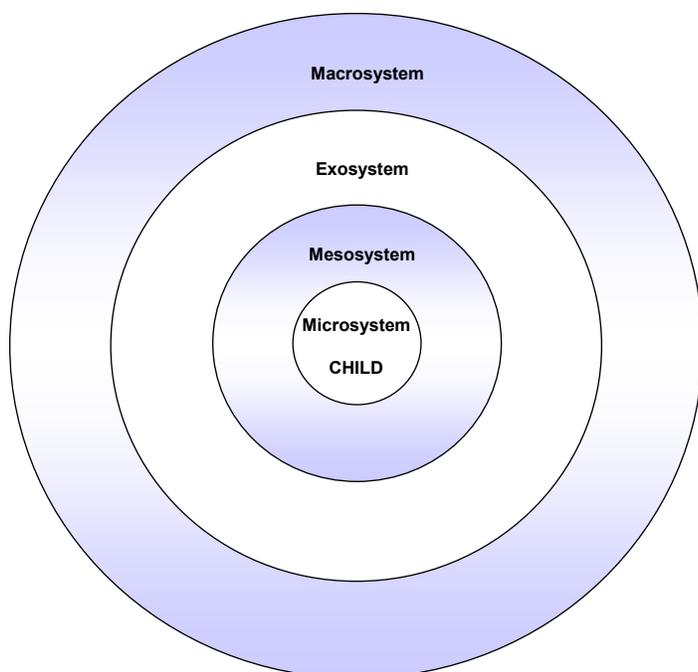
### CHALLENGING TRADITIONAL THEORY: RECONCEPTUALISING LEARNING AS EXPERIENCE

In the previous chapter, I established that the organisation and nature of current schooling practices are predicated on traditional psychological models of learning. Most pervasive are the underpinning tenets of behaviourist theory, which posit a transmission-receiver model of learning and locate performance in the individual. In this chapter, I set out to challenge this prevailing discourse by reconceptualising learning as experience. This act renders any understanding of the process more complex than currently acknowledged by the education system today. It becomes a wider phenomenon, encompassing the individual and the multiple settings in which s/he is embedded. This shift in focus enables the intricate nature of children's development to become more readily apparent. With raised awareness, stakeholders will identify that any learning trajectory is shaped not only by the actions of the individual child, but also, myriad wider factors beyond his/her control.

The position I adopt is informed by multiple theoretical perspectives that I have found to possess particular explanatory power in terms of elucidating the process and nature of learning. As the core framework, I use Urie Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory of human development (2001). This provides a coherent understanding of the complex environment in which every individual is situated. Although designed to encompass an individual's entire life span, I use the framework to specifically explore the world of the Year 6 child. An underpinning assumption of this theory is that development cannot be explained through exclusive consideration of the individual child but must also explore the complexity of his/her environment. As Bronfenbrenner noted, 'Development never takes place in a vacuum, it is always embedded and expressed through behavior in a particular environment' (Bronfenbrenner 1979: 27). Accordingly, the bioecological theory

places the child at the centre of his/her world, envisioned as a series of nested systems: micro-, meso-, exo- and macro- (see figure 2.1). It is asserted that the proximal and distal factors operating in the child's multi-tiered environment interact in idiosyncratic and dynamic ways with his/her repertoire of personal characteristics, shaping the child's development.

**Figure 2.1:** A topological illustration of the embedded contexts comprising the bioecological model



- ◆ *The Microsystem* represents the child's immediate social and physical environment. Within this context, consideration would need to be given to the proximal relationships (with friends, parents, teaching staff) and activities (reading, playing) in which the child engages.
- ◆ *The Mesosystem* is the network of relations amongst the microsystems in a child's life.
- ◆ *The Exosystem* represents the larger community setting in which the child lives. It comprises contexts which impinge on a child's learning experiences although the child is not directly involved.
- ◆ *The Macrosystem* represents the societal blueprint and includes core cultural, legal, political, religious, economic and educational values of a given society.

The conceptualisation of development posited by this model means it operates as a broad brushstroke theoretical lens. Thus, I have chosen to embed additional theoretical perspectives within it. These essentially provide a means of investigating the intricacies of factors operating both within the multi-level environment and the developing individual. Specifically, I integrate: the work of Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger on legitimate peripheral participation and communities of practice to explore factors operating in the child's exo- and meso-system; Lev Vygotsky's zone of proximal development to consider the role of relationships in the child's microsystem; and notions of metacognition and self-efficacy to investigate the developmentally instigative characteristics of the child

him/herself. Applied in unison, these theories provide an explanation for learning on multiple levels: the wider conditions that surround learning, the intricate mechanisms of the learning process itself and the role of the learner.

In the following sections, I will discuss each of the theoretical perspectives noted above and consider how they inform our understanding of the learning process and how they may account for pupils' performance in the school domain. I begin with Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model and go on to outline the principles of the remaining theoretical perspectives, situating them within this broader theory. To demonstrate the elucidatory strength of each theoretical lens, I incorporate pertinent illustrations. These are taken from a fund of real life examples observed in my role as classroom assistant prior to undertaking this research. These illustrations often take the form of vignettes, as I have found them to be particularly effective in communicating complex ideas. Given confinements of space, these are located in the appendices rather than the main body of text. In the discussion which ensues, I also endeavour to show how my selection of theoretical frameworks can usefully co-exist and be situated within the ecological model to provide a powerful exposition for understanding the complexity of children's learning experiences.

In recognising the mediating role of the environment, all the approaches utilised are united in the assumption that a child's development and learning experiences can only be understood through consideration of the social networks in which they are embedded. The fundamental role of the social context is acknowledged in much of today's developmental literature. However, many researchers explore specific influences upon children's learning, failing to situate investigated phenomena in the wider ecological framework. For example, in stressing the role of proximal relations upon learning and behaviour, be it with family members (Sénéchal and LeFevre 2002; Haney and Hill 2004), peers (Day 1996; Fawcett and Garton 2005) or teachers (Swinson and Harrop 2001), prominence is given to the microsystem. This context is reported to receive the most attention in the psychological literature (Tudge and Hogan 2005). The role of distal factors in

shaping learning and development are acknowledged to a lesser extent. Research that gives consideration to the influence stemming from the home-school relationship (Hughes 1996; Greenhough et al 2005) stresses the role of the mesosystem, whilst that which investigates the impact of government policies or legislation (Dadds 2001; Alexander 2004) focuses on the exosystem. Consideration of each of these factors provides only a partial view of a child's ecological context. In accordance with Bronfenbrenner's framework, the most powerful explication for understanding the complexity of the learning process is that research which gives consideration to factors in all four systems alongside the developmentally instigative characteristics of the child.

### **Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory of human development**

Within the context of the bioecological theory, development is defined as 'the phenomenon of continuity and change in biopsychological characteristics of human beings both as individuals and as groups. The phenomenon extends over the life course across successive generations and through historical time, both past and present' (Bronfenbrenner 2001: 3). The original formulation of the ecological model conceptualised the environment as a series of contexts, each located inside the next, similar to a set of Russian dolls (Bronfenbrenner 1979). Termed micro-, meso-, exo- and macro- system, these operate as systems both within themselves and in relation to each other (Bronfenbrenner 1995). The conceptualisation of the environment using four systems has provided scholars with powerful tools with which to understand and research the dynamic multilevel environment in which a person is embedded (Lerner 2005). In the present formulation of the theory, this multi-layer world continues to play a key role, constituting two of the principle components of what Bronfenbrenner has termed a Process-Person-Context-Time (PPCT) model of development. This revised version of the model stresses the influence of multiple factors in shaping the course of development: the attributes of the active developing child, his/her proximal relations in the immediate

environment, factors in the more distal environment in which the child is embedded and the spatial and temporal broader context.

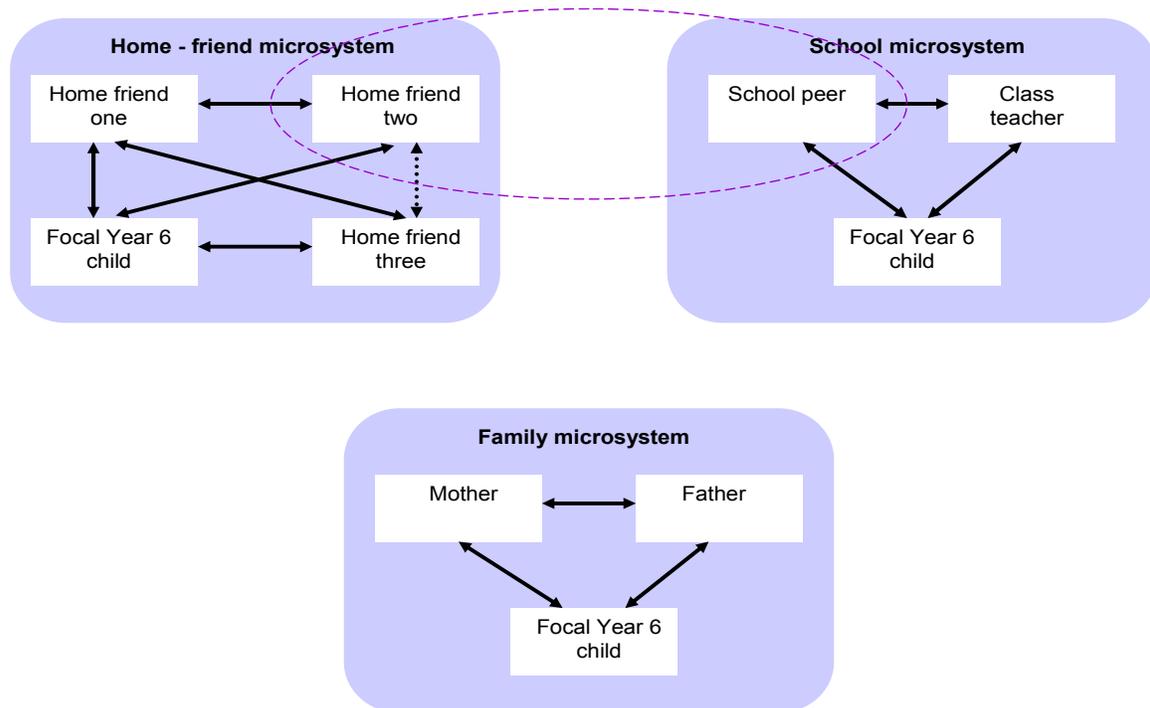
### **Process**

Located at the inner core of the bioecological model, the microsystem represents the child's immediate social and physical environment and emphasises the role of proximal processes in development. Bronfenbrenner (2001) states that '... human development takes place through processes of progressively more complex reciprocal interaction between an active, evolving biopsychological human organism and the persons, objects and symbols in its immediate external environment. To be effective, the interaction must occur on a fairly regular basis over extended periods of *time*' (page 6; italics in original). In terms of children's development in Year 6, such enduring proximal interactions may include activities between teacher and child, parent and child, child and child, sporting activities and group play. However, proximal processes are not only limited to interactions with others, they can also include objects and symbols in the child's immediate environment which invite reciprocal interaction, such as those permitting 'attention, exploration, manipulation, elaboration and imagination' (Bronfenbrenner 1999: 6). Again, for the Year 6 child these may include solitary play, reading, problem solving, making plans, learning new skills and studying. Bronfenbrenner argues that development, be it intellectual, social, emotional or moral, takes place through prolonged engagement in increasingly more complex interaction and activities. Participation in a given activity over a long period of time permits exposure and practice, enabling the child's actions and understandings to evolve. Thus, in light of this conceptual framework, actions carried out on an occasional basis or over a very short duration of time will not result in development, as any elaboration is restricted. For a Year 6 child at home, infrequent activity with a working mum or an occasional weekend visit to spend time with a divorced dad, would have a limited contribution to a child's development.

Throughout a person's life course, proximal processes are posited as the primary engines of development (Bronfenbrenner 2001). Whilst these processes include reciprocal interactions with objects and symbols in a person's environment, I want

to focus here on the role of others in his/her immediate external environment. Throughout their lifetime, people inevitably experience an ever-changing tapestry of microsystems as their priorities and roles change over time. In addition, people will also participate in relationships which continue to remain salient throughout their lifetime. For the ten year old child this web of ever-changing and salient relationships is already under construction; examples may include those with family members, teaching staff at his/her primary school, the peer group, friendship groups outside the school setting and the football or netball team etc. More often than not, a number of a child's microsystems are interrelated and as such, it is assumed that what occurs in one will influence and be influenced by what happens in another. As children's development progresses, their number of microsystems typically increases and the relations between them become more complex. Figure 2.2 depicts four microsystems which a Year 6 pupil may be involved in.

**Figure 2.2:** Pictorial representation of a Year 6 child's microsystems



The thickness of the line between each of those comprising the child's microsystems represents the extent of the connections between them. As illustrated in the figure, the Year 6 child has proximal relations with three home

friends; whilst home friend one knows both home friend two and three, home friend two and home friend three are not acquainted. Moreover, as indicated, one person can also play a role in more than one microsystem, whereby home friend two is also the focal child's school peer.

With proximal processes considered the crux of the PPCT model, it is clear that Bronfenbrenner perceives relationships to play a crucial role in children's learning and development, a notion mirroring both CoP literature and Vygotsky's work. Developmentally effective proximal processes are founded on reciprocity, with both parties working together to produce change via initiation and response. In these terms, we can visualise a healthy microsystem where perhaps the development of an effective working relationship between pupil and teacher can have significant ramifications for the child's position as a learner and in turn his/her educational attainment. However, in circumstances when reciprocity between parties breaks down, the quality of the microsystem declines and it can become impoverished. For example, if we envisage a situation where a pupil who has limited communication and interaction with his/her class teacher, the latter of who merely engages in instructional methods on mass in a unidirectional manner, it would be unsurprising to find that it impacted negatively on the pupil's behaviour in class and his/her academic achievement. In terms of the structure of schooling today, which stresses the breadth and depth of curriculum coverage and typically sees in excess of thirty pupils per class, teachers are permitted little time to establish and develop healthy working relationships with every pupil.

Bronfenbrenner further notes that 'The form, power, content and direction of the proximal processes producing development vary systematically as a joint function of the characteristics of the developing person (including genetic inheritance), of the environment – both immediate and more remote – in which processes are taking place, the nature of the developmental outcomes under consideration, and of the continuities and changes occurring in the environment over time, through the life course, and during the historical period through which the person has lived' (Bronfenbrenner 2001: 6-7; italics in original). Each of the three remaining components of the PPCT model is now given consideration.

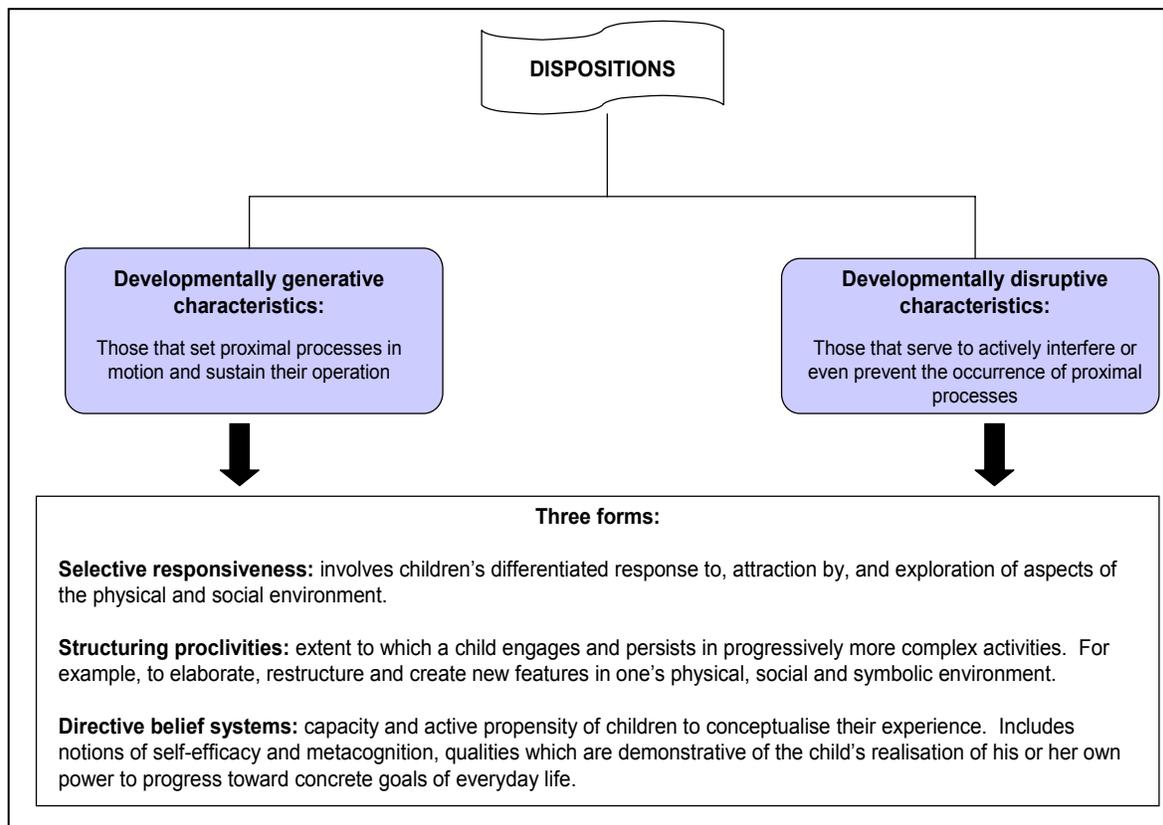
## ***Person***

Predicated on the idea that individuals influence the people and institutions in their environment as much as they are influenced by them, recent revisions to the bioecological theory have given precedence to the role and nature of the developing child; specifically, his/her genetic, physiological, emotional, cognitive and social characteristics. The interplay between the developing individual and his/her environment is manifested at the microsystem level, in the interactive proximal processes involving particular characteristics of the child and given features of his/her immediate context (Bronfenbrenner 1989). Those developmentally instigative characteristics of the person most powerful in affecting the subsequent course and outcome of his/her subsequent behaviour 'are those that set in motion, sustain, and encourage processes of interaction between the developing person and two aspects of the proximal environment: first, the people present in the setting; and second, the physical and symbolic features of the setting that, in both cases, invite, permit, or inhibit engagement in sustained, progressively more complex interaction with and activity in the immediate environment' (Bronfenbrenner 1989: 97).

Three aspects of the individual's biopsychological characteristics are deemed most influential in shaping the course of his/her future development: dispositions, bioecological resources and demand characteristics (Bronfenbrenner and Morris 1998). Briefly, the authors suggest that a child's dispositions can initiate and sustain, or conversely, actively interfere or even prevent the operation of proximal processes in a given developmental domain (see figure 2.3). Examples of developmentally generative characteristics given by Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998) include attributes such as curiosity; tendency to initiate and engage in activity with others or independently; readiness to defer immediate gratification to allow pursuit of long-term aims. Examples of developmentally disruptive characteristics include impulsiveness, distractibility, inability to defer gratification,

inattentiveness, apathy, and a general tendency to avoid or withdraw from activity perhaps due to feeling of insecurity or shyness etc.

**Figure 2.3:** A child's dispositions as shapers of his/her development  
(Adapted from Bronfenbrenner and Morris 1998)



After successful initiation of proximal processes, continued effective functioning at any point of the child's development would require the child to draw on his/her repertoire of bioecological resources. Assets here would include increasing ability, experience, knowledge and skills as they evolve over the life course; characteristics which may serve to limit or disrupt the functioning of proximal processes include genetic defects, physical handicaps, severe and persistent illness (Bronfenbrenner and Morris 1998). In addition, the child's demand characteristics serve to either invite or discourage reactions from the social environment which in turn, foster or disrupt the operation of proximal processes. These may include factors such as a child's gender, skin colour, attractive or unattractive physical appearance etc. which will inevitably influence the ways in which people interact with the child and the expectations they hold for him/her.

These three aspects of the individual's biopsychological characteristics alone do not determine the course of a child's development but dynamically combine and impact on the direction and power of resultant proximal processes, shaping his/her future development.

### **Context**

The context of human development is envisaged as the multi-tiered environment depicted in figure 2.1 previously. These four systems are defined by Bronfenbrenner (1992) as:

- ◆ 'A *microsystem* is a pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given face-to-face setting with particular physical and material features and containing other persons with distinctive characteristics of temperament, personality, and systems of belief' (page 148).
- ◆ 'The *mesosystem* comprises the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings containing the developing person' (ibid.).
- ◆ 'The *exosystem*, encompasses the linkage and processes taking place between two or more settings, at least one of which does not ordinarily contain the developing person, but in which events occur that influence processes within the immediate setting that does contain that person' (ibid.).
- ◆ 'The *macrosystem* consists of the overarching pattern of micro- , meso- , and exosystems characteristic of a given culture, subculture, or other broader social context, with particular reference to the developmentally instigative belief systems, resources hazards, lifestyles, opportunity structures, life course options, and patterns of social interchange that are embedded in each of these systems' (page 149).

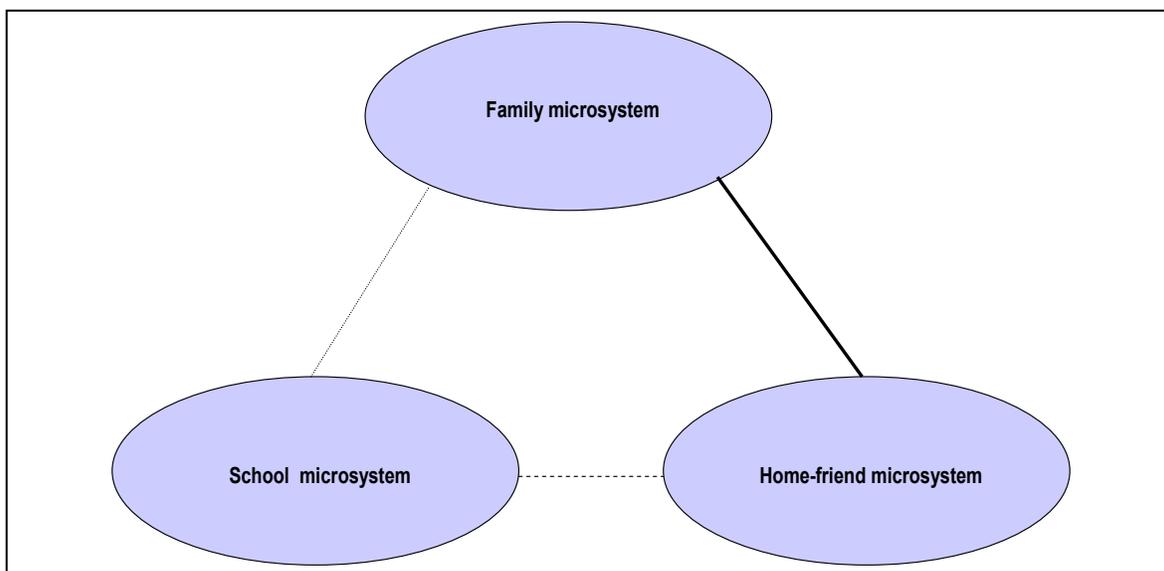
The nature of the microsystem was just addressed in the section entitled process. I now go on to consider the remaining three systems in terms of the developing

Year 6 child. In each of these three systems, there are factors to consider which either serve to foster or interfere with the development of the proximal processes in the child's microsystem.

### *The mesosystem*

During their lifespan, people experience multiple ecological transitions. They move into a new and different ecological context which has developmental consequences for the focal individual in that it involves him/her in new activities and types of structure (Bronfenbrenner 1977b). For a Year 6 pupil these transitions might include: returning to school after the long summer holiday; moving up from Year 5 to Year 6; moving house; the arrival of a younger sibling; becoming a member of a school sports team; moving from primary to secondary school. Each move sees a change in the child's microsystems and the network of relationships amongst them, that is, the child's mesosystem. The emphasis is on the number and quality of the links existing between two or more microsystems and the encouraging or inhibitory effect they have on the child's development. In the context of this thesis, the mesosystem for a Year 6 pupil would typically include connections between home, school and peer group. This is illustrated in figure 2.4; again, the thickness of the line between each of the child's microsystems represents the extent of the connections between them. Whilst there is relatively little interaction between the child's family and school microsystems, the child's family microsystem is highly interrelated with the child's home friend microsystem. There is also limited interaction between the child's school microsystem and home friend microsystem, where in this example only one 'home' friend occasionally joins the focal child's school friends to 'hang out' or play football in the park. Bronfenbrenner's conceptual framework would maintain that a rich mesosystem link existed between these microsystems if communication flows were effective and bi-directional, with all parties working together for the benefit of the child. In contrast, an impoverished mesosystem link would be characterised by few or no meaningful linkages between the child's microsystems.

**Figure 2.4:** The mesosystem of a Year 6 child



In a primary school setting, which can be thought of as a small community, links between home, school and peer networks are typically characterised as strong, particularly when compared to the nature of relations at secondary school (Tobbell 2003). In the primary school context, is it not unusual to observe parents stopping to chat with the class teacher whilst picking up their son or daughter after school; parents allocating time to assist with school activities and trips; children taking schoolwork to their friend's house if they are off sick; pupils approaching teaching staff if they were concerned about friends; children playing and 'hanging out' with school friends outside the school context.

However, rich mesosystem links between a child's microsystems cannot be assumed. In exploring the influence of the mesosystem on development, attention must also be given to the values of the constituent microsystems. If the values of multiple microsystems correspond, a powerful supportive link for the child's performance and development will emerge. For example, if school staff, parents and peers all place a high value on academic success, their common values will have the potential to impact positively on his/her progress at school. If microsystems endorse divergent values, tensions will inevitably arise and the child may experience interpersonal and intrapersonal pressure as a consequence of trying to manage the differing microsystem values; a situation which may occur if

school achievement is valued by a child's parents but not his/her peer group. An exploration of the mesosystem links between home, school and peer group can be found in Appendix 2.A, a vignette which considers the experiences of two Year 6 children, Holly and Alice.

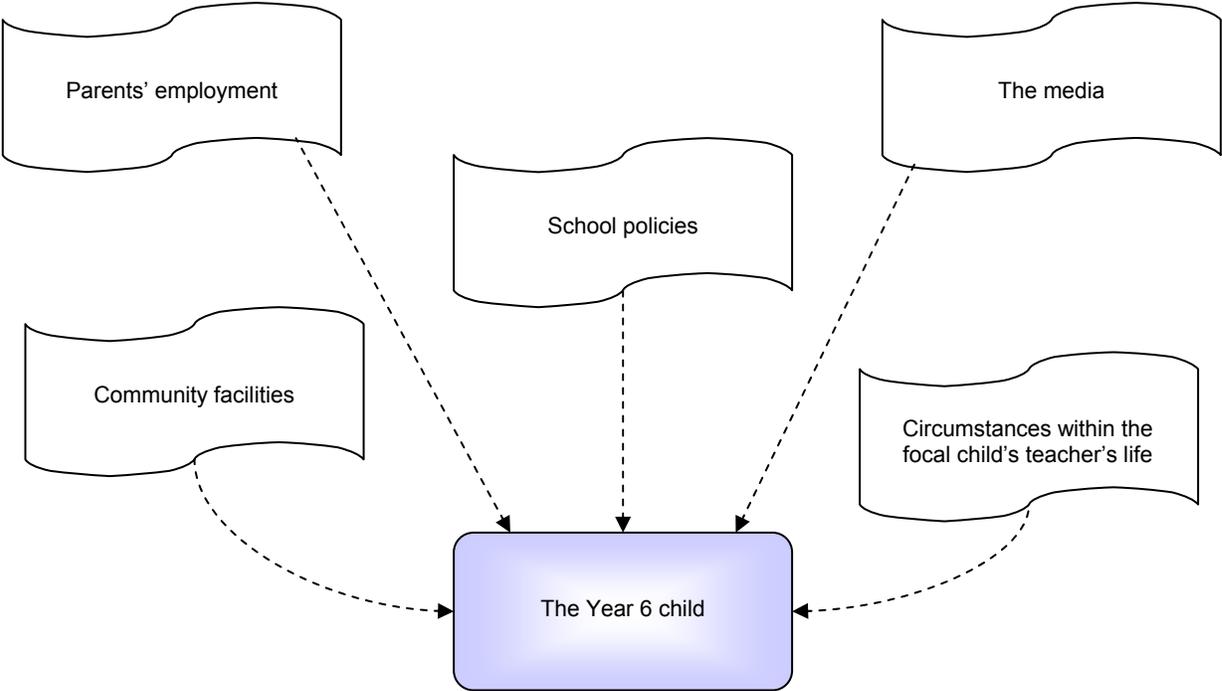
### *The exosystem*

With reference to the aforementioned vignette, it is evident that factors operating external to the parties involved in the mesosystem, serve to influence the nature of their interactions. For example, the issue of parental employment shapes to some degree the extent of parental involvement displayed by Holly's and Alice's parents in the school community. In giving consideration to the more distal environmental features of the developing person's environment, I turn to the role of the exosystem. As noted previously, this system includes events and decision making that the child does not directly participate in but the outcomes of which, influence his/her experiences either directly or indirectly through the child's parents or school etc. Exosystems exert their influence upon child development in two ways: via the active involvement of significant others in his/her life, such as a family member, friend, teacher etc. or through decisions made by social institutions which ultimately affect conditions of family, school and community life (Bronfenbrenner 1977a). Factors within the exosystem which might impact upon the Year 6 child include: the parents world of work; the parents' circle of friends; a teacher's home life; the school attended by an older sibling; the child's friends' social circles; school and government policies (for example, the national curriculum); community facilities and the media (see figure 2.5).

With children possessing no voice within the exosystem, this context can serve to enrich or impoverish the quality of a child's micro- and meso- systems. For example, many parents and carers work full-time. Regardless of whether their employment is characterised by secure or insecure conditions, the nature of their work will inevitably impact on family processes and in turn, the experiences of the developing child. If we consider a situation where parents have little control over

their working hours as they are in a constant state of flux, this will impact on the time they can make available for child-parent activities and whether an alternate caregiver is required to take and collect the child from school. Such characteristics of employment may mean that there will be little or no routine to the child's home life. Moreover, the employers of the child's parents or carers determine their level of pay, the flexibility of their working role and hours and their holiday entitlement, the taking of which may be restricted to a specific time of year. Although the developing child is not an active participant in these scenarios, decisions are clearly being made which influence his/her experiences in the home setting. Each of the factors listed above will inevitably impact on parents' and carers' opportunities to spend time with their child and the quality of life they will lead as a family.

**Figure 2.5:** Factors to consider within the exosystem of a Year 6 child

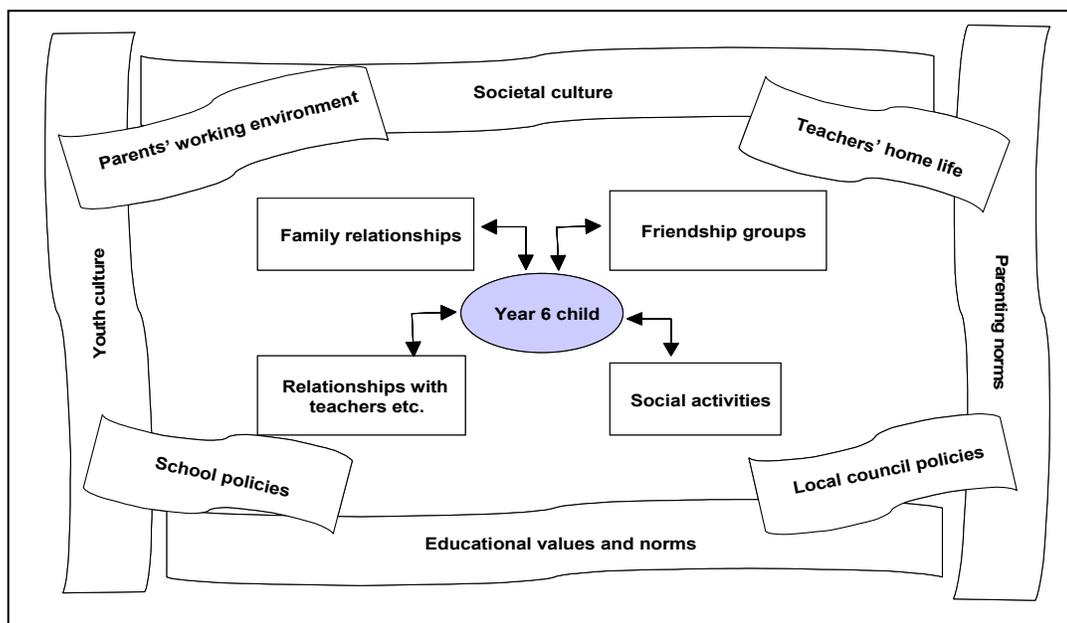


## The macrosystem

The macrosystem constitutes the outer ring of the child's ecological environment and an additional distal influence in shaping his/her development. It represents the societal blueprint, which includes: prevalent social and cultural norms, the political landscape, core educational values and practices, prevailing religious imperatives and the economic backdrop etc. These overarching patterns of ideology and organisation are manifested in the lower-order systems of the model (micro-, meso-, and exo-). The structure, substance and function of these lower order systems tends to be similar *within* a given society or social group, but vary markedly *between* different societies and social groups (Bronfenbrenner 1979). Thus, in attempting to gain greater insight into the learning trajectories of individual children, consideration must be given to a society's overarching ideologies concerning children's learning and development. As pointed out in chapter one, these are manifested in the organisation and practice of schooling and the role assigned to children. In adapting Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory to the context of this thesis, figure 2.6, provides a simple representation of the micro-, meso-, exo- and macrosystem influences that might impact upon a given child in Year 6.

**Figure 2.6:** The child at the centre of their relationships and environment

(Stivaros, Tobbell and Lawthom, taken from a paper presented at BERA conference 2002)



## ***Time***

The dimension of time constitutes the final component of Bronfenbrenner's theory of development and takes into account changes over time relating to both the person and the environment. As such, it has a prominent place at three levels of the bioecological model: the microsystem, the mesosystem and the macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner and Morris 1998). The authors note: 'Micro-time refers to continuity versus discontinuity within ongoing episodes of proximal process. Meso-time is the periodicity of these episodes across broader time intervals, such as days and weeks. Finally, macro-time focuses on the changing expectations and events in the larger society, both within and across generations, as they affect, and are affected by, processes and outcomes of human development over the life course' (page 7). To explore the dimension of time as it relates to features of the environment, Bronfenbrenner (1999: 20-22) summarises Elder's theory of life course development which is founded on four principles:

1. '...the individual's own developmental life course is seen as embedded in and powerfully shaped by conditions and events occurring during the historical period through which the person lives.'
2. '...a major factor influencing the course and outcome of human development is the timing of biological and social transitions as they relate to the culturally defined age and role expectations and opportunities through the life course.'
3. '...the lives of all family members are interdependent. Hence, how each family member reacts to a particular historical event or role transition affects the developmental course of the other family members, both within and across generations (Bronfenbrenner 1999: 21).
4. '...within the limits and opportunities afforded by the historical, cultural, and socioeconomic conditions in which they live, human beings themselves influence their own development – for better or for worse - through their own choice and acts'

Thus, in using Bronfenbrenner's theory to understand children's development and the intricate web of factors shaping his/her learning experiences, an argument is

made for considering the reciprocal interaction of two structures: the child's biopsychological system and the socioeconomic-political system that characterises his/her environment. It behoves researchers and policymakers alike, to look beyond explanations of learning located solely in the individual and give greater consideration to the direct and indirect influences of external factors in the child's embedded world. Figure 2.7 provides a visual representation of how the process, person, context and time elements of Bronfenbrenner's developmental model relate in unison to the life of a Year 6 child.

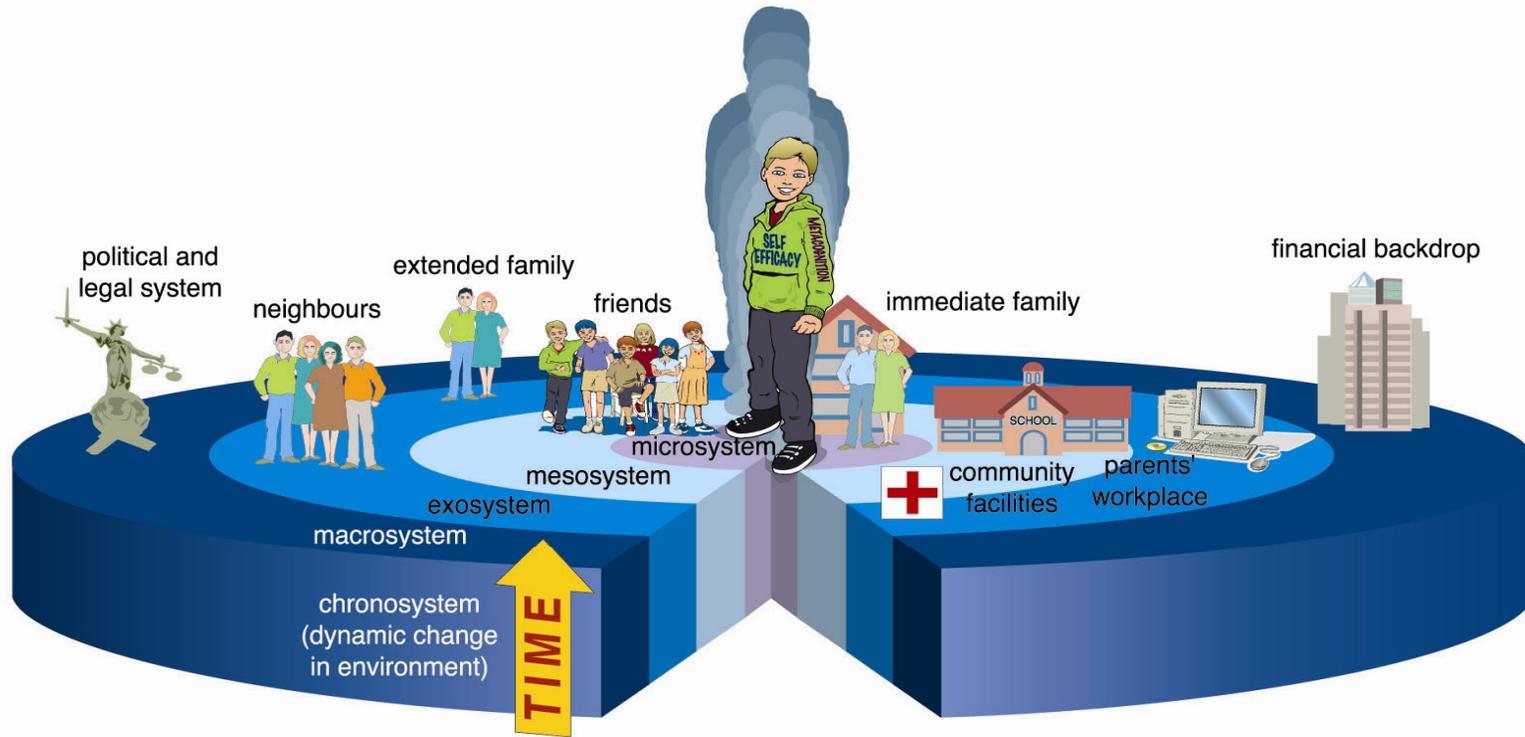
### ***The use of the ecological framework in the research literature***

The initial formulation of the ecological model was in response to the then prevailing conventions of research in the developmental field. Working with unfamiliar people in a specially devised and controlled environment, children were required to undertake activities remote from their day-to-day experiences. Bronfenbrenner's desire for scholars to study development in context has since been realised and there is extensive literature on human development in situ. However, reformulation and elaboration of Bronfenbrenner's initial structure means context is now recognised as only one of four constituent elements of the full model. The developmentally instigative characteristics of the person are also a crucial aspect to consider, with the person perceived as both the product and partial producer in the process of his/her development. Fifteen years ago, Bronfenbrenner declared (1989) '*...existing developmental studies subscribing to an ecological orientation have provided far more knowledge about the nature of developmentally relevant environments, near and far, than about the characteristics of developing individuals, then and now*' (page 95: italics in original). This remains true today, with research paying little or no attention to the role of the developing individual.

**Figure 2.7:** Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model in application to the life of a Year 6 child

Illustration by Derek West ©

(Adapted from <http://www.education.umd.edu/Depts/EDHD/geron/lifespan/Bronfenbrenner-2.JPG>)



Nevertheless, the scope and explanatory power of the ecological framework has made it widely effective as an analytical tool in research, with scholars using it to advance understanding across diverse subject matters. In this section, I draw on literature from the fields of psychology and education which have employed the ecological framework in its formulation of research aims and/or its analyses of data. Through exploring the role of the micro-, meso- and exosystems as contexts of human development, Bronfenbrenner (1979) posits that it is feasible for research to illuminate the properties of the environment characteristic of different societies and social groups (for example, particular social classes, ethnic or religious groups). This is typical of much of the developmental research claiming to use an ecological approach. With a focus on a particular subgroup, the primary concern seems to be the identification of common factors operating within the four structures of the environment, with many authors providing blanket measures for those persons comprising the particular subgroup and others sectors of the population in similar situations.

Whilst this approach may be useful in providing a more detailed framework of the ecological context for particular subgroups of the population, it cannot hope to provide specific information pertaining to the intricate web of relations and factors impacting upon each of the developing children comprising the subgroup. To gain a greater understanding of a particular child's world, it is crucial that stakeholders also recognise the vital role of subjective experience. In relation to self, others and activities in which they engage, developing persons experience feelings such as anticipation, foreboding, hope or doubt etc. which are susceptible to stability and change during the life course. These experiential qualities are of paramount importance as they can contribute in powerful ways to shaping the course of development (Bronfenbrenner 2001). Thus, it is my understanding that the bioecological theory posits a notion of development and learning experience which is different for every child. By its very nature, the dominant approach used in ecological research (which essentially seeks to identify normative influences upon specific subgroups of the population) serves as a denial of the individual and his/her claim to his/her life story. In these terms, I reason that it provides an insufficient translation of Bronfenbrenner's conceptual model. Nonetheless,

valuable data regarding the way in which behaviour and practices are shaped have emerged from research whose design and/or analyses is informed by the ecological model.

Bradford Brown (1999) draws on the ecological model to inform his conceptualisation and measurement of the relations between the developing adolescent and his/her social world of peers. In acknowledging the complexities of the peer group amongst adolescents in contemporary society, the author outlines several principles which underpin his conceptualisation:

- ◆ The adolescent peer environment is multilevel and multicontextual. The myriad factors influencing development within this context are thought to vary in form and effect.
- ◆ The peer environment is further embedded in a broader set of social and interpersonal contexts, which serve to shape the structure of this environment and impact on developing adolescents.
- ◆ Features of the peer environment are contingent on the individual characteristics of developing adolescents, many of which change during the period marked adolescence.
- ◆ The influence of relations between the developing adolescent and his/her peer group environment is perceived to be bi-directional.

These principles are comparable to the very nature of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model. To gain greater insight into relations between the developing adolescent and his/her social world of peers, Brown asserts that analyses need to move beyond simple cause-effect models and incorporate variables of structure, content and process. He proposes that Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model could be of particular use in achieving this aim, but how one actually goes about measuring the complexity amongst these factors is not addressed.

In a review and critique of research exploring the concept of childhood risk and resilience, Howard, Dryden and Johnson (1999) used the ecological model to frame the multiple factors identified in the literature as indicators of children's capacity for successful adaptation despite the presence of adverse circumstances. Alongside the qualities of the individual child, the authors note that support

emanating from the family, school and community act as rich sources of protective factors. They conclude that childhood resilience is most marked when these sources act in a cumulative manner. Resilience is not viewed to be a fixed attribute of the individual child, but recognised to be variable over time, changing as a function of multiple factors operating in the individual and environment which interact in dynamic and idiosyncratic ways.

In a further study, Howard and Johnson (2000) sought to identify those factors deemed to be important in promoting resilience from the perspectives of primary school pupils and teachers in Australia. The research focused on the role of proximal processes in family, school and community spaces. Whilst all three microsystems were acknowledged as potential sources of resilience building, pupils and teachers emphasised the roles of family and school to a greater extent. It is interesting to note, that the themes of academic achievement, competence and success were resonant amongst pupils' perspectives as indicators of children 'doing okay' despite difficult circumstances. However, given that formal schooling constitutes a significant proportion of the primary school child's day and where goals include acquiring new knowledge, developing skills, demonstrating competencies and experiencing success, the pupils' reported understanding of promoting and indicating resilience make sense. Puzzlingly, these same themes were assigned little to no role by the teachers in their perceptions of the three microsystems under consideration. Perhaps it is also worth noting here that the significance attached to the value of educational attainment by the pupils, mirrors not only their participation in the day-to-day practices at school but also that of wider society, where it is considered by many as a key measure of life success (see chapter one).

Smith (2002) employed the principles of the ecological model to develop an intervention programme aimed at facilitating the transition of four year old children from nursery to the school playground. Implemented during the children's time in nursery and involving both classroom and playground activities, the programme was designed to promote children's social and emotional development to enable them to develop a capacity for successful adaptation to the forthcoming transition.

Smith, in her dual role as researcher and reception class teacher, used the involvement of multiple stakeholders including parents, lunchtime supervisors and the children themselves, to fulfil the ongoing aims of the programme. The perspectives from these multiple parties indicated that after successful completion of the programme, children were indeed more equipped to make a positive transition to the school playground. This was bolstered by the contributions of each stakeholder, helping to sustain the resilience children developed against possible lunchtime difficulties such as bullying.

Using the principles of Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model to frame their research, Tudge, Otero, Hogan and Etz (2003) explored children's transition to formal schooling in the U.S. Observations of pre-school children's engagement in and initiation of everyday activities were carried out and drawing on teacher's reports, compared to teacher's perceptions of the children's competence in the early school years. As hypothesised, the authors found that preschool children from a middle class background engaged in and initiated a greater number of activities deemed to be more school relevant than those from a working class background. They explain the greater engagement of middle class children in school type activities as a result of the value placed on self-direction by their parents. They argue that these children are involved in multiple settings which encourage greater self-direction compared to those children from a working class background. But perhaps this constitutes a partial explanation of a much wider picture. If we consider that school is a community created and controlled by the middle classes and as such reflects their day-to-day practices, it perhaps explains why middle class children tend to experience greater success in this setting.

Rimm-Kaufman and Pianta (2000) also argue for the use of the ecological approach in conceptualising and exploring children's transition to formal schooling in the US, namely kindergarten. The authors acknowledge that any full understanding of transition issues can only stem from an examination of the relations amongst child characteristics and contextual factors in the home, school, peer group and neighbourhood. Moreover, they assert that the changing or stable nature of these relations over time is a crucial factor in understanding children's

experiences of transition to kindergarten. Whilst this approach seems laudable, Rimm-Kaufman and Pianta go on to suggest that policy and practice shaped by research adopting an ecological approach will be of particular use for 'normative and high risk populations' (page 491). However, research and policy which uses ecological approach to propose such blanket measures for particular groups of the population, including those deemed 'typical,' fail to give consideration to the subjective experiences of the developing person and the uniqueness of each child's situation. Consider a class of Year 6 pupils. In attempting to gain insight into the complexity of the children's learning experiences, there may be common factors stemming from the micro-, meso- and exosystems comprising their worlds. However, the manner in which the factors from these lower order systems are perceived and experienced may differ markedly and this will have a massive impact on each child's development. Those implementing blanket solutions for particular sectors of the population are acting on the assumption that features of the environment exist solely as objective, physical events and conditions and as such, it is unlikely that stakeholders will witness the desired effect of their policies and practice.

### **Section summary**

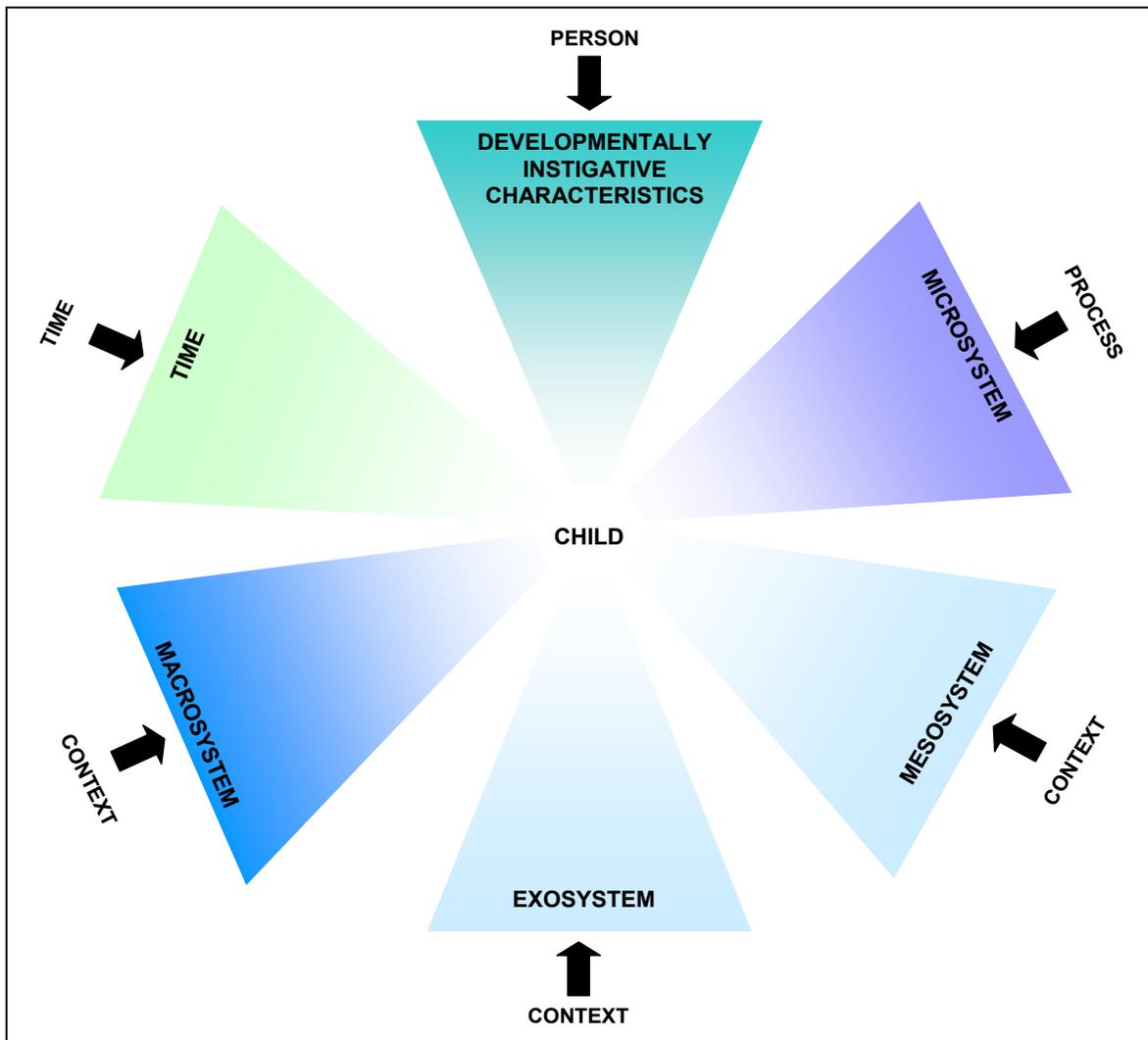
Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory serves as a powerful analytic rather than interventionist framework for understanding children's learning experiences. Challenging explanations of learning and development located solely in the individual child, this theory gives prominence to the wider environment and its complexities. It posits that any full understanding of the process and outcome of children's learning experiences must give consideration to the interplay of two crucial phenomena: the developmentally instigative characteristics of the developing person and the changing properties of the environment which make up his/her world. Because these factors are specific to the child and moreover, uniquely experienced, it is my understanding that this theory posits a notion of learning and development which is different for each child. Acting as a broad brushstroke theoretical lens, greater insight into the intricacies of factors operating

both within the developing individual and his/her multi-level environment can be provided through the integration of additional theoretical perspectives. Situated within the context of Bronfenbrenner's broader framework, I visually represent my selected perspectives in figure 2.8. Going on to look at the utility of each of these in turn, I start with the communities of practice literature and notions of legitimate peripheral participation. I use these to explore the exo- and meso- systems of the child's world.

### **Learning as experience: the communities of practice formulation**

The acquisition model which underpins current schooling organisation is powerfully challenged by the Communities of Practice (CoPs) framework and the notion of Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP). Here, learning is re-conceptualised as experience: '...participation in everyday life may be thought of as a process of changing understanding in practice, that is, as learning' (Lave 1993: 6). Rather than a separate activity located in the minds of individuals, it thus becomes a social phenomenon, ubiquitous in all activity (ibid.). This perspective proposes that development and learning occur through our changing levels of participation in the social spaces which make up our world. The degree of participation or membership that an individual has in a given social space determines the degree of success s/he experiences as it coincides with the extent of their interactions with others comprising this community. Increased participation levels allow for reciprocity and it is this process which permits the mutual transformation of those parties involved. Because all CoPs are situated in broader macro ideologies, the process of gaining and sustaining membership of these social spaces is not straightforward, rather it is an intricate process of negotiation. In this section, I will discuss the critical aspects of this theoretical framework before addressing how it can be applied to the context of this thesis. Inasmuch as learning is synonymous with experience, we can gain an understanding of children's school experiences and performance through exploring the various CoPs to which they belong and their levels of participation within these communities.

**Figure 2.8:** The use of additional theoretical perspectives as a means of exploring the intricacies of factors operating within the developing child and his/her nested world.



**Key**

- Consideration of the child’s directive belief systems: exploring the role of metacognition and self-efficacy
- Drawing on Vygotsky’s model of learning and development to gain insight into the intricacies of proximal relations
- Using notions of legitimate peripheral participation and communities of practice to explore mediating factors operating in the wider setting

### *Defining communities of practice*

Based on the work of Wenger (1998), a community of practice is an informal or formal grouping of people bound together over a sustained period of time by shared concerns, purpose, activity, values, desires or passion etc. Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002) identify a variety of forms which they may take:

- ◆ CoPs may be small and intimate involving only a few members, whilst others can comprise large numbers of people. Large communities are typically structured differently, perhaps subdivided by geographic region in an attempt to encourage all members to actively participate.
- ◆ The life span of CoPs can vary widely. Conole, Ingraham and Cook (2003) compare the recent emergence of the learning technology community to that of chemistry, a well established community. In terms of life span, learning technology is recognised to be a relatively young, short lived research community emerging just over a decade ago. In contrast, the chemistry discipline as a recognised field has had a long history, spanning at least two hundred and fifty years when it emerged from alchemy.
- ◆ CoPs can be co-located or distributed. Shared location is the starting point for many developing communities; for example, children who are located in the same school classroom (Watson 1998; Linehan and McCarthy 2001) or parents whose children attend the same school. However, shared location is not a necessity for community development and sustained interaction. CoPs can be distributed over vast areas with web-based facilities, telephone and letter correspondence providing alternative forms of communication to face-to-face relations.
- ◆ CoPs can be homogenous, composed of people from the same discipline or function whilst others can be heterogeneous, bringing together people from different backgrounds.
- ◆ CoPs can exist inside and across boundaries. For example, Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2004) describe how four different subject departments located within the same secondary school, operated as separate CoPs. Each departmental group had developed different cultures and working practices which served to influence teachers' learning. Whilst these communities

emerged and existed inside the boundaries of each departmental group, each community also belonged to the wider school community, and in this respect, the school community of practice stretched across the boundaries between the departments.

- ◆ CoPs may emerge spontaneously or intentionally and be formal or informal in nature.
- ◆ CoPs can have a number of relationships to organisations. At one extreme, the existence of a community is unrecognised; they are invisible to the organisation and in some cases, even to the members themselves. At the other end of the continuum, the community is perceived to be a valuable component, and as such becomes institutionalized. It is given official status and its function, integrated into the structure of an organisation. Between these two extremes, Wenger et al (2002) identify three other relationships which can exist between communities and organisations: 'bootlegged'; 'legitimized' and 'supported'. This provides an interesting characterisation of the relationships between informal and formal communities emergent in the broader school context.

In adopting any of these forms, ongoing reciprocal interaction within the community allows members to deepen their knowledge and extend their expertise via the exploration of ideas and alternative viewpoints, the sharing of information and the discussion of situations and needs (ibid.). As a community they develop personal relationships and established ways of interacting, shared understandings and practices. The notion of practice is acknowledged to be socially and historically situated and is essentially understood by the acts of doing and knowing (Wenger 1998). Practices are explicit (that represented by language, tools, skills, documents, images, symbols, artefacts, roles, procedures and regulations) and tacit (implicit relations, subtle cues, untold rules of thumb, underlying assumptions, shared world views and tacit conventions); 'It includes what is said and what is left unsaid; what is represented and what is assumed' (Wenger 1998: 47). In serving to define a community, practices are both constituted by and constitute the participants.

At any one time, each of us is a member of multiple CoPs. These typically reflect the varying spheres of our lives: home, school, work and leisure interests etc. In giving consideration to the varying communities which an individual encounters on a daily basis, that is his/her 'daily round' (Erikson 2002), it becomes apparent that s/he is a core member of some communities and an occasional or perhaps 'peripheral' participant in others. Each community is dynamic and fluid in nature. Rather than having a set of practices set in stone which new members routinely acquire and perform, the practices of a community are continually evolving, developed via the contributions of all members to the community, including those of newcomers. As Paechter (2003a) points out, '...the practices of a particular community are constantly being shifted, renegotiated and reinvented' (page 71). The contributions of others are needed to complement and develop expertise. In that we each belong to multiple communities, we acquire diverse subsets of cultural knowledge and practice that we bring to any situation and which serve to inform our understanding and shape our participation. The practices of every community are negotiated via the social co-participation of the constituent participants. Thus, the process of learning is distributed across agent, activity and world rather than being located in the individual. Shaped by the changing CoPs to which we each belong and our participative experience within these social spaces, our identity undergoes a continual state of renegotiation throughout the course of our lives (Wenger 1998).

Examples of CoPs may include: the pupils and staff (teachers, cleaners, lunchtime organisers etc.) of a particular primary school, the teachers within this specific school, the infant teachers, the junior teachers, Key Stage groups, Year 2 children, Year 6 children, class 6B, class 6E, higher and lower ability groupings within each class. Each social community or group can be separated from the others by reference to the shared cultural practices in which they engage. The inherent notion of shared practice which defines communities creates the existence of boundaries. These are typically fluid in nature and unspoken rather than explicit and well defined. As Wenger (2000) states, 'they arise from different enterprises; different ways of engaging with one another; different histories, repertoires, ways of communicating, and capabilities' (page 232). Whilst it is a common preconception

that the practices which children engage in within the school setting are confined to the 'formal' learning of the National Curriculum, the CoPs formulation illuminates that children's learning experiences within this social space are much more varied and diverse. Through a deepening process of participation in a community of practice, such as those evolving within a classroom or school setting, we can observe children also learn how to behave in a way that is valued by the class teacher. For example, putting your hand up and waiting for the teacher's acknowledgment before answering or asking a question; how to be accepted by class peers and avoid ridicule; how to gain praise from teaching staff (verbal or in the form of rewards) and prevent being disciplined etc. Through exploring the various CoPs to which children belong and their levels of participation therein, we can begin to understand their differing experiences of school.

### ***The integral role of participation***

A central tenet of the CoPs formulation is the notion of participation. The theoretical framework first emerged in research on craft apprenticeship among Vai and Gola tailors in Liberia (Lave 1990). Here, it was observed that tailors' apprentices engaged in a common, structured pattern of learning experiences without being taught, examined or reduced to mechanical copies of everyday tailoring tasks (Lave and Wenger 1991). Based on these learning experiences, Lave and Wenger (ibid.) conceptualised a model of participation within CoPs. Central to this model, is the notion of Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP), which acts as a descriptor of a person's engagement in social practice and denotes the varying shapes, degrees and textures of community membership. Lave and Wenger proposed that typically, a tailor's apprentice moved from LPP (where he was present as an observer but not active in the profession) to full participation (the tailoring of the most complex garments to a high standard and at speed). Legitimacy of participation defines a way of belonging to a community; due to his lack of experience an apprentice's participation is at first restricted and thus referred to as legitimate. In addition, the term peripheral implies there are 'multiple, varied, more- or less- engaged and inclusive ways of being located in the fields of

participation defined by a community' (Id. at 36). In subsequent work the authors proposed, that legitimate peripherality provided newcomers with more than a mere observational lookout post. 'It crucially involves participation as a way of learning – of both absorbing and being absorbed in – the 'culture of practice'. An extended period of legitimate peripherality provides learners with opportunities to make the culture of practice theirs' (Lave and Wenger 1999: 23). Thus, in being characterised as a process of LPP within CoPs, learning involves the mastery of knowledge and skill which sees newcomers move toward full participation in the sociocultural practices of a community. The LPP concept can be used as a means of exploring children's changing levels of participation in the CoPs which make up their world.

### ***The negotiation of meaning***

In that the CoPs to which we each belong and our participative experiences within these social spaces change as a course of time, adaptation to and renegotiation of practices is an inevitable aspect of quotidian life. Whilst many of the activities people engage in are the result of millennia of evolution, crucially, it is the meanings that people produce that hold significance (Wenger 1998) and impact on the nature of their participation within communities. Everyday engagement in practices serves to 'produce meanings that extend, redirect, dismiss, reinterpret, modify or confirm – in a word, negotiate anew – the histories of meanings of which they are a part' (Wenger 1998: 52-53). In understanding this, living becomes a constant process of what Wenger terms the negotiation of meaning. Thus, to gain insight into the nature of children's learning experiences, this supposition suggests that it is not enough to look at the knowledge and skills which comprise their learning curriculum or the instructional methods which they engage in within the classroom. Rather, it is the meanings that children construct around their learning experiences which serve to influence the nature of their participation in communities and in turn, shape their learning trajectories.

Wenger (1998) posits that meaning is located and understood in ongoing emergent negotiation, which is noted to be historical, dynamic, contextual and unique. This negotiation of meaning involves the interaction of two constituent processes which relate to the social experience of membership in multiple CoPs: participation and reification. Participation is recognised to be more than mere presence in a community and exceeds immediate engagement and collaboration. It relates to all the activities of mutual recognition in which people engage in within a social space: co-operative, competitive, confrontational and harmonious etc. In addition, the process of participation is seen to be transformative, shaping the experience and meaning of the individual and the community of practice.

The concept of reification refers to the process of giving form to aspects of human experience and practice by producing concrete and fixed forms such as tools and procedures, around which the negotiation of meaning becomes organised. For example, the law in England states schooling is compulsory for children aged 5 to 16 years of age, the National Curriculum specifies the content of teaching and learning for teachers and pupils alike, the Framework for Teaching Mathematics outlines the structure of the numeracy hour and the lesson plan is the tool which guides teachers in their delivery of a lesson. Understanding is given form through the construction of these objects. However, whilst the tool or procedure itself is important, the process of reification is more than objectification. The attendant meanings which surround the reification are crucial as they become the focus for the negotiation of meaning. Tobbell (2006) provides the following example: the procedure which sees children line up in total silence before being permitted to proceed anywhere in the school can be understood as the teacher's desire and need to gain control over the class. Whilst the formation of a line and the act of silence both constitute important practices, the meanings which underpin both are as much a part of the reification as the line and silence themselves.

Above, I have outlined the dual process of participation and reification which together constitute the negotiation of meaning. In that the two processes are viewed to be inextricably linked, any understanding of one process is contingent on an appreciation of the other. Each process compensates for the inherent

limitations of the other and it is via their interplay in the negotiation of meaning that makes people and things what they are (Wenger 1998).

### ***Identity***

In adopting a social framework, the notion of identity is central to understanding children's learning experiences. In the landscape of communities and boundaries in which human beings live, a child defines herself in reference to what s/he is, as well as what s/he is not, by the communities s/he belongs to alongside those to which s/he does not (Wenger 2000). A child's membership of communities and his/her participative experience within these social spaces, changes as a matter of time. Thus, a child's identity is shaped by his/her movement within the communities which make up his/her past, present and future. Multimembership in communities is seen to be an inherent aspect of person's identity (Wenger 1998). Whilst a child may be a daughter or sister in one community, across various other communities, she may also adopt the role of: Year 6 pupil, netball player, violinist etc. Her membership as a pupil in the Year 6 community does not cease when she leaves school to go home and join her family members, rather it is ongoing; the child reconciles her various forms of membership into one identity.

Wenger (2000) maintains that a strong identity is required to successfully navigate the CoPs which make up a person's world. He suggests that a healthy social identity comprises three co-existing core qualities: connectedness, expansiveness and effectiveness. In that identity is conceptualised as a lived experience of belonging and not belonging to communities, the idea of *connectedness* is integral. Wenger proposes that a 'strong identity is characterized by deep connections with others through shared histories and experiences, reciprocity, affection, and mutual commitments' (page 239). Rather than being exclusively defined by a single local community, a healthy identity involves multimembership across broad communities. In this act, the notion of *expansiveness* is inferred as the healthy identity crosses multiple boundaries present amongst various CoPs. As a person's identity is a vehicle for both participation and non-participation in

the social world, the quality of *effectiveness* is underscored by the assertion that a 'healthy identity is socially empowering rather than marginalizing' (page 240).

The concept of identity is not perceived to be a stable or fixed entity; rather it is fluid and dynamic in nature, undergoing constant transformation throughout the course of a person's lifespan. Identity arises out of the interplay between participation and reification and as such, is constantly renegotiated. Identity extends in time; it is a trajectory in progress that includes both your history and your aspirations (Wenger 2000). Thus, to gain insight into children's learning experiences, it is necessary to give consideration to the child, his/her history, present situation and aspirations and also those of the communities of which s/he is a member.

#### *The complexity of participation*

Whilst the notion of participation is central to the CoPs formulation, it is presented as somewhat unproblematic in the literature. This is exemplified in the book authored by Lave and Wenger (1991) entitled '*Situated Learning: legitimate peripheral participation*' and to a lesser extent in the follow up book by Wenger (1998) '*Communities of Practice: learning, meaning, and identity.*' Linehan and McCarthy (2001) assert that the literature presents an oversimplification of the participation process, paying insufficient attention to the complex and messy relations between individuals and between individuals and their communities. In analysing primary classroom exchanges they illuminated that each member's position and level of participation in the classroom community was subject to a continued process of renegotiation, shaped by shifting relations of responsibility and control. These were apparent in classroom interactions which observed: the teacher's need for control; asking questions characterised as easy rather than difficult; the location of pupils as resource dependent rather than independent learners; the use of negative sanctioning and the acceptance of answers in a specified format.

The complexity of participation within a community of practice is also illustrated in the work of Maynard (2001), whose writings provide an explicit focus on the developing relations between newcomer and other members of the community. In exploring student teachers' learning during teacher training placements, Maynard highlighted the various and changing pressures that impacted on the nature of their participation as newcomers to a school community. She noted that in the movement from periphery towards full participation, student teachers 'were subject to internal pressures, for example their own need to survive as a person and succeed as a teacher, and also external pressures, for example pupils', class teachers' and tutors' covert and overt attempts to ensure that they conformed to what were seen as 'appropriate' and 'known' ways of working' (page 50). Rather than the acquisition of practice happening in a straightforward and benign way, Maynard highlights it to be a complex and emotive process. Positioned as a newcomer, conflict underpinned the student teacher's relationship to and within the school community of practice, described by Maynard as 'uneasy' (ibid.). Whilst it became apparent that conforming to and adopting the behaviour and discourse of established class teachers led to acceptance and approval within the school community, student teachers experienced tension between their desire to fit in and be themselves.

The complexity and messiness of relations can be extended beyond the remit of a given community and is evident between communities and moreover, between communities and the societal context in which they are embedded. The latter is evident in the work of Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2004) mentioned earlier. In considering the development of secondary school teachers in the work place, they observed that teachers' learning experiences were shaped by their membership in CoPs which had formed around the departmental groups in which they were located. Despite being located in the wider school community, each of the four subject departments were characterised by different cultural and working practices. In line with the CoPs literature, Hodkinson and Hodkinson noted that the social practices of each community were in part influenced by the positioning, actions and personal dispositions of those teachers who comprised the department. In addition, they found that social practices were influenced by wider policy and

structures operating outside the immediate context of community. This paper illustrates that the evolving practices of any community are also shaped by the wider societal context in which it is embedded. In this example, the multiplicity of factors working to structure social practice within the art community can be framed using Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model: wider organisational policy and structures are factors operating in the macrosystem and exosystem; established departmental modes of working and learning constitute a teachers mesosystem; and personal dispositions are encompassed in a teacher's repertoire of characteristics. All factors will inevitably impact on the development of proximal relations in the teacher's microsystem. This research exemplifies that the process of participation within CoPs is highly intricate and shaped by the nature of relations between individuals, communities and the wider context.

Tobbell (2006) points out that Lave and Wenger's presentation of participation implicitly assumes that mere presence in a community establishes legitimacy and moreover, that the acquisition of practice takes place in a benign way. For example, in a school context it is assumed that children will participate in the practices of the social spaces which surround them; that they will each express a desire to become members of them and that all will be welcome. This infers a linear relationship between mere presence and legitimate participation, one which is overly simplistic and certainly not inevitable. As outlined earlier, our participative experience as members in CoPs is founded on the negotiation of meaning; a process which involves both the production and adoption of proposals for meaning (Wenger 1998). It is via this process that the practices of any given community achieve their fluidity; they are continually shifted, renegotiated and reinvented via the contributions of all members. The duality of production and adoption enables us to understand why membership is not an inevitable outcome of mere presence in a community. A person cannot be a member if s/he does not produce proposals for meaning or alternately, if the person's production of meaning fails to be adopted. The condition of membership is thus dependent on fulfillment of both criteria.

Using the CoPs formulation, a child's identity is defined by the practices s/he engages in alongside those in which s/he does not engage. In this respect, his/her participation and non-participation in CoPs are both sources of identity shaping. In considering the dynamic relations between notions of participation and non-participation within CoPs, Wenger (1998) defines two forms of non-participation: peripherality and marginality, each producing qualitatively different experiences of identity. Peripherality defines those times when fuller participation in one particular community of practice is enabled by non-participation in another. Within the school context, an example of this might be a pupil choosing not to wear the sanctioned school uniform because this would exclude him/her from the community of rebels. Through not participating in this dominant practice, the child's actions enable him/her to adopt a peripheral or full position as a member within the rebel group. In contrast, marginality refers to those times when participation is restricted by non-participation. An example of this would be those children labelled with having learning difficulties, who, because of their perceived ability level are withdrawn from mainstream lessons and taught elsewhere in the school by special teachers on an occasional or permanent basis (for example, Norwich and Kelly 2004). This practice serves to impact upon the nature and extent of the participation such children can have as members of mainstream classroom communities. They are excluded from being full participants of the community and permitted at best only a marginal position.

Clearly, the interplay between participation and non-participation has significant ramifications for the shaping of a child's identity, with both the individual child and wider social communities maintaining power and influence over forms of membership. In some social communities a child may be a core member and in others, s/he may have occasional or limited participation and be located on the margins of the group. It is the child's position in a community of practice which has significant ramifications for his/her opportunities to access and engage in the learning process. Wenger (1998: 167-168) suggests a number of sources for understanding participation and non-participation:

- ◆ How we locate ourselves in a social landscape
- ◆ What we care about and what we neglect

- ◆ What we attempt to know and understand and what we choose to ignore
- ◆ With whom we seek connections and whom we avoid
- ◆ How we engage and direct our energies
- ◆ How we attempt to steer out trajectories

However, as Tobbell (2006) points out, these sources overlook the aforementioned dual processes of production and adoption involved in community membership. If a child is marginalised, the choice of participating in a community has been taken away from him/her. Although the child may seek to belong to a particular community and produce proposals for meaning, the adoption of these by other members is not inevitable and in turn, membership is denied.

Whilst the notion of participation is integral to the CoPs formulation, the research presented above indicates that the process of participation within communities is more intricate than the writings of Lave and Wenger suggest. In order to further address this gap in the literature, this research will draw on the bioecological model of Bronfenbrenner. Through situating CoPs in the wider concentric circles comprising the ecological model, the latter can act as a powerful analytical tool in which to illuminate the wider and more proximal factors impinging on the quotidian experience of communities. It is these factors which serve to contribute to the messiness and complexity of the participation process.

### ***Situated learning and cognition***

As I outlined in chapter one, the current organisation of schooling is founded on an acquisition model of learning. This assumes that knowledge, skills and understandings are general and independent of the context in which they were learnt. As such, any information gained in the classroom context is thought to be transferable and of use in everyday life beyond the school walls (Lave 1990; Brown, Collins and Duguid 1989). However, the CoPs formulation would challenge this notion; rather than characterising such phenomena as abstract, internalised entities ready for general application, it would reason that they are, in fact, context dependent and situated in our lived experiences of the world. This has been

exemplified in multiple research studies. For example, De Abreu, Bishop and Pompeu (1997) looked at children's mathematical activities outside school. They interviewed two children who talked about their involvement in the specific act of buying bread for the family. Rita was described by the teacher as having difficulties at school whilst Ana was identified by the teacher as a successful pupil. De Abreu et al found that the practices at home shaped the children's mathematical ability out of school. Rita was given money by her parents to purchase fifteen loaves of bread and charged with returning the correct amount of change. She alone was expected to perform this calculation on a weekly basis. Knowing that one loaf cost 30 escudos and employing the mathematical rules of addition and subtraction, she undertook this task successfully. In contrast, Ana was required to purchase three loaves of bread on a weekly basis. Although she knew that the cost of three loaves was ninety escudos, she was unable to calculate the cost of one loaf of bread. She stated that her mother gave her money to purchase the bread and the seller gave her the change or pointed out any shortcomings which she returned with the following day. In this example, it was Rita who was described as having difficulties with mathematics in the school context that was the competent problem solver in mathematics embedded in outside-school practices.

The notion of situated learning and cognition is important in understanding children's learning performance at primary school, particularly when they change class at the start of each academic year. As pointed out by Tobbell (2006), failure to participate upon entry to a new community is not a problem but an inevitable by-product of the process of human learning. She states 'When we enter new domains we need time to understand and negotiate the skills necessary to function within them. It is not possible to simply transfer behaviours from other domains because they may not be appropriate, instead we wait and see how our present knowledge and skills can be used and in so doing, this knowledge and these skills are developed by and in the new community and as a result the trajectory of participants is changed' (pages 53 - 54).

Notions of competency are context dependent in the same way that knowledge, skills and understanding are. Wenger (2000) posits that competence is socially and historically defined and that knowing is a matter of displaying competences defined as valuable in a particular community. Socially defined competence is always in interplay with personal experience and it is in this interplay that he proposes learning takes place. These notions of competence are illustrated in (Appendix 2.B), a vignette of two figures participating in the same school community of practice. In this, it is apparent that knowledge, skills, understanding and competence are context dependent; they are product of the activity, context and culture in which they are developed and utilised.

This premise is critical when we give consideration to the teaching and learning relationship in the school context. As Lave and Wenger (1991) point out, ‘...the organisation of schooling as an educational form is predicated on claims that knowledge can be decontextualized, and yet schools themselves as social institutions and as places of learning constitute very specific contexts’ (page 40). This behoves any researcher undertaking analysis of children’s learning experiences to consider the situated nature of knowledge and competency within the culture of the school. In conceptualising learning as participation in the valued practices of a particular community, it becomes necessary to illuminate what these practices are. Yet crucially, this appears to constitute a major omission in the research literature. In analysing transition research between schools, Tobbell and O’Donnell (2005) highlight that the literature fails to provide detail or understanding regarding what actually happens in a classroom on a quotidian basis, the practices which construct children’s participation and in turn, their learning. In acknowledging the situated nature of learning, it follows that the mastery of knowledge and skill application does not reside in the individual child but in the organisation of the community of practice in which the child is a part. Educational success and failure are thus a product of specialised social and institutional arrangements rather than attributes of the individual child (Lave 1993).

## ***Applying the communities of practice formulation to the experiences of children in Year 6***

Above, I have given consideration the core aspects of the CoPs formulation. Here, I want to explore its use in understanding children's learning experiences in the school context. In that learning is viewed to be an aspect of changing participation in the multiple CoPs which comprise a person's everyday life (Lave 1996), it is necessary for this research to consider the partial, growing and changing involvement of focal children in the social spaces of their environment. In order to achieve this, I will position the primary school as a community of practice. In this scenario, it is reasonable to look upon Year 6 pupils as full participants. Of all the pupils in the school, it can be assumed that they have gained the most experience and thus understanding, of the practices which determine membership, in turn, shaping their identities. Over time, Year 6 pupils will have had the opportunity to access and use the knowledge, tools and language needed for them to move from the periphery to the centre of participation. For example, Year 6 pupils use these resources to engage in the most complex tasks in the classroom setting and successfully manage relationships with fellow peers and a host of teaching staff throughout the school.

However, given the highly intricate nature of the participation process, it cannot be assumed that a particular child will become a full participant in a community merely because s/he has a personal history and continuity of experience (Paechter 2003b). In that the primary education for many children is located in the same school, one may expect very few changes in children's experiences in the movement between Year 5 and 6. However, whilst the children comprising the class may stay the same, there are multiple contextual shifts for the children to negotiate. For example, more often than not, there is a change in teaching staff along with a shift in classroom location, rules, practices, social and academic expectations and relations with peers etc. Whilst consideration of these is crucial in terms of understanding children's learning experiences and relationships, it

seems that educational and psychological literature give them little acknowledgment.

As I outlined in chapter one, government policy plays a critical role in shaping teaching and learning experiences in Year 6. In light of this, I posit that many of the goals of the Year 6 community are shaped and indeed dominated by the political climate of testing, targets and league tables. Whilst children may have gained prior exposure to this testing culture, they have not yet been immersed in it to the extent they will experience in Year 6. The knowledge and understanding of primary school practices which children have gained prior to their entry to Year 6 is not rendered obsolete as it may still be pertinent to their wider lives in school. Moreover, some of it may be of use in the new Year 6 community, the practices of which will undergo negotiation. Critically, space is needed to filter through and identify previous acts of doing and knowing which may be feasible for adoption and integration. However, there are also new and unfamiliar practices in place and as such, additional knowledge, tools and language etc. to access and employ. This heightens an awareness of the complex position Year 6 children find themselves in upon entry into Year 6.

At this time, there is little continuity of experience for pupils and as such they cannot be considered as full participants. For those children who have moved up through the school, there will be some existing knowledge, understanding and familiarity with school practices; nonetheless they have little experience of their new community and so by definition, have become peripheral participants. However, for any children joining the school community at the start of Year 6, their position can be thought of as one of non-membership. Whilst they may be present, they initially have no knowledge or understanding of the practices which make up the Year 6 community and, as such, they are prohibited from active participation. They cannot produce proposals for meaning or, in turn, have them adopted by fellow members, thus prohibiting the processes involved in the negotiation of meaning that is necessary for community membership. Until a pupil learns the new

practices which determine membership of the Year 6 community of practice, any participation will be limited by non-membership or peripheral location and may remain so for the duration of the academic year.

### ***Section summary***

The CoPs formulation presents a significant challenge to current traditional learning theory and looks beyond the individual for any real understanding of the learning process. It is a useful framework for exploring the complexity of the meso- and exo- systems within Bronfenbrenner's ecological model and as such, serves as a middle level theory between structure and agency (Barton and Tusting 2005). Whilst not highlighted in the main body of literature, it is important to note that all CoPs are situated in broader macro social and political orders. These factors impact upon the negotiations involved in participation of social spaces and make the process much less straightforward than one might first suspect. The stories presented in the analyses section of this thesis explore children's levels of participation in and amongst several CoPs. Consideration is given to the wider and more proximal factors which impinge on their movement, serving to either encourage or discourage their inclusion in surrounding social spaces. As I have argued, it is the nature of children's participation in these CoPs which are key to understanding their learning experiences and performance. I now move on to consider the nature of participation through exploring the role of proximal relations inherent in the learning process.

### *Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory of learning*

To gain greater insight into the role of proximal processes operating in the microsystem of Bronfenbrenner's model, I use the ideas of Vygotsky. These also provide further understanding of the interactive nature of practice and participation in the CoPs formulation. The core concept of reciprocal activity taking place in the

immediate setting of the developing person (the microsystem) was originally borrowed from the work of Vygotsky (Bronfenbrenner 1995). Underpinning Vygotskian theory is the notion that learning and cognitive development are socially, culturally and historically rooted processes. Goals of development and the valued means of attaining them are not universal but multifarious, defined by the many communities in which we are embedded. For example, in an ethnographic study of primary schooling in England and France, Planel (1997) point out that the differing educational philosophies and practices are the result of the contrasting cultural and social values. She argues, that these 'predispose pupils to learning and act as the medium through which pupils relate to styles of teaching and make their experience of school meaningful' (page 352). Thus, the focus should not be on the properties of the individual child, but on people's active participation in socially constituted practices where they utilise the cultural tools, skills and knowledge base made available to them. Learning is characterized as a bi-directional process and argued to be the result of meanings a child negotiates through his/her quotidian relationships and experiences. All such interactions are influenced by the knowledge, understandings and assumptions both parties convey, be it parent-child; teacher-pupil; pupil-pupil etc. Opportunities for development are thus constrained by the social, cultural and historical environment a child inhabits and the tools made available (Moran and John-Steiner 2003), with his/her intellectual and social growth mirroring the demands of the society in which the child lives. Cultural and social practices are perceived to be ever evolving, constituted and transformed through the collective active participation of each successive generation (Rogoff 1990); a premise which accords with the CoPs formulation. As such, Vygotsky perceived the 'environment as a source of development rather than a mere context for development' (Wong 2001: 367).

### ***The zone of proximal development***

In his attempt to operationalise the learning process, Vygotsky conceptualised the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), a model which sets the spotlight on the relationships between persons, and the processes by which these relationships

change over time. This model has proved to be very insightful in understanding my own experiences of learning and teaching and that of Year 6 children during my teaching assistant post. In recognition of an alternative view of competence than solely that of individual performance, the ZPD distinguishes between two developmental levels: actual development and zone of proximal development. The former is indicative of that which a child can do alone, whilst the latter refers to competence and performance in collaboration with a more able peer, be it parent, sibling, teacher, pupil etc. Using a classroom based illustration, consider a Year 6 child who, working independently, may be unable to calculate the solution to an arithmetic problem but with assistance from teaching staff or another pupil (for example, deconstructing the terminology, identifying the numerical operations needed, etc.) would be able to ascertain the answer. Exceeding the reach of a child's actual developmental level, learning is characterized by the ZPD, which permits the child to engage in levels of activity that s/he could not manage alone. Vygotsky (1978) proposed, '...that an essential feature of learning is that it creates the zone of proximal development; that is, learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with his peers. Once these processes are internalized, they become part of the child's independent developmental achievement' (page 90).

In the current education system, individual performance on school and government tests is the recognised and valued measure of a pupil's status as learner; this reflects his/her actual developmental level. As I pointed out in chapter one, the prominence given to individual attainment seems somewhat incongruous when we consider our endeavours outside the educational domain. Here, it is our performance in conjunction with others which is encouraged and valued. As Rogoff (1990) asserts, '...in everyday situations in many cultural settings, not to employ a companion's assistance may be regarded as folly or egoism' (page 59). Despite this, allegiance to actual developmental levels is continued on a national scale; a decision which impacts on both the management of children's learning and beliefs about their abilities to learn. Testing practices fail to furnish stakeholders with insight into the ZPD, which Vygotsky defined as 'those functions that have not

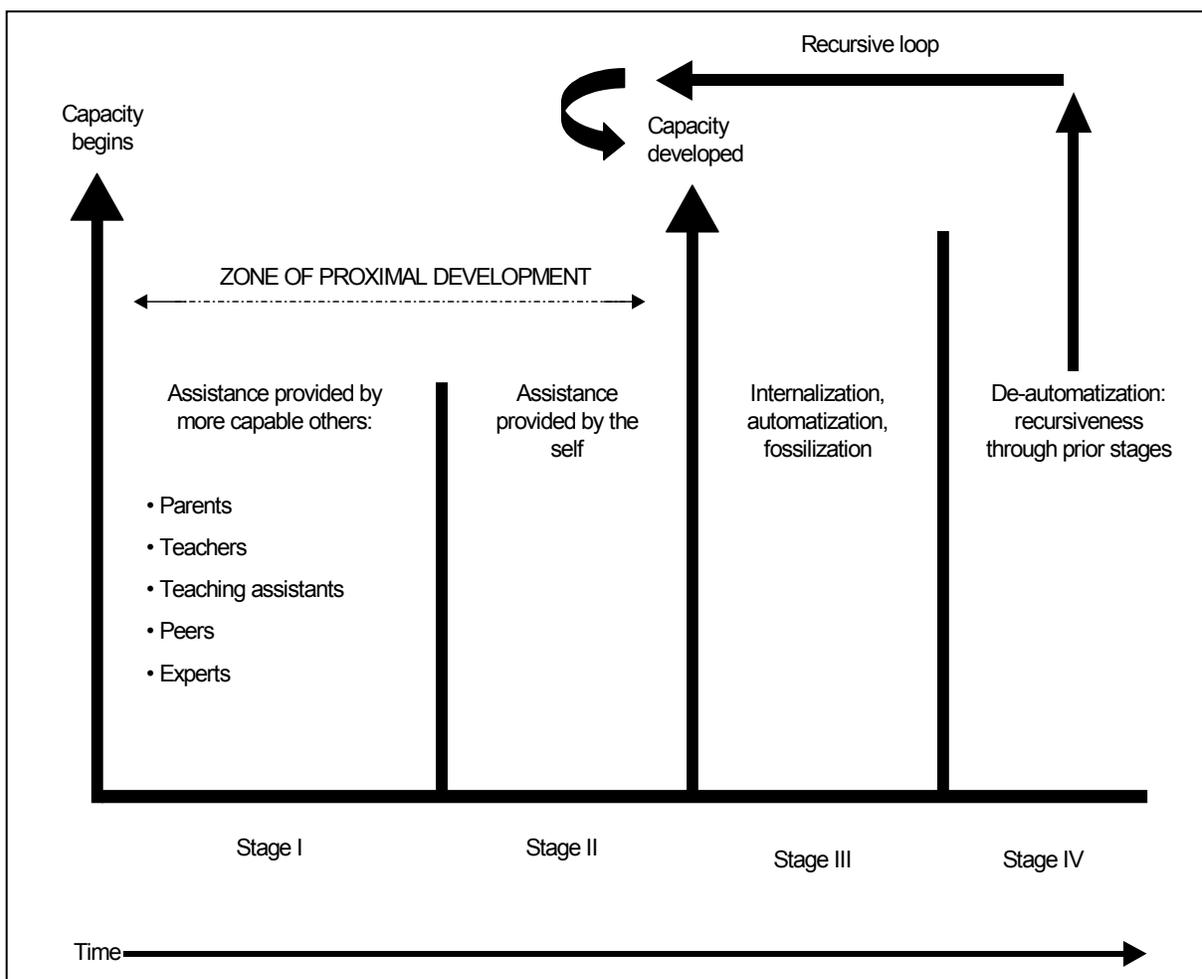
yet matured but are in the process of maturation, functions that will mature tomorrow but are currently in an embryonic state' (1978: 86). No person has a single ZPD; rather each person forms multiple shared ZPD across the myriad skills s/he develops. These particular competencies will vary as a function of the social, cultural and historical conditions the person finds him/herself embedded within. Such conditions are reflected in the multiple CoPs which comprise the person's world. For example, whilst some cultures may not hold academic activities such as the ability to read and write in high regard, government initiatives and teaching practices in England promote the eradication of illiteracy. The ability to read and write is integral to successful participation in our society and in turn, constitutes a goal of development here in the UK.

In characterising the learning process as a social and co-operative venture, Vygotsky's work is useful for understanding notions of participation and changing practice in communities. Learning takes place through people's active participation in socially constituted practices where they utilise the cultural tools, skills and knowledge base made available to them. It is in this process that the renegotiation and reinvention of the practices which constitute a particular community takes place. Community membership is not the result of merely absorbing the current practices, it is an act of transforming them through participation. In order to achieve this, a person must integrate into their current mindset his/her reconstruction of the knowledge gained in interaction with other members. The reconstruction of knowledge undertaken by all members of a community serves to shape the dual aspects of production and adoption involved in the negotiation of meaning. This process ensures the cultural and social practices of any community are continually evolving; transformed through the collective active participation of every member, past and present.

Tharp and Gallimore (1998) present a four stage transition through Vygotsky's ZPD and beyond (see figure 2.9). Stage one sees the activity introduced to the child by a more able other, drawing on the use of scaffolding (Wood, Bruner and Ross 1976) or guided participation (Rogoff 1990). This process is regarded as pivotal to a child's progress and essentially involves both parties working together to achieve

a mutually negotiated goal. Although, with an asymmetry of skills, knowledge and power in the adult-child dyad, Chak (2001) asserts the onus is on the adult to facilitate the transformation (rather than transmission) of skills within the ZPD whilst attuning to the pace of the child. Drawing on my teaching and learning experiences whilst working with Year 6 pupils, I illustrate the notion of guided participation in Appendix 2.C, a fictional account of a pupil named Alistair undertaking a mathematical activity with the support of a teacher.

**Figure 2.9:** Progression through the zone of proximal development and beyond (Tharp and Gallimore 1998)



Guided participation is a challenging and somewhat daunting task, where the more able other endeavours to execute multiple goals simultaneously. Although assistance strategies may initially be frequent and of a focused, concrete and closed nature, as the learner becomes increasingly competent, those providing assistance will experience diminishing responsibility and any guidance will perhaps

be of a more abstract and flexible nature, permitting the learner to exercise greater control over the process. Rogoff (1990: 94) summarises Wood et al's interpretation of the tutor role in these joint endeavours:

1. *'Recruiting the child's interest in the task as it is defined by the tutor.*
2. *Reducing the number of steps required to solve a problem by simplifying the task, so that the learner can manage components of the process and recognize when a fit with task requirements is achieved.*
3. *Maintaining the pursuit of the goal, through motivation of the child and direction of the activity.*
4. *Marking critical features of discrepancies between what a child has produced and the ideal solution.*
5. *Controlling frustration and risk in problem solving.*
6. *Demonstrating an idealized version of the act to be performed.'*

Whilst the overarching aim of guided participation is to deconstruct an activity to enable achievement, the tutor must also find ways to maintain the learner's interest and motivation, ensuring s/he is actively engaged and focused on the task at hand. Responding to the needs of the learner, the tutor must also allow space for the child's voice and actions, sensitivity to which will enable continual assessment of the learner's performance. Clearly, there is no one way of providing guided participation; it is an intricate process and content will vary across agent, activity, context, time and space. Nonetheless, through stressing joint-endeavour learning, the notion of scaffolding within the ZPD suggests a mutual readiness on behalf of both parties is a prerequisite for learning (Tobbell 2000).

Demanding high levels of interaction and time commitment, a teacher's provision of guided participation would be difficult to achieve in a class of approximately thirty pupils. However, elements of guided participation are evident in the classroom. Whilst, more often than not, pupils are expected to work silently, observations of teacher interaction see her supporting pupils with minor interventions, asking leading questions, drawing attention to pertinent aspects of a task, providing feedback and in small group work, incorporating instructive methods specific to a pupil's strengths. These actions enable the children to perform at a developmental

level beyond his/her individual level of achievement. Accordingly, Tharp and Gallimore (1998) suggest '*Teaching consists in assisting performance through the ZPD. Teaching can be said to occur when assistance is offered at points in the ZPD at which performance requires assistance.*' (97: italics in original). Nonetheless, National Curriculum coverage is vast and it is an unrealistic proposition that a class teacher could work within a shared ZPD with each pupil across tasks in every subject domain without support.

Perhaps anticipating little change in current educational structures and teacher-pupil ratios, literature has explored the possibility of pupils adopting the role of more able other. The work of Tudge (1990) examined the effects of collaboration between peers working in a shared ZPD and raised several issues pertaining to the management of the learning relationship. Notions of self-efficacy are paramount, with Tudge recognising that the degree of confidence displayed by the tutor throughout the scaffolding process inevitably impacting on its level of success. For example, although one child may be more competent than the other, if the child hold's no self-confidence in his/her own understanding and abilities, this will hinder any provision of guided participation. Tudge also raised the issue of social positioning and suggested that problems may occur if the status of the more capable peer is not perceived to be equal to that of the teacher or expert. In such circumstances the learner may dismiss the words of his/her more able partner and actively decide not to engage in the scaffolding process.

In reflecting on adult-child learning relationships, Rogoff (1990) also highlights the issue of social positioning, noting crucial differences in children's management of the relationship as a consequence of the learning situation. Whilst interactions with no explicit focus on teaching permit the child to contribute more extensively in structuring interactions, the role ascribed to the learner in overt adult-child instruction serves to inhibit his/her involvement and limit any contributions. Rogoff asserts, 'In explicit teaching situations, an important part of the learner's role is helping to preserve the greater status of the teacher by avoiding the impression of being "uppity"' (1990:98).

In summary, the passage through stage one of the ZPD is founded on the learning relationship co-constructed between learner and more able partner. Whilst micro level analysis of the ZPD permits us to see that relationships are intrinsic to the learning process, wider analysis illuminates them to be tangled webs of complexity. Acting as powerful analytical tools in our wider understanding of relationships, CoPs literature and ecological theory propose they are embedded in practices and multiple contexts.

Throughout stage two of the ZPD, Tharp and Gallimore (1998) suggest that the child manages his/her own performance. However, performance throughout stage two is still considered to be learning as it has not yet been internalised or automatized and thus, is in Vygotskian terms, not classed as actual development. The use of self-guidance and self-instruction are crucial at this time as the responsibility for the performance of a task has been transferred to the child. In turn, s/he adopts the role of guide, motivator and administrator. Entering stage three of Tharp and Gallimore's transition framework, the processes for successful execution of a task have been internalised and automatized. Thus, the learner has emerged from the ZPD into the developmental stage and the so termed 'fruits of development' have been realised and take on a fossilized state, beyond both self and social control.

Stage four is not an inevitable feature of the ZPD and highlights that progression through the ZPD is not unidirectional. In this stage, the child finds him/herself unable to do what s/he formally could do, perhaps as a consequence of environmental shifts or individual circumstances such as stress or physical trauma (ibid.). For the child's skills to be restored and his/her competence increased, the child must enter into a process of recursion through the ZPD. Initially the child must return to stage two and provide him/herself with explicit assistance to complete the task at hand; failing this, the child must return to stage one where s/he will be provided with assistance from a more able other. This latter stage is also useful for developing an understanding of movement into a new community of practice. By way of illustration, consider the transition of a Year 5 pupil to the subsequent year group. At the start of the new academic year, pupils learn that

some modes of performance that were suitable in Year 5 are no longer suitable now that they are in Year 6. For example, whilst in Year 5 children are permitted greater freedom in the classroom and frequently partake in unstructured activities reflecting the broader curriculum, in Year 6, the practices have changed; with the KS2 SATs a prime concern, much of the timetable is dedicated to the structured study of the three core subjects. Foundation subjects are allocated little time and attention and there are fewer opportunities to partake in extra curricula activities. Thus, for a child to become a successful participant in his/her new class, it would be necessary to revisit his/her internalisation of classroom behaviour and learn the desirable practices of Year 6, until they too become internalised and automatized.

### ***Section summary***

Essentially, Vygotskian theory challenges prevalent teaching and learning practices, suggesting a shift 'away from the notion of learners as isolated individuals who succeed or fail by their own resources, towards a view of learning as a situated, culturally-contextualized activity' (Mercer 1994: 101). Rather than the acquisition of curriculum content, or the ability to reproduce memorised 'right' answers and the perspectives of others, learning is conceptualised as the co-construction of meaning through active participation in quotidian relationships and experiences. However, it could be that Vygotsky's conception of the ZPD has limited value in the current educational climate, where ideologies of mainstream schooling emphasise the use of tests, targets and league tables. With class sizes typically exceeding thirty pupils, teaching staff are ill-equipped to provide students with assistance in shared ZPD. Nevertheless, with a focus on didactic relations between child and teacher, carer or class peer etc., the ZPD framework and guided participation notion help us to develop an understanding of the learning process and what it entails at the micro level. Recognising the bi-directional influence of both parties in the learning relationship, the contributions of the individual child are critical. As outlined earlier, it is the interaction of an individual's multi-tiered ecology and his/her repertoire of biological, cognitive, emotional and behavioural characteristics which for Bronfenbrenner result in idiosyncratic and dynamic

developmental processes. Thus, I now move on to give consideration to the developmentally instigative characteristics of the child, stressing the role of self-efficacy and metacognition.

### **The role of the developing child: personal agency in the learning process**

Mechanisms of personal agency hold particular relevance in the context of this thesis, as they posit that children have the capacity to exert influence over their own development and academic achievement. This corresponds with the pivotal role assigned to the focal child's developmentally instigative characteristics in the context of the bioecological model. Bronfenbrenner's theory, the CoPs formulation and Vygotskian psychology all recognise that a child's performance is influenced by myriad factors outside the pupil's control. However, they also acknowledge that s/he is active in the learning process. Through participation in the social spaces of his/her environment, a child influences the relationships and communities of which s/he is a part. Rather than passive recipients of their environmental conditions, children have an active role in their learning experiences and performance. The socio-cultural perspective adopted here, accounts for the role of the individual through focusing on the role of his/her direct belief systems. Specifically, I look at notions of metacognition and self-efficacy in shaping the process and outcome of the developing child's learning experiences. Whilst social cognitive theories, I reconceptualise them as sociocultural in order to situate them usefully in the approach I adopt. This is achieved through recognising that both phenomena are shaped in part by myriad factors operating external to the individual child over which s/he has no direct control.

Multiple literature searches reveal that both metacognition and self-efficacy have currently lost favour as powerful explanations of learning performance. Nevertheless, it is well established that they aid the management of the learning process and in turn, impact on the degree of success a learner experiences. Thus, whilst serving as powerful tools of personal agency in the academic context, metacognition and self-efficacy beliefs are also of benefit beyond the school walls.

In fostering these mechanisms of personal agency, schools will be providing future generations with skills necessary for successful and responsible participation in an unknown society. Although I now go on to consider metacognition and self-efficacy in turn, I believe that one cannot usefully be applied without consideration of the other.

### ***Metacognition***

The notion of metacognition illuminates the active role of the individual in the learning process. It is concerned with a learner's knowledge and awareness of his/her own cognitive processes and the ability to actively control and manage these processes (McCrinkle and Christensen 1995). Although a review of the literature reveals variations in the scope of the concept and its constituent subcomponents, Flavell (1979, 1987) presents a model of cognitive monitoring which involves the interplay between four metacognitive components: knowledge, experiences, goals (or tasks) and actions (or strategies). This section considers each of these components in turn and, using examples, illustrates how pupils' understanding of metacognitive processes can be used to enhance their learning experiences in the school context and beyond.

### ***Metacognitive knowledge***

Metacognitive knowledge refers to the knowledge or beliefs an individual holds about the factors which affect his/her cognitive activities. Flavell (1979) outlined three general factors of knowledge which are in constant interaction: person, task and strategy (see table 2.1).

**Table 2.1:** The three factors comprising metacognitive knowledge  
(Adapted from Flavell 1979, 1987)

<b>Metacognitive knowledge</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<p><i>Knowledge about people:</i> An individual's knowledge and beliefs about him/herself as learner, those of others and in learning in general.</p>	<p><i>Intra-individual:</i> 'I learn best through processing information presented visually rather than orally.'  <i>Inter-individual:</i> 'Jack is the better than Sophie at maths, but I struggle the most.'  <i>Universal:</i> 'Human short term memory is limited in capacity.'</p>
<p><i>Knowledge about tasks:</i> Being aware of the nature, extent and demands of a task and of the factors that make one task easier or more difficult than another. This knowledge guides the individual in the management of a task and provides information about the degree of success s/he is likely to experience.</p>	<p>'This excerpt is difficult to read as there is a lot unfamiliar terminology littered throughout the passage. I will have to continue with this comprehension exercise as part of my homework as I don't have enough lesson time to look up all the words in a dictionary and answer the questions based on the text.'</p>
<p><i>Knowledge about strategies:</i> An individual's knowledge and beliefs about general and domain specific learning strategies. This knowledge enables the person to select the most effective strategies for making progress across tasks.</p>	<p><i>General:</i> 'To learn effectively, children need to be actively engaged with the information presented.'  <i>Domain specific:</i> 'When painting or drawing an object it is useful to mark out a grid on the canvas or paper to act as a guide to proportion.'  <i>Knowledge about which strategy is best for which task:</i> 'In terms of revision, visual representations such as mind maps are extremely useful for summarising science information but they are not useful for maths, where it is most effective to work through practice questions.'</p>

An awareness and use of metacognitive knowledge in everyday classroom activities can have a significant impact on the learning experiences and performance of individual children. This is exemplified in Appendix 2.D, a vignette which follows the thoughts of one Year 6 pupil, Matt, as he undertakes a question on his English SATs paper. Rather than locating learning performance in the amount of children's expended effort or practice, metacognitive processes indicate learning is much more complex than any linear input → output relationship. Its use encourages an active role for the child in that it promotes awareness of his/her capacities as a learner. For example, it raises awareness of the learning strategies that s/he is using and those more widely available that are not being drawn upon. Rather than teaching pupils particular skills, the overriding aim would be to foster a critical disposition, where they begin to implicitly use their metacognitive knowledge and strategies as they go about their quotidian lives (Quicke 1994). Clearly, metacognitive knowledge is only going to be of use if it is acted upon, so classroom policy and practice needs to foster both its development and utilisation within

pupils. Conflicting with heavily ingrained patterns of pupil behaviour in the classroom, namely passivity, pupils may resist using metacognitive knowledge to inform their task performance, perhaps unwilling to make the effort to participate as an active agent. Even after considerable use, it may be that pupils choose not to use their knowledge of specific strategies in given circumstances as they deem them to be of little use to the task at hand, perhaps incorrectly so.

In researching the pedagogy of reading in English and Irish primary classrooms, Hall, Myers and Bowman (1999) note that the principles of metacognition do not feature prominently in classroom life. They point out that teachers are more task and product driven than learning or process orientated. Given their extensive workload and the prominence given to judgements founded on tests results and positions on performance tables, this finding is unsurprising. The focus for government policy and classroom practice today is the product of learning rather than the process, and in these terms, opportunities to foster metacognitive processes are limited.

Carrying out research in the school context, Quicke and Winter (1994) posit that pupils' development and use of metacognitive knowledge serves to empower them as agents in the learning process. In acquiring insights that would assist their self-development and increase control over their learning, metacognitive knowledge serves to facilitate pupils' self-regulated learning. During their extensive years in academia, I propose that a number of pupils may develop metacognitive knowledge about people and tasks over time without explicit instruction, but not necessarily knowledge about strategies.

### *Metacognitive experiences*

Metacognitive experiences are characterised by the subjective internal responses of a person to his/her own metacognitive knowledge, tasks or strategies. Examples of metacognitive experiences include, when a person has the feeling that something is difficult to understand, to memorise or to solve; if a person has

the feeling that s/he is nearing his/her end goal or alternatively, is far from reaching it; or if a person feels a particular task is getting easier or more difficult than it was a few moments earlier (Flavell 1987). In undertaking mathematical problems, reading and completing comprehension exercises, planning and writing a story or letter etc. Year 6 pupils may find themselves deep in a sea of metacognitive experiences. Here, they may endure both positive (meeting a challenge and succeeding; finally understanding the gist of an inaccessibly written book; writing the introduction and middle section of a story and seeing the end in sight) and negative experiences (feeling that they will never grasp how to calculate long multiplication; feelings of inadequacy as they struggle to perform to the expected level of attainment for their age group).

Given the space to reflect on such experiences, children can learn how to interpret and respond to such feelings in a proactive way, for example, perhaps s/he requires some distance from the task at hand to reflect on his/her understanding. If negative feelings continue to pervade and a child is still struggling to understand a concept or to complete a challenging task, failure and frustration will hinder any progress and diminish any motivation. In contrast, positive metacognitive experiences can fuel enthusiasm for participation in learning experiences and sustain optimism that one can and will succeed with perseverance despite initial barriers. Whilst children may have exposure to such metacognitive experiences it is important that they learn to interpret them and respond appropriately, managing them and any consequences they have for the task or activity at hand.

### *Metacognitive goals or tasks*

Metacognitive goals or tasks are the desired outcomes or aims of a cognitive venture. For a Year 6 pupil, examples may include: calculating the solution to an arithmetic problem, committing facts to memory (e.g. the times tables), completing an English comprehension, designing and making a hat using a limited range of materials and products. In the valued practices of the Year 6 classroom community, such cognitive ventures are integral. Membership in this Year 6 CoP is

in part, dependent on pupil's successful performance when undertaking these cognitive ventures. Thus, it can be reasoned that the metacognitive goals which children strive for in Year 6 are shaped by the practices of the community; they are inextricably linked. Flavell's model of cognitive monitoring maintains that the successful completion of any one of these goals is reliant upon a child's use of both metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive experience.

### *Metacognitive actions or strategies*

Metacognitive actions or strategies refer to the methods employed to achieve a desired goal or aim. Flavell (1987) distinguishes between metacognitive and cognitive strategies. Consider a Year 6 child who is given a passage of information to learn. If s/he chose to skim read through the article at first to get an idea of how easy or difficult it would be to learn the content and how much time s/he will need to set aside to achieve the task, the child would be engaging in a metacognitive strategy. In contrast, when the child actually begins the task of reading through the passage slowly in order to learn the content, s/he would be engaging in a cognitive strategy. In everyday activities, people draw on cognitive strategies to make progress and metacognitive strategies to monitor this progress. Appendix 2.E comprises a vignette of one Year 6 child, Chris, employing metacognitive knowledge, experience, goals and actions in application to an everyday classroom activity.

### *Metacognitive regulatory processes*

Metacognitive processes are essentially a series of reflections which accompany any task and assist in the active management of an individual's cognitive processes. Such skills enable decisions to be made about pursuing or changing activities and include planning, monitoring and evaluation (see table 2.2).

**Table 2.2:** Understanding the role of metacognitive processes: planning, control and evaluation  
(Adapted from Schraw and Moshman 1995)

Metacognitive processes
<p><i>Planning involves the selection of appropriate strategies and allocation of resources deemed to affect performance of a given task.</i></p> <p>Skills include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Analysis of task and identification of aims</li> <li>◆ Effective deconstruction of the original task into sub-tasks, thus making it more manageable to the individual</li> <li>◆ Approximating the time necessary to achieve the task and evaluating the chances of success</li> </ul>
<p><i>Monitoring relates to an individual's awareness of task comprehension and performance and allows the follow up, collection and examination of information.</i></p> <p>Skills include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Classification of action: 'what am I doing, what type of activity is this?'</li> <li>◆ Verification: 'there is something I don't understand'</li> <li>◆ Anticipation to reflect upon and judge consequences: 'if I do this, this might happen'</li> </ul>
<p><i>Evaluation refers to appraising the products of learning and reflecting on one's engagement in the regulatory processes to attain these.</i></p> <p>Skills include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Comparison of original goals and end product</li> </ul>

Drawing on the learning experiences of sixteen students, Conner and Gunstone (2004) demonstrate that use of metacognitive regulatory processes can improve task performance. They explored the knowledge, management and use of learning strategies in the completion of an essay task. Conner and Gunstone conclude that metacognitive awareness and strategy use were more evident in those students who attained a higher mark in their essays. Students who produced 'quality' essays were found to engage in planning, monitoring and evaluative activities to a greater extent.

The explicit instruction of metacognitive regulatory processes in the school domain would serve as a means of empowering pupils in the learning process. Positioned as active agents, control of the teaching-learning relationship would be handed over to them and they would become responsible for the management of their own learning. However, the evaluation element could pose a problem, as a child may think s/he is completing an exercise or task correctly, when in fact, this may not be the case. Perhaps, teachers and peer review or discussion could aid and strengthen the evaluation component of the regulatory processes.

### *Measurement of metacognitive phenomenon*

On the whole, researchers use self-report measures as the primary means of measuring a person's knowledge and use of metacognitive processes. This method is underpinned by the assumption that the learner consciously and deliberately engages in metacognitive processes. However, research has shown that with practice, strategy selection and regulatory processes may become spontaneous or automatic and in so doing, infer that any reflective processing taking place is implicit (Conner and Gunstone 2004). Thus, data collected via self report measures such as questionnaires may be of little use; perhaps participation in social practices presents an alternative means. In classroom observations and conversations afforded by my role as teaching assistant, I was able ascertain a glimpse into children's use of metacognitive processes as they went about their day-to-day activities. This is evident in the examples comprising the vignettes included and is also demonstrative in stories presented in the analyses section of this thesis. Whilst these provide only a snapshot of metacognitive use by children, they are nonetheless valuable in informing strategies designed to aid children's learning and performance.

### *Problems with transfer*

If employed appropriately, the examples above indicate that children's knowledge and management of metacognitive strategies can powerfully enhance their capacities as autonomous learners and in turn, their learning performance. However, issues of transfer remain a fundamental problem. The literature reveals that students do not utilise metacognitive skills regularly (Bandura 1995). Why is it, as exemplified in the De Abreu et al study (1997) discussed previously, that children who display competence in one task can fail to employ it in another task, be it similar or dissimilar? Research indicates that difficulties are evident in the transfer across knowledge domains within school and the transfer of school subject knowledge to the context of everyday life (Quicke 1994). The communities of practice formulation would claim that the inability to successfully transfer

information is founded on the underpinning assumption that all knowledge, skills and understanding are context dependent. How can notions of metacognition usefully be synthesized into a theory which reconceptualises learning as experience? It is necessary to point out here, that as an individual participates in the social practices which comprise his/her quotidian life, transfer must take place. In being a member of multiple CoPs, every person is continually involved in the process of negotiation of meaning, in which s/he must synthesize past and present experiences. Thus, whilst the knowledge, skills and understanding which make up the particular practices of a community are context bound, they are in part, shaped by criteria outside the remit of the community. That is, the knowledge, skills and understanding we have as a member in one community shapes what we take to another.

The regular use of metacognitive knowledge and the successful transfer of strategies across tasks and subject domains are dependent on the mediating role of self-efficacy. Bandura (1995) defines this as the 'belief in one's capabilities to organise and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations' (page 2). For the self-regulated learner, the power of employing metacognitive strategies to enhance performance in a given situation is dependent on the nature of his/her self-efficacy beliefs. Whether the individual is using metacognitive skills to select appropriate strategies to test comprehension in their understanding or access knowledge to meet the demands of a task, etc., self-efficacy beliefs will affect task attainment via self-enhancing or self-debilitating thoughts, motivation levels, affective states and perseverance. Effective use of metacognitive knowledge and strategies involves an underlying sense of self-efficacy; this affects people's use of metacognitive processes in the face of fatigue, stressors, competing attractions and obstacles (Zimmerman 1995).

Although a person's knowledge, skills and understandings may be context dependent, use of metacognitive processes can enable successful transfer of said information to another domain. For example, the child's ability to write an essay in English can transfer to their ability to tackle an essay in history if the two processes are complementary. Critically, 'this process is rooted in specific knowledge

domains and involves the active and deliberate construction of links between different spheres. Such active transfer requires that the learner possess knowledge and understanding in each domain, as well as an appropriate disposition,' (Quicke 1994: 253). In this way a person's knowledge, skills and understanding remain contextualised in nature.

Flavell's model of cognitive monitoring and Schraw and Moshman's metacognitive regulatory processes provide common frameworks which practitioners can work with to enhance children's capacity to become autonomous learners. These frameworks in themselves are decontextualized and thus generalizable. However, in application, the components which comprise each (for example, metacognitive knowledge and planning) are shaped by the context in which the framework is used and in this way, the models are transformed, they become contextualised and subject specific. This process highlights how metacognitive processes can be considered both generalizable and localized.

### ***Section summary***

The research discussed in this section suggests that the learning process can be facilitated by pupils' emerging awareness of their personal cognitive powers and increasingly deliberate use of them. However, teachers rarely make strategies needed for the development and management of these explicit, leaving pupils' to discover strategies independently. Teaching can benefit from stressing the conscious engagement on behalf of the pupil, to encourage explicit self-examination and self-regulation of his/her metacognitive processes. For example, when a teacher works alongside an individual pupil, the child could be asked to think aloud whilst problem solving. This would provide his/her teacher with greater insight into the pupil's approach and locate where any difficulties might lie (Dominowski 1998). On occasions where pupils experience difficulty verbalising metacognitive processes, teachers may assist through the use of probing questions, drawing on pupils' actions as a cue. For example a teacher may ask 'What made you decide to do it that way?' or 'Is there something you'd like to ask

me about?’ Such teaching practices empower the pupil as a learner in the school context through handing over knowledge and control.

To enhance pupils’ reflective practice whilst undertaking mathematical activities in the classroom setting, Bell, Swan, Shannon and Crust (1996) outline the use of two techniques which involve peer collaboration: scripted discussion and pupils as assessors. The first involves working in pairs, with one pupil undertaking the task and the other asking questions of his/her partner once they have finished. Bell et al propose supplying interviewers with a set of questions designed to guide the discussion and elicit reflective thought (Appendix 2.F). The interviewer is asked to make a note of the interviewee’s responses and list anything they disagree with so it can be discussed after the checklist had been completed. In application with Year 7 pupils in one lesson, the method was found to be effective. Bell et al report that pupils ‘thought that it helped them to remember and it helped them to think about what they had learned and whether they had understood it’ (page 8). Whilst the stated questions are aimed at encouraging pupils’ self-reflection, many of them are also particularly powerful in elucidating the implicit practices involved in the participation of the lesson.

The second method saw Year 10 pupils working as assessors and diagnosing errors. Pupils were asked to take the role of the teacher in an exercise on reflection and mark the work of a (fictional) member of another class, Edward. Although pupils were able to draw on the knowledge gained from tackling reflection questions in class, in their unfamiliar role as teacher, some struggled to provide constructive advice for the pupil and required assistance from the class teacher. Interestingly, Bell et al note that pupils were quite comfortable to allocate marks and grades to Edward’s work, although they were particularly harsh. It could be that pupils’ ease with allocating marks was a function of the prominence given to measurement in our education system; practice dictates that all children’s educational attainment is pigeonholed by grades and levels. Similarly, perhaps the struggle to provide verbal advice was a reflection of the status it is assigned in the English education system. For example, whilst the statutory assessment procedure sees Year 6 pupils’ performance reported via teacher’s written

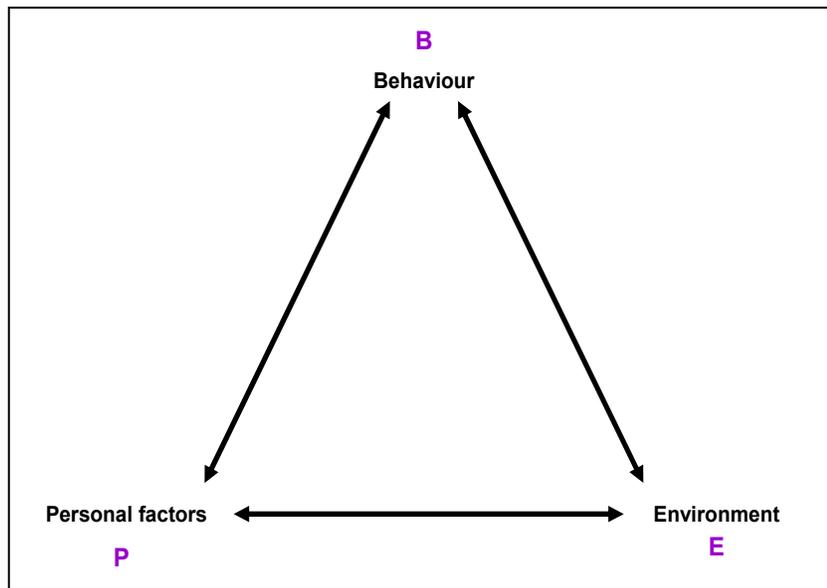
assessments and attainment on KS2 SATs, it is the latter that are given the most weight as they are the only part of the procedure reported in the league tables.

Whilst the above practices aimed at heightening pupils' self-reflection do possess power, they appear alien in light of current classroom practices. Here, the scope to hand over knowledge and control to pupils' is restricted (Quicke 1994). The National Curriculum for KS2 provides little opportunity for teachers to engage in instruction of metacognitive strategies. The Year 6 timetable is devoted to the teaching of domain specific knowledge, to be assessed in the forthcoming end of year curriculum tests. This highlights the influence of prevailing government and primary school policies upon the child as learner; both parties would benefit from cultivating a working environment which reinforces notions of metacognitive practice within the teaching and learning relationship. Whilst notions of metacognition are important, they are in themselves limited. They claim greater explanatory power for learning performance when used in conjunction with self-efficacy theory.

### ***Self-efficacy theory***

The concept of self-efficacy was first introduced in a paper authored by Bandura (1977) entitled 'self-efficacy: toward a unifying theory of behavioral change' and has since been integrated into a social cognitive theory of human behaviour (Bandura 1986). Briefly, this theory explains human psychosocial functioning in terms of triadic reciprocal causation, whereby personal factors (cognitive, affective and biological aspects), behavioural patterns and environmental events operate as interacting determinants, each maintaining bi-directional influence (Bandura 1999). The model of the relations between the three classes of determinants in the conception of triadic reciprocity is illustrated in figure 2.10.

**Figure 2.10:** Model of triadic reciprocal causation  
(Adapted from Pajares 1996)



The three different sources of influence are argued to vary in strength and act at different times as it takes time for a causal factor to exert its influence and activate reciprocal influences (Bandura 1989). The  $P \leftrightarrow B$  link reflects the interaction between thought, affect and action. What a person thinks, believes and feels serves to shape and direct how s/he behaves. Moreover, biological structures affect behavior and impose constraints on one's capabilities. In turn, a person's actions contribute to his/her thought patterns, emotional reactions and serve to modify sensory systems and brain structures. The  $P \leftrightarrow E$  link is concerned with the interactive relation between personal characteristics and environmental influences. A person's thoughts, beliefs and feelings are developed and modified in light of social influences, specifically modeling, instruction and social persuasion. It is in this interplay between personal factors and the environment that one can recognise that notions of self-efficacy are indeed shaped by factors external to the individual child. The  $B \leftrightarrow E$  link represents the bi-directional influence of behaviour and the environment. The environment is not a fixed entity that inevitably impinges upon an individual; rather behaviour alters environmental conditions and in turn, is altered by the very conditions it creates. In this interplay of triadic reciprocal causation, it is thus acknowledged that individuals, so termed

'agentic operators' (Bandura 1999: 22), have the capacity to intentionally influence their own functioning and life circumstances.

Whilst recognising the role of the three core phenomena in shaping human behaviour, it may be argued that this model does provide a somewhat oversimplified notion of the complexities involved in development. For example, in giving consideration to the notion of participation, the CoPs literature illuminates the differing levels of membership that are feasibly open to an individual seeking entry to a new community. It is recognised that the level of participation actually undertaken is shaped by not only the actions of the individual concerned, but also the other groups to which s/he belongs and critically, the prospective community. The level of the participation ultimately adopted will have ramifications for the person's development alongside that of the other communities. As such, the CoPs perspective accentuates the messiness and richness of the learning journey, a feat which Bandura's social cognitive theory perhaps fails to accomplish.

Nonetheless, in Bandura's framework, personal agency is essentially perceived to be socially rooted, operating within broader sociocultural influences (Pajares 1996); people are viewed as both products and producers of their environment (Bandura 1989). Whilst not individually determined, the notion of self-efficacy illuminates the active role of the individual in the learning process; with efficacy beliefs influencing people's thoughts, feelings, motivation and actions (Bandura 1995). The concept of self-efficacy has been widely employed to heighten understanding in varied disciplines; Pajares (1997) lists these to include: the investigation of clinical problems such as phobias, depression and addiction; smoking behaviour; stress; pain control and educational attainment. Crucially, in terms of learning performance in academia, social cognitive theory proposes that self-efficacy beliefs serve as a mediatory factor between knowledge and action. Hence, 'knowledge, skill and prior attainments are often poor predictors of subsequent attainments because the beliefs that individuals hold about their abilities and about the outcome of their efforts powerfully influence the ways in which they will behave' (Pajares 1996: page 543). The extent to which a child's academic performance is influenced by factors pertaining to cognitive ability, prior educational preparation

and attainment, gender and attitudes towards academic activities is dependent on how much they affect efficacy beliefs; the more they shape efficacy beliefs, the greater impact they have on academic attainments (Bandura 1997). Before setting out to consider how self-efficacy can powerfully contribute to an understanding of children's learning performance, this section will look at the origins of self-efficacy beliefs and the effects of such beliefs in regulating human behaviour.

### *The origins of self-efficacy beliefs*

According to Bandura (1995) perceived self-efficacy beliefs stem from the cognitive processing of four sources of influence: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, physiological and emotional states. These are presented in Appendix 2.G, where I have sought to integrate pertinent examples relating to children's learning in the school setting. Critically, it is the child's cognitive processing that underpins the extent to which each source impacts upon the development of his/her personal efficacy beliefs. The child's cognitive processing influences: the selection of information, the importance assigned to each piece of information and the manner in which it is integrated into self-efficacy judgements (Bandura 1995). Thus, self-efficacy beliefs are not individually determined, but are shaped in the interplay between personal factors, environmental influences and behavioural patterns. Various factors affect how the information is processed and interpreted; these include factors of a personal, social and situational nature (Bandura 1997). For example, a child's perceived efficacy to successfully perform a given task will be influenced by the perceived difficulty of the task, the child's preconceptions of his/her own capabilities, the child's physical and affective state, his/her level of motivation, the extent of external support made available from teaching staff or peers, the presence of situational distractions (e.g. noise, limited time) and the sustained effort required to achieve completion of the task. The role of these factors in shaping an individual's perceived self-efficacy to achieve is illustrated in Appendix 2.H.

### *The role of self-efficacy beliefs in regulating human behaviour*

Bandura (1994, 1995) notes that efficacy beliefs regulate ongoing human functioning via four main psychological processes: cognitive, motivational, affective and selection (Appendix 2.1); these act in unison rather than isolation. The first three efficacy activated processes enable people to exercise some control over the tasks and activities they encounter on a quotidian basis. The last stresses that personal efficacy beliefs can shape life trajectories by influencing the types of activities and environments people choose to participate in. These processes can usefully be applied in the exploration of membership and levels of participation within communities of practice, a notion explored in Appendix 2.1. A person's beliefs in their ability to have some control over the endeavours they engage in has significant ramifications for their way of life. High self-efficacy beliefs, if not too unrealistic, can foster positive well being and ongoing success through perseverant effort. People with low-efficacy beliefs who, prone to negative emotional states and fear of failure, limit their participation in activities of a challenging nature, perhaps showing an inclination for situations deemed 'safe.' However, in reality everyday life is full of uncertainty and unforeseeable obstacles and in this way it can be understood as undeniably challenging.

### *The measurement of self-efficacy beliefs*

In the sections considered above, the discussion has drawn on a black and white distinction of high and low efficacy beliefs. Whilst this has served in aiding readers to begin to paint a picture of the implications of such beliefs for learning performance, it also presents an over simplistic representation of the construct. A review of the literature reveals that self-efficacy beliefs are typically investigated using self-report measures. Employing Likert scales, individuals are asked to report the level, generality and strength of their confidence to accomplish a task or succeed in a particular situation (Pajares 1996). Of course, the effectiveness of such measures is founded on several assumptions: firstly, that the learner possesses self knowledge and secondly, that any reports will be honest and

accurate. Taken from research exploring the role of self-efficacy beliefs in academic settings, examples of items comprising such self-report measures are illustrated in Appendix 2.J. Clearly, the manner in which self-efficacy and criterion tasks are operationalised and assessed in a particular research study will serve to influence the relationships and effect sizes found (ibid.). Problems in the measurement of the self-efficacy construct have arisen in the nature of questions used within self-report measures. Judgements of self-efficacy are task and domain specific and as such, any items on self-report measures need to reflect this. However, Pajares (ibid.) notes that some studies utilise self-report measures which attempt to tap into a more global or generalised attitude about a person's capabilities with items. The information rendered from these measures is of little use as they fail to recognise the complexity of self-efficacy beliefs and how they are shaped by contextual factors.

In relying on self-report measures, it is assumed that the learner is consciously aware of his/her personal beliefs and deliberately engages them as s/he undertakes day-to-day tasks. However, perhaps much reflective processing is implicit rather than explicit in nature and in these terms, data collected via self-report measures has limited use. Moreover, the highly structured nature of questionnaire self-report measures presents a simplistic representation of self-efficacy. This construct is more intricate than the number or category distinction on Likert scales merit. Rather than employing this highly structured method as a means of gaining access to people's cognitive processing, perhaps dialogue would be more effective in terms of aiding reflection. In classroom observations and conversations afforded by my role as teaching assistant, I was able capture a glimpse of the self-efficacy beliefs held by focal children and the implications of these beliefs for their learning performance as they went about their activities. This is demonstrated in the stories presented in chapter five. Whilst these provide only a snapshot of the value of self-efficacy beliefs held by children, they are nonetheless valuable in informing strategies designed to aid children's learning and performance.

### ***The role of self-efficacy in educational settings***

In its current fluid and evolving form, society requires members to possess the '...cognitive and self-regulatory competencies to fulfil complex occupational roles and to manage the demands of contemporary life' (Bandura 1995: 17). Education is a means of encouraging this personal disposition. This section gives consideration to the implications of self-efficacy beliefs within the primary school setting, where they exert influence over the performance of pupils, teachers and the school as a community itself.

#### ***Pupils and self-efficacy***

Children's efficacy beliefs play an influential mediational role in academic attainment (Bandura 1997) and as such, are paramount in understanding children's development and learning performance. Utilising a quantitative meta-analytic methodology, Multon, Brown and Lent (1991) integrated the results from thirty nine independent studies which investigated self-efficacy beliefs in relation to academic performance and/or persistence outcomes. They concluded that there was a positive statistical relationship between self-efficacy beliefs, academic performance and persistence across a wide range of subject domains. Self-efficacy beliefs mediate learning performance of specific tasks in the classroom context via: the role of self-enhancing or self debilitating thoughts, motivation levels, affective states, perseverance in the face of obstacles and employment of metacognitive skills. On a wider level, Bandura (1995) notes that a pupil's beliefs in his/her ability to master academic activities affects his/her aspirations, level of interest in intellectual pursuits, academic accomplishments and the extent to which s/he regulates his/her own learning. Bandura further reports that children with a high sense of efficacy to regulate their own learning and to master academic skills, display more pro-social behaviour, are more popular and experience less rejection by their peers. In comparison, children with a low sense of efficacy display high levels of verbal and physical aggression and disengagement of self-sanctions from harmful behaviour.

In light of the examples noted above, it is apparent that children's learning and development, both personal and social, benefit immensely from higher perceived levels of self-efficacy. As a principle setting in many children's lives, schools must endeavour to foster this personal attribute. Although not a simple process, teachers in particular, are in a powerful position to build favourable notions of self-efficacy within the children that comprise their class. Commitment of time and effort to each pupil would establish and maintain higher levels of self-efficacy across subjects and tasks. This is no easy feat. Each teacher working in a class community will be subject to wider conditions, with factors impacting on their situation over which they have little or no control. For example, in its current format, the National Curriculum continues to prohibit a participatory role for children in deciding the content of their learning. Policymakers are in essence, taking away possibilities for building self-efficacy on the part of both pupil and teacher.

In this sense, notions of self-efficacy can be linked to levels of participation within communities, with greater levels of membership permitting the development of heightened levels of self-efficacy. With an awareness of this, teachers must work around such obstacles (which often stem from wider operating systems) to find alternative paths to increase the self-efficacy beliefs of their pupils. Critically, this can be achieved by encouraging pupils increasing levels of participation in alternative communities, such as the class community, where the teacher has more direct input into shaping the practices of the group. Ultimately however, the nature of participation adopted by a particular pupil is not the sole responsibility of the class teacher, but involves the input of the child him/herself and his/her fellow peers.

### *Teachers and self-efficacy*

Bandura (1995) reports that teachers' instructional efficacy has been found to affect the creation of a positive or negative classroom atmosphere and to shape specific teaching strategies. He states 'the task of creating learning environments conducive to development of cognitive competencies rests heavily on the talents

and self-efficacy of teachers' (Bandura 1997: 240). Crucially, the impact of high and low teacher efficacy beliefs in creating positive and negative classroom environments correspondingly influences children's own efficacy beliefs and cognitive development (Bandura 1995). The atmosphere in a classroom is in part determined by a teacher's belief in his/her instructional efficacy. Personal efficacy beliefs regarding instruction will, for example, impact on the teacher's perceived ability to motivate and educate difficult pupils and counterinfluence any adverse home and community influences on the children's educational attainment. Gibson and Dembo (1984) found that teachers with a high sense of instructional efficacy operate from the belief that they can educate difficult pupils if they invest a greater amount of time and effort, employ appropriate strategies and enlist family support. Conversely, teachers with low instructional efficacy believe there is little they can do when their efforts are counterpoised by factors in the child's proximal contexts and when pupils themselves have low motivation.

Instructional efficacy beliefs can vary across subject domains (Bandura 1997) and in different units of the same subject domain. Thus, whilst a Year 6 primary teacher may judge him/herself highly efficacious in English or science instruction, s/he may be less assured of his/her efficacy in mathematics and art. Or perhaps a specific teacher judges him/herself to be highly efficacious in teaching the fractions, decimals and percentages unit but has low instructional efficacy in the shapes, space and measures unit. The classroom atmosphere in these lessons will vary as a consequence of the teacher's judgement of his/her efficacy levels.

Research also indicates that a teacher's instructional efficacy contributes to his/her teaching style. Woolfolk and Hoy (1990) report that teachers with a high sense of instructional efficacy support developments of pupils' intrinsic interests and academic self-directedness. Perhaps such teachers would aim to inculcate upon entry to their class, knowledge and use of metacognitive skills as a means to facilitate pupils to become self-regulating learners. In contrast, those with a low sense of instructional efficacy favour a custodial orientation that relies on extrinsic inducements and negative sanctioning in order to motivate students. This may include the use of strict deadlines and behaviourist notions of reward and

punishment. From these examples, it is clear that the learning experiences of two Year 6 children taught by the same or two different teachers in the same primary school can vary widely.

Again, in recognising the critical role played by teachers' self-efficacy beliefs in shaping teaching and learning practices in the classroom, it is imperative that this personal attribute receives greater consideration. As communities of practice, schools can work together to build the perceived levels of self-efficacy amongst their teaching staff and build their confidence in areas they feel they need to improve. With recognition of such areas facilitated by either personal insight or brought about by the observations of 'supportive' team members, interventions can be made to heighten efficacy in these areas; be in delivery of a particular topic or management of paperwork. It is important here that these observations are an integral aspect of everyday life in the community, rather than special occasions for those deemed to be struggling. The 'constant strive to always improve' must become a valued practice in the school community for all parties', where assistance is ongoing rather than sporadic. For example, observations and support for one off ventures such as preparation for imminent Ofsted inspections etc. would be insufficient.

### *Schools and self-efficacy*

Efficacy beliefs can serve as both personal and social constructs (Pajares 1996). Different communities of practice operate as collective systems, which each develop a sense of collective efficacy. These may take the form of a specific Year 6 class, a group of primary school teachers, a particular school or perhaps a school district. Each community develops a shared belief in their capabilities to realise given levels of attainment. Throughout this chapter, it has been argued that people do not act individually but as members of multiple CoPs. Thus, a particular primary school may develop collective beliefs about the capabilities of: their children to learn; their teachers to effectively deliver the National Curriculum; their teachers to otherwise enhance the lives of pupils beyond the remit of the curriculum; their Year

6 teacher(s) to ensure as many Year 6 children as possible attain level 4 in their end of KS2 curriculum tests; their Year 6 children to attain at least level 4 on the English, mathematics and science end of year SATs; and their community to cultivate a positive working environment for both teacher and pupil and in turn accomplish significant academic progress.

School effectiveness is typically measured using information pertaining to rate of absenteeism, levels of behaviour problems and pupils' academic attainment on standardised tests (Bandura 1997), such as the KS2 SATs taken at the end of Year 6. Of course there are clear limitations with these measurements, not least that they negate to look at the personal circumstances of the individual children involved. There is an implicit assumption that the most effective and successful school can with the correct interventions 'fix' any shortcomings pupils may bring with them in the 'haven' of school. In Appendix 2.K, I drawn on the concepts outlined in this section and outline a description of a highly efficacious school and a low achieving one. Despite government policies such as the National Curriculum and the NLNS which aim to make education a level playing field for all children throughout schools in England, it is apparent that children's learning experiences differ depending on the schools they attend. The learning performance of children attending the two different schools described in Appendix 2.K will be in stark contrast, as each reflects a different set of collective efficacy beliefs. Not only will collective school efficacy beliefs serve to affect a child's academic progress, motivation and career prospects directly but also indirectly, via influence on his/her own efficacy beliefs.

### ***Section summary***

The research discussed in this section illuminates that children's learning experiences and performance in the school context are greatly shaped by the efficacy beliefs of the child, the teachers s/he has throughout his/her school career and the collective efficacy beliefs of the schools s/he attends. Recognising that the heightened efficacy of all these parties serves to benefit a child's learning and

development most, I have proposed that time and effort ploughed into building the efficacy in these areas is much needed. Critical to intervention work are levels of membership. I have suggested that the greater the level of participation within a community (be it school, Key Stage, year group or class etc.) the higher the potential for building efficacy beliefs. Whilst a particular school, teacher or pupil cannot ensure the membership of a particular individual, they can with increased awareness, facilitate it through their actions and practices.

Although self-efficacy theory clearly possesses explanatory power in accounting for learning performance, Seifert (2004) notes that it falls short on two accounts. Firstly, whilst it is reasonable to suppose that pupils who perceive themselves incapable will not be motivated to learn, it does not follow that those pupils who are not motivated to learn see themselves as incapable. This point is evident in the pupil who is bright but bored and underachieving; s/he does the minimum amount of work necessary to achieve some minimally acceptable standard (for example level four in the KS2 SATs). This pupil may feel capable but attaches no value to effort beyond the minimum. Secondly, there are numerous instances when a child has been witnessed proclaiming 'I can't do that' but proceeds to attempt the task regardless. Thus, whilst a pupil may state that they do not know how to do something, his/her perception of incapability may not necessarily hinder his/her performance. This may be the result of the child using the claim as a self-protective mechanism or alternatively, viewing the problem as a challenge to be tackled.

Despite these exceptions, the notion of self-efficacy possesses significant explanatory power in understanding children's learning experiences and performance. In terms of academic attainment, it would be useful if pupils, teachers and schools were educated about the notion of efficacy beliefs and the potential power they have in shaping learning and teaching performance. Critically for the child, it is the emerging awareness of self-efficacy beliefs in conjunction with the use of metacognitive knowledge and strategies that can play a significant role for his/her learning attainment. Perhaps the identification of negative or low self-efficacy beliefs can be eradicated through reflection and positive action, where

activities are structured and conducted in ways to ensure they can be mastered by the parties concerned. Although not discussed in this section, it is crucial to recognise that children's learning experiences and performance are also influenced by the efficacy beliefs of those people in his/her life that are outside the remit of school. This will include those people the child has proximal relations with on a daily basis and the collective efficacy beliefs of the CoPs in which s/he is a member. Thus, whilst the role of self-efficacy illuminates the role of personal agency in the learning process, it is important to remember that the construct is shaped by factors external to the individual child.

### **Synthesizing the models: outlining an ontology of learning**

In this chapter, I have sought to adopt a theoretical standpoint which challenges the rhetoric of traditional learning theories underpinning the organisation of schooling today. Characterised as an acquisition model, learning is currently perceived to be a relatively unidirectional process taking place between teacher and pupil. In identifying only these parties in the learning endeavour, such models locate explanations of performance exclusively in the individual, be it child and/or teacher. In offering an alternative view, I have put forward a position which reconceptualises learning as experience. This has been achieved through the layering of five perspectives: Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory of human development, the CoPs formulation, Vygotsky's ZPD concept and notions of metacognition and self-efficacy. Whilst the latter two are social cognitive theories, I have restated them here as socio-cultural in order to fit usefully with the other lenses employed. In unison, I have argued that these perspectives provide a powerful framework for understanding the complexity of children's learning experience and performance in that they provide an explanation for the development and learning process on multiple levels. Together, they address the wider conditions that surround development and learning, the intricate mechanisms of the learning process itself and the role of the individual learner.

The selection of theoretical frameworks which I have drawn on to explore notions of learning and competency are underpinned by the philosophical beliefs that I hold as researcher. Specifically, my theoretical standpoint pertains to the philosophical beliefs which I hold about the nature of human existence (ontology) and the nature of knowledge and knowing (epistemology). Inasmuch as the researcher's ontological and epistemological position underpins the entirety of any research endeavour, it behoves any researcher to illuminate for the clarity of his/her audience, the particular philosophical position s/he has taken. In reviewing any research material, readers can, in turn, take this additional insight into consideration when interpreting findings and forming any conclusions. Accordingly, this section outlines my ontological and epistemological beliefs as researcher. Whilst I have not located my position within a particular philosophical approach, I have attempted to outline a number of arguments which I believe underpin my theoretical standpoint and my use of methodology. This latter issue is further addressed in the following chapter.

I argue that development is an ontological imperative of being human; that is, across time and place, it is an inevitable social aspect of our day-to-day lives. Moreover, I maintain that development is central to any real understanding of learning. I believe that the development process is not individual, but distributed over people and systems; a notion exemplified through my use of theoretical perspectives. In turn, learning is recognised to be a complex and embedded process; we each experience our life journey in diverse and unique ways. This is a human truth and is powerfully illustrated in the children's stories which comprise chapter five. In denial of the transmission model, I thus propose that the nature of educational policy and practice needs to be transformed in light of these overarching ontological viewpoints.

To gain a fuller understanding of any child's learning experiences and performance, one must thus give consideration to the particular complexities of their world. Epistemologically, I take the position that at any given time a person can only ever have partial knowledge and understanding of his/her life. This is in part because the world in which we reside is not stable but in a constant state of

flux. Moreover, it relates to the notion that, as humans, we do not always have a direct awareness of everything that goes on around us, but rather, only have knowledge of that which we experience. In reflecting on the circumstances which shape our development, we typically look to those factors operating in the inner micro and meso- systems. This is predictable given the state of ideological power in modern day society, where the onus is on the individual to shape his/her life trajectory. As pointed out by Smail (2005: 6): 'In the world of twentieth-century therapeutic psychology, people do things because of impulses, intentions, cognitions or conditioned reflexes of which they may or may not be aware. This inevitably means that, at least implicitly, they are *responsible* for their actions and that change can be brought about only through some kind of *decision* on their part. Such decisions may not be easy; they may need to be based on 'insight' brought about by therapeutic interpretation or intervention: but when all is said and done, 'it's up to *you*' (italics in original). However, in light of Bronfenbrenner's theory and CoPs literature, it is evident that the process of development is also mediated by more distal factors; specifically those operating in the exosystem and macrosystem. Whilst some people may acknowledge that such factors are present and shaping their development and learning, they are not necessarily explicitly aware of what these factors are and how they serve to impact.

In my reading, I have found the work of critical realism useful to elucidate this notion. A fundamental tenet of this philosophical approach is the independence of the world from our knowledge of it (Sayer 2000). Following this, a distinction is made between three domains of reality, highlighting that we do not experience all of our reality directly. Blaikie (2000: 108) states:

- ◆ 'The *empirical* domain consists of events that can be observed.
- ◆ The *actual* domain consists of events whether or nor they are observed
- ◆ The *real* domain consists of the structures and mechanisms that produce these events.'

In reference to this research, the above distinctions can usefully be applied to Bronfenbrenner's model: the empirical relates to our proximal experiences in the microsystem; the actual domain can be linked to those factors operating in the mesosystem and exosystem and the real domain pertains to forces operating in

the macrosystem. Thus, in terms of my epistemological position, I recognise that how we as humans understand and construct that which goes on around us is not a simple process.

In acknowledging the uniqueness of each child's world and experiences, I posit a notion of development and learning which is different for each child. Thus, the provision of uniform goals and prescriptions of child development is neither desirable nor helpful. I believe that stakeholders can only gain insight into the complexities of the learning process through accessing the individual's perspective and giving prominence to the role of subjective experience. Given the uniqueness of learning journeys, the perspective of the learner is invaluable. Whilst our understanding of reality may be partial rather than full, it nonetheless remains critical. In discussion participants can provide a rich source of material pertaining to personal experiences, insight which could not otherwise be accessed. However, whilst this information is necessary to gain an understanding of the process of learning, it is not sufficient as this data can only provide a limited understanding of the learning experience. In that development and learning are wider phenomenon, encompassing the individual and multiple settings in which s/he is embedded, the researcher must look beyond the focal person in order to gain any fuller understanding of the intricacies involved; supplementing personal data with that pertaining to the factors operating in his/her wider environment. Epistemologically, ethnography serves as a powerful tool to understand this complexity. With the researcher drawing on a multiplicity of research methods, s/he is able to access material within each of the three domains of reality. As a form of analysis, story narratives facilitate the researcher's ability to capture a more holistic picture of learning trajectories. S/he can integrate the aforementioned data, and bring to the fore, factors pertaining to each of the components comprising the PCCT model.

### **Chapter summary**

The five perspectives explored in this chapter provide a framework for understanding the complexity of children's differing learning experiences and

performance. Traditional learning theories locate explanations of performance in the individual. However, according to ecological theory, a focus on the individual child can serve only to present a partial aspect of a much wider picture as the child does not exist in isolation but is situated in a series of multiple settings which comprise his/her world. This behoves researches to look beyond the individual for any real understanding of the learning process. In this chapter, learning has been re-conceptualised as experience and in doing so, the understanding of children's learning and development has been rendered much more complex than previously acknowledged. In this re-conceptualisation the process of learning has become a wider phenomenon, distributed across agent, activity and world. In order to reduce the complexity of these theoretical perspectives and demonstrate how they can be situated in unison to usefully and powerfully provide insight into the learning process, I have mapped them together on to one diagram (see figure 2.11).

As the core framework I have used Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory of human development. This posits that development is shaped by the interplay of factors operating within the developing person and his/her multi-level environment. To heighten the analytic power of this tool I have embedded an additional four theoretical perspectives within this model. These essentially provide a means of exploring the intricacies of these factors and, in unison, provide an explanation for learning on multiple levels: the wider conditions that surround learning, the intricate mechanisms of the learning process itself and the role of the learner. In conjunction with the bioecological model, the CoPs formulation serves as a powerful framework for exploring the wider conditions which surround children's learning. It illuminates that learning is the process of adopting and transforming membership practices as one moves from LPP to full participation within particular social spaces. To gain an understanding of children's differing experiences and performance in the Year 6, it is necessary to consider the multiple CoP of which they are members and their levels of participation within these. These notions are used to explore factors in the child's mesosystem and exosystem. However, it is acknowledged that all CoPs are situated in broader macrosystem ideologies, which inevitably impact on the negotiations involved in participation.

**Figure 2.11:** Diagrammatic representation of the theoretical perspectives working together in unison  
 Illustration by Derek West ©  
 (Adapted from <http://www.education.umd.edu/Depts/EDHD/geron/lifespan/Bronfenbrenner-2.JPG>)

**Context**

- **Macrosystem**
- **Exosystem:** Utilising notions of legitimate peripheral participation and communities of practice to explore mediating factors operating in the exosystem.
- **Mesosystem:** Utilising notions of legitimate peripheral participation and communities of practice to explore mediating factors operating in the mesosystem.

**Process**

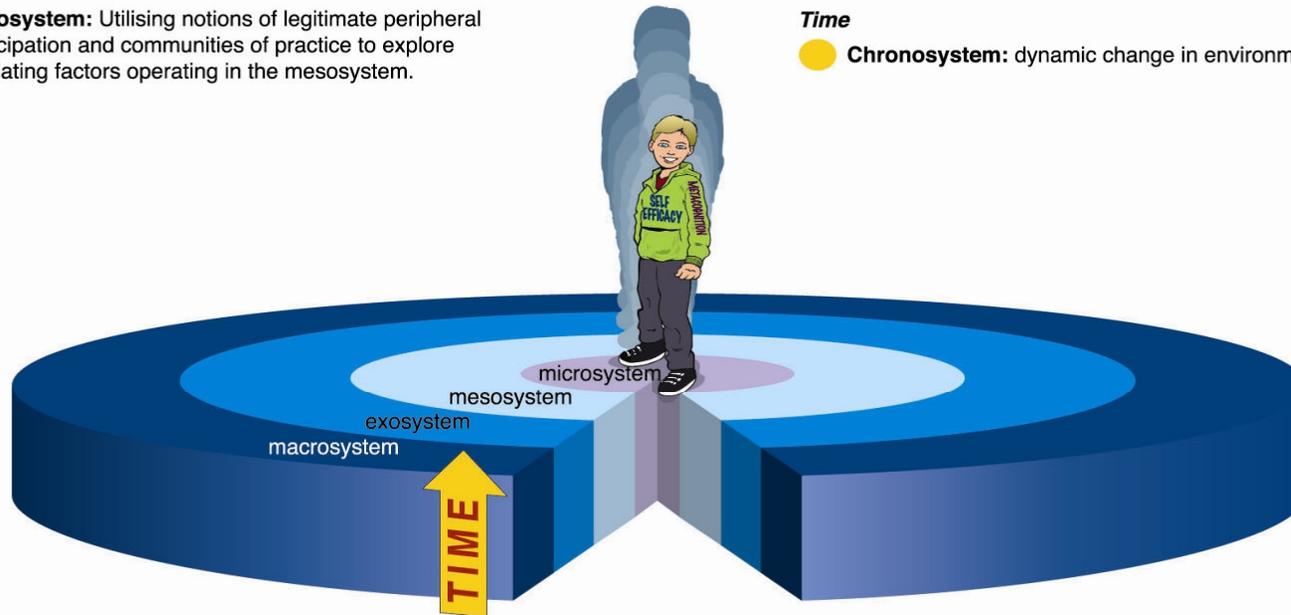
- **Microsystem:** Incorporating Vygotsky's model of learning and development to gain insight into the intricacies of proximal relations.

**Person**

- Consideration of the child's developmentally instigative characteristics: exploring the role of metacognition and self-efficacy.

**Time**

- **Chronosystem:** dynamic change in environment.



However, the above two perspectives fail to furnish stakeholders with any tangible ideas about what learning means for the parties involved. To explore the intricate mechanisms of the learning process itself, I incorporated the work of Vygotsky; specifically, his concept of the zone of proximal development. This establishes the importance of the individual child in the learning process, albeit acknowledging the individual is situated in a complex socio-cultural milieu. Vygotsky's conceptualisation of the learning relationship in terms of the personal exchange of knowledge, skill acquisition and performance is of particular use in giving consideration to the nature of proximal relations operating in the microsystem. It illuminates the importance of a child's understandings in enabling or disabling participation in the valued practices of surrounding communities. Moreover, in highlighting that children are active parties in learning relationships, Vygotsky's work recognises that children's own contributions shape their learning journeys. Positioned as active participants, the developmentally instigative characteristics of the child inevitably influence the nature of the role s/he adopts. To address this, I have incorporated notions of metacognition and self-efficacy which posit that children have the capacity to exert influence over their own learning experiences and performance. In that both are shaped by factors external to the individual child, these phenomena can usefully be situated within the context of the socio-cultural approach adopted here, specifically those operating within the child's micro and mesosystem.

Ecological theory maintains that the web of unique proximal and distal factors operating in each child's multi-tiered environment work together in non-linear and non-predictable ways with his/her repertoire of biological, cognitive, emotional and behavioural characteristics, shaping his/her development and learning trajectory. It is thus recognised that development cannot be a uniform process. Rather, each person, be it child or adult, encounters his/her world in an individual and idiosyncratic manner. Thus, I posit a notion of development and learning which is different for each child. Therefore, it is imperative that stakeholders who seek to gain a fuller understanding of any child's learning experiences and performance, give consideration to the particular complexities of the child's world.

It is my intention to use the above theoretical frameworks to analyse and interpret data collected in relation to eight, Year 6 children in one primary school. In light of these five theoretical perspectives, the data needs to address:

- ◆ The complexity of each child's world, giving attention to the role of micro-, meso-, exo- and macro- systems in shaping the learning process.
- ◆ The practices which characterise the multiple CoPs of which the children are members (*exploration of meso- and exo- systems*)
- ◆ Analyse practice which serves to include and exclude children's participation (*exploration of meso- and exo- systems*)
- ◆ Children's level of participation within the CoPs which comprise their world and how these serve to shape their identity (*exploration of micro-, meso-, and exo- systems*)
- ◆ Learning relationships and how these relate to children's educational experiences and performance (*exploration of the microsystem*)
- ◆ Children's use of metacognitive and self-efficacy beliefs in relation to undertaking tasks and activities on a day-to-day basis. (*exploration of children's developmentally instigative characteristics*)

In positing a notion of development and learning experience which is specific to each child, there is a need to utilise an approach to research which respects this individuality and diversity. As such, this research draws on a qualitative ethnographical methodology which I believe, is best suited to an exploration of children's unique encounters with their world. The complexity and richness of a child's life cannot be found on the surface of life but rather, one must delve deeper, and look to how it is lived. The ethnographic approach permits this, with the researcher able to participate in the school and classroom CoPs and capture others' experiences and reactions to the world in which they live. The following chapter discusses ethnography in terms of its theoretical underpinnings, its application in research settings and its relevance in meetings the aims of this research.

## CHAPTER THREE

### ETHNOGRAPHY

This chapter explores the act of collecting, recording, analysing and presenting ethnographic data. Upon first acquaintance, the nature and practice of employing an ethnographic approach to research may seem relatively straightforward. Utilising a multimethod approach, data is collected and recorded over an extended period of time in a specific context. The data accumulated is subsequently analysed and presented. Summarised as such, the conduct of ethnography appears deceptively simple. However, as I point out in the first section of this chapter, each of these stages is shaped by the philosophical beliefs of the particular researcher(s) involved. As such, the practice of doing ethnography is rendered highly idiosyncratic. I seek to exemplify this notion in the second section, where I review research which adopts an ethnographical approach in the field of education. I give particular attention to research conducted in the school setting as these studies are relevant to my own work.

#### **Defining ethnography**

The field of ethnography is broad and diffuse and as such, escapes neat categorisation and simplistic summary definitions (Atkinson, Coffey, Delamont, Loftland and Loftland 2001). Subsumed under this broad umbrella term, multiple 'schools' operate, each offering a different conceptualisation of ethnographic methodology, fieldwork application and interpretation. This diversity in prescription and practice (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983) means that much discussion surrounding ethnographic research is a site of debate and tension. Nonetheless, these 'schools' also share several core assumptions regarding the nature of ethnography. All 'are grounded in a commitment to first-hand experience and exploration of a particular social or cultural setting' (Atkinson et al 2001: 4).

Extended participant observation is the chief means of attaining this goal and as such, is viewed to be an integral aspect of ethnographic fieldwork (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw 1995). This method involves the researcher positioning him/herself alongside focal persons during everyday life in an attempt to capture their experiences in detail. In this context, 'the researcher strives to be a participant in and a witness to the lives of others' (Loftland and Loftland 1995: 3).

However, participant observation is not employed exclusively as a means of attaining insight into a particular social context. Typically, the researcher utilises a diverse repertoire of research methods, both qualitative and quantitative (Macdonald 2001), to facilitate exploration of a given setting. Through being immersed in a particular social context and employing a host of research methods, Spradley (1979) proposes that the role of the ethnographer is not to study people per se, but crucially to learn from them. This notion is also reflected in the work of Ottenberg (1990), who likens the experience of the ethnographer in the field to that of childhood. He states 'we are in a strange world where we are in the process of learning the language and the rules, learning how to live. Much of our previous experience seems useless, unhelpful or downright contradictory. We depend upon others to guide us: pseudoparental figures such as interpreters, field guides, the persons we live with, the friends we make in the field' (page 141). After departing the research field, the ethnographer returns to the academic one (May 1993) to undertake the process of writing an ethnographic account. In constructing tales of the field, the researcher's writings ultimately permit readers to catch a glimpse into the lives of strangers.

Historically, ethnography is rooted in the field of social and cultural anthropology (Atkinson and Hammersley 1994) where it provided a means of exploring cultural and community practices in foreign and distant lands (Pearson 1993). Such communities were chosen specifically because they engaged in practices dissimilar to those of the prevalent white, western world. In these terms, ethnography typically rendered the strange familiar (Gordon, Holland and Lahelma 2001). However, ethnographic fieldwork is no longer exclusively defined in terms of gaining understanding of distant, unfamiliar terrains. Time has witnessed its

widespread application across diverse disciplines. Indeed, the utilisation of the ethnographic approach has also been a central feature of sociological research for some time (Atkinson et al 2001) and more recently has been employed in social psychology (Taylor 1994). As a consequence, ethnographic research fields now include cultural settings closer to home. Researchers can choose to use an ethnographic approach to look afresh at the ordinary lives of participants in familiar settings. Consider the school setting; many have gained experience of this as pupils and have perhaps returned as a parent/carer or a member of teaching staff etc. Whilst it may be that the researcher is familiar with this setting, s/he is required to treat it as strange in an effort to make explicit the assumptions s/he takes for granted (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983). Thus, the role of a researcher entering this context is to make the familiar strange (Gordon et al 2001); to turn 'a critical eye onto practices, dynamics, policies and meaning-making within familiar cultures' (Goodley et al 2004: 57). Moreover, emergent data from the field is inevitably construed through a particular researcher's lens and as such, the lives of those being studied (pupils, teachers etc.) and their participation in community practices are fundamentally re-presented. In this act, Tobbell (2006) proposes that the lives of such people are perhaps rendered more remote from their own accounts or interpretations. The power of utilising ethnography thus lies in its potential to make both the familiar strange and the strange familiar.

### **Carrying out ethnographic field research**

In the field, the ethnographer is faced with 'a multiplicity of complex conceptual structures, many of them superimposed upon or knotted into one another, which are at once strange, irregular, and inexplicit, and which he must contrive somehow first to grasp and then to render' (Geertz 1973: 10). However, a review of the literature reveals that there is no definitive 'recipe' for carrying out this process successfully. This is in part, a consequence of the wide application of the ethnographic approach in which research focus and field work setting are diverse and replete with the unexpected (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983). Moreover, it is somewhat inevitable because of the variation in prescription and practice amongst

ethnographers. For these reasons, the task of outlining a single set of standards for all ethnographers would be difficult, if not impossible (Spradley 1979). Rather, the 'how to' literature present accounts of others' experiences in the field and gives consideration to the broad stages involved in conducting ethnographic research. Specifically, it illuminates the complexity of managing access to communities, forming and maintaining relations with informants and addresses issues surrounding confidentiality and anonymity. The literature also gives consideration to the collection, recording, analyses and presentation of ethnographic data, although several of these stages are more detailed than others. Saliency is given to the multiple methods a researcher may draw on to access and experience the new social world which s/he is immersed and to the analysis and presentation of data. However, little attention is given to how field data is actually collected or recorded (Jackson 1990; Emerson et al 1995) and to practitioners' subjective research experiences.

Despite the disparity in coverage, decisions made throughout every research stage play a crucial role in shaping the research process. In Appendix 3.A, I outline some of the multiplicity of decisions encountered by the researcher on his/her ethnographic journey. I would argue that such a profusion of decisions is not exclusive to carrying out ethnographic fieldwork but is present when undertaking research of any nature. However, the dynamic nature of the ethnographic approach and the complexities stemming from immersion as a participant in the social world of others, perhaps renders the decision making process more perplexing. As Rock (2001) notes, ethnographic research is not orderly or fixed in nature, but fluid and changing, with many important issues emerging 'in situ'. Every decision and action taken by the researcher is underpinned by his/her philosophical standpoint, specifically his/her ontological and epistemological beliefs. These philosophical assumptions cannot be avoided, they are made regardless of whether one is aware or unaware (Hammersley 1992). It is in the act of placing the researcher's beliefs in the foreground that one can begin to appreciate how they manifest into a diversity of practice amongst ethnographers. It is useful here to revisit my philosophical position and consider how it shapes my research endeavours (see Appendix 3.B). This not only serves as additional

insight for the reader when interpreting findings and forming conclusions, but aids the ongoing process of reflection for me, as researcher.

## **Ethnographic methods**

Much textbook literature defines ethnography in terms of the methods and procedures involved. In the research field, an ethnographer typically draws on methodological triangulation (Searle 1999). Multiple means of collecting data is argued to minimise the bias or partiality arising from the use of a single method (Heaton 2004). Research methods may include, but are not exclusive to, the use of participation observation, interviews, conversations, questionnaires, visual and textual materials, diary or journal writing etc. In employing these, the ethnographer seeks to gain a rich understanding of how individuals in different cultures or communities make sense of their lived reality (Nagy Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2006). In this section, I give consideration to those methods which feature prominently in ethnographic field research: participant observation (and the integral role of fieldnotes) and interviews.

### ***Participant observation***

Participant observation is the core method of ethnographic research. It involves 'establishing a place in some natural setting on a relatively long-term basis in order to investigate, experience and represent the social life and social processes that occur in that setting' (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw 2001: 352). The researcher's participation in the daily lives of others' can be either overt or covert in nature (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983). In both scenarios, the ethnographer habitually writes down in a systematic way, what s/he observes and learns during his/her extended time in the field. In the act of writing down social discourse, the researcher '...turns it from a passing event, which exists only in its own moment of occurrence, into an account, which exists in its inscriptions and can be re-consulted' Geertz (1973: 18). Over time, the researcher accumulates an ongoing

written record of his/her observations and experiences in the field. In leaving the research field, this mass of fieldnotes are typically paramount to the researcher as s/he attempts to represent the lived reality of others through the analysis of his/her own experience in their social world (Van Maanen 1988). It is the researcher's first-hand participatory experience which enables him/her to produce written accounts which illuminate versions of everyday life in these particular communities.

### *Observational roles in the field: degrees of involvement*

In the literature, there have been several attempts to map out the varying positions that the researcher as an observer in the field may adopt. The most frequently cited work, is that of Gold (1958) and Spradley (1980). Here, I draw on the latter, who outlines five forms of researcher participation that may be adopted by the observer in a particular setting. Operating on a continuum, each relates to the extent to which the researcher engages with the people and activities observed.

- ◆ *Non-participation*: the researcher has no involvement with the people or activities being studied. S/he is openly observing whilst having no other role in the setting.
- ◆ *Passive participation*: the researcher is present at the scene of action but s/he does not participate or interact with others to any great extent. In this situation, the researcher typically locates an observation post from which to observe and records what goes on, adopting the position of a bystander or spectator.
- ◆ *Moderate participation*: this role is adopted when the researcher seeks to maintain a balance between being an insider and outsider, between participation and observation.
- ◆ *Active participation*: the researcher extends his/her involvement in the particular culture or community under study and takes part in practices alongside other members in order to gain acceptance and to fully learn the cultural rules for behaviour.

- ◆ *Complete participation*: the observer becomes immersed in the particular culture or community under study and is considered by the others present as an ordinary participant.

The extent to which the researcher's presence impacts on the situated being observed, is dependent upon the degree of involvement s/he chooses to adopt in the field. Clearly, it is most prominent when the researcher becomes involved in activities as a complete participating observer. However, as Spradley acknowledges, the mere presence of an observer in the chosen setting will influence the occurrences that take place. Given the complexities of observational work, the above typology appears perhaps too simplistic. This is exemplified in the ethnographic fieldwork carried out by Davis (2001), who explored the use of computing technology in a public hospital setting in England. In this setting, Davis carried out observational work adopting a non-participant role. Despite researching a topic that was deemed unemotional, Davis found herself consciously and involuntarily engaged in emotional work whilst in the field. Emotional experiences were regular rather than isolated occurrences and this made her question her purported non-participant role. Moreover, it served to illuminate the ambiguity of this position for the ethnographic researcher engaged in observational work. In the field it is perhaps more difficult than one suspects to maintain a degree of detachment and not get involved emotionally with those being observed.

The literature reveals that researchers approach any acknowledgment and/or exploration of the emotional nature of research with trepidation. It is apparent that an emphasis on the emotional dimensions of research experience is not always valued. This is the case even in the qualitative arena, where it is acknowledged that data collection and the analysis process is shaped by the intensely personal involvement of the researcher (Gilbert 2001). Indeed, May (1993) reports that the inclusion or use of personal feelings in ethnographic research is frequently deemed as an impediment to good practice and analysis. This issue seems particularly pertinent when one considers that many ethnographers adopt a participatory role in the field. In these scenarios, emotional experiences are an inevitable feature of everyday life in the field; although clearly personal, they cannot be deemed

irrelevant. This behoves researchers to recognise the impact which emotional labour can have on the research process. As pointed out by Coffey (1999: 158-159) 'Emotional connectedness to the processes and practices of fieldwork, to analysis is normal and appropriate. It should not be denied or stifled. It should be acknowledged, reflected upon, and seen as a fundamental feature of well-executed research. Having no emotional connection to the research endeavour, setting or people is indicative of a poorly executed project.'

### *Exploring the nature and purpose of fieldnotes*

The process of observation requires the researcher to pay particular detailed attention to chosen aspects of the social community or world in which s/he is located and attempt to make explicit what is observed (Goodley, Lawthom, Tindall, and Tobbell 2002). This is achieved through the use of fieldnotes, detailed written descriptions recorded during the researcher's time in the field. The richness of this data, what Geertz (1973) terms 'thick description', is argued to be a defining feature of the ethnographic enterprise. He writes, '...what we call our data are really our own constructions of other people's constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to (page 9). Ultimately, the researcher's collection of fieldnotes is critical to the processing stages which lead up to the production of a polished ethnographic text. Here, fieldnotes are reordered, rewritten, selected and shaped through the author's analytical lens (Emerson et al 1995).

Although writing fieldnotes is a crucial phase in the practice of doing ethnography, authors have failed to give them a prominent place in the plethora of published books which address how to undertake ethnographic fieldwork. Jackson (1990) observes that there is very little explicit detail offered on how a researcher actually undertakes the task of writing fieldnotes. Rather, much of the 'how to' fieldwork literature utilises existing fieldnotes as their starting point and move on to consider either their rhetorical character (Hammersley 1992) or how they can be organised and analysed in order to produce a polished ethnographic account (Emerson et al 1995). As a consequence, the act of writing fieldnotes remains largely mysterious.

Given the scarcity of literature on the nature and practice of making fieldnotes, the explication below draws extensively on two sources: Rodger Sanjek's 1990 edited volume, entitled '*Fieldnotes: the makings of anthropology*' (with particular attention given to the papers written by Jean Jackson and Simon Ottenberg) and Emerson et al's (1995) '*Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*'. These writings illuminate that the practice of making fieldnotes is highly complex; there is no 'recipe' that a researcher should follow as the act is highly personal and individualistic.

Because of the multiplicity of 'schools' operating within the ethnographic field, there is little agreement amongst researchers as to what actually constitutes fieldnotes (Jackson 1990). However, Sanjek (1990) states that they typically adopt a written format and stem from diverse sources including texts, journals and diaries, letters, report papers, scratch notes<sup>1</sup>, fieldnotes proper<sup>2</sup>, fieldnote records<sup>3</sup>. Researchers employing an ethnographic approach also rely on what Ottenberg (1990) has termed headnotes. These refer to the researcher's mental notes and memories of the research field. These may be used in conjunction with fieldnotes or employed exclusively. In that there are always a greater number of impressions, scenes and experiences than can be noted down, remembered observations are an important source of data. Headnotes are used extensively by those researchers who believe much is missed in pulling away from the scene and noting down observations (Ely, Vinz, Downing and Anzul 1997). In addition, they are utilised in those field situations where written documentation of observations and/or audio recordings of conversations are impossible.

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<sup>1</sup> Coined by Simon Ottenberg, scratch notes refers to those instances in which the researcher writes down a mnemonic word or phrase to fix an observation in his/her head or recall something particular that was said in the field. As noted by Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) 'A single word, even one merely descriptive of the dress of a person, or a particular word uttered by someone usually is enough to "trip off" a string of images that afford substantial reconstruction of the observed scene.' Scratch notes can be written down when the researcher removes him/herself from the research context or in full view of those being studied, whilst observing or talking with informants.

<sup>2</sup> Fieldnotes proper typically take the form of written daily logs. Researchers may choose to: write these detailed notes soon after witnessing an event; write brief notes at the time of the event and then elaborate and finish these initial records upon leaving the field; or postpone writing of notes until they have left the research field and returned to the academic field, where they begin to grapple with the task of writing an ethnographic account.

<sup>3</sup> Fieldnote records may include reference to a researcher's own reactions, sources of background information or a preliminary stab at analysis.

In terms of the latter scenario, Werner (1999) discusses two methods which the ethnographer can utilise in the field. Firstly, Werner advocates the use of memory training, formal or otherwise in nature. Whilst he reports that there is little reference to this technique in the literature, he says that it can be a viable option for the ethnographer despite being 'tedious and time consuming' (page 75). The second method is founded on the notion that memory is enhanced by repetition. Accordingly, Werner suggests recalling the interview (or observational event) in your mind's eye three times, each time with increasing recall of detail. This would perhaps enable the researcher to record micro detail pertaining to the actions, speech and relationships of others rather than producing notes that are more macro descriptive in nature.

Although an over reliance on the use of headnotes can be criticised on the basis that they are subject to distortion, elaboration or forgetting, it is important to bear in mind that any intention to record 'objective' fieldnotes is futile. Firstly, it is impossible to record *all* data acquired in the course of carrying out fieldwork (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983); as such, any researcher's fieldnotes and headnotes are fundamentally selective by nature. Secondly, in detailing any observed action or event, fieldnotes are always a representation rather than an exact record (Emerson et al 2001). Because it is possible to provide multiple descriptions of any observed event, the task of the researcher is to generate field notes which are authentic and illuminating (Goodley et al 2002). Thirdly, one must acknowledge that the researcher is never a passive or neutral channel of communication. As such, data sets, analyses and reports cannot be considered objective sources of knowledge about the world but must be viewed as social products (Rock 2001). Nonetheless, in conjunction, fieldnotes and headnotes aid the researcher in the reconstruction of events witnessed; they capture and preserve the insights and understandings afforded by intimate and long term relations in the field (Emerson et al 1995).

There is also debate amongst ethnographers as to what detail should be included within fieldnotes. Some state that they should be exclusive to descriptions of observed phenomena whilst others propose that they should additionally include

the researcher's own perceptions, feelings and interpretations of events (Jackson 1990). The act of immersing oneself in the lives of others is always going to be a highly intricate process, one that mere description of observed events and behaviour fails to capture. Feelings, beliefs, hopes, failures etc. are inevitable and common features of life for the researcher in the field. As such, they should comprise an important part of written fieldnotes and not be allocated a subsidiary position or at worst, be subject to elimination (May 1993). May suggests that in illuminating these personal experiences, one can begin to understand the role that the researcher has when carrying out and analysing research. This 'requires an honesty which is personally uncomfortable, but which produces higher-quality research' (id. at 76). Even amongst those ethnographers who seek the inclusion of both emotional experience and observational data, some insist on a sharp distinction between the methods used to record them. In such cases, a journal or diary is often designated for the purpose of specifically recording the former (Emerson et al 1995).

The act of undertaking observation work in the field can be overwhelming. There is abundant data to be gathered and it is impossible for a researcher to detail all phenomena. Thus, observation work inevitably involves making decisions about what criteria to include and exclude. Spradley (1980) identifies nine features of social situations which serve as a guide to the researcher:

- ◆ Space: the physical place or places
- ◆ Actor: the people involved
- ◆ Activity: a set of related acts people do
- ◆ Object: the physical things that are present
- ◆ Act: single acts that people do
- ◆ Event: a set of related activities that people carry out
- ◆ Time: the sequences that take place over time
- ◆ Goal: the things that people try to accomplish
- ◆ Feelings: the emotions felt and expressed

Whilst these criteria seem straightforward, further scrutiny reveals their ambiguity. In attempting to detail them, a number of questions are raised, for example: What constitutes an actor? Does there need to be interaction or is mere presence

sufficient to qualify? How can one identify when an activity or an act starts and when it finishes? What constitutes an object? Again, does there have to be interaction or does mere presence qualify it being recorded? As a researcher how can one be aware of the goals of those being observed? How can one identify others' feelings unless they are expressed? Even in such cases, a linear relationship between feelings experienced and the public display of emotions cannot be assumed. Does the researcher seek to record his/her own emotional feelings and reactions or should data only pertain to those people being observed?

Essentially, any recognition and inclusion of the researcher's own actions, questions, reflections and feelings within the body of fieldnotes is essentially a matter of personal choice. In utilising participant observation as a core method, it can be argued that '...the ethnographer's presence in a setting inevitably has implications and consequences for what is taking place, since the fieldworker must necessarily interact with and hence have some impact on those studied' (Emerson et al 1995: 3). Accordingly, it is critical for the ethnographer to document his/her own activities, impressions and emotional responses etc. as these serve to shape the research process and can yield powerful insights (Loftland and Loftland 1995). Even for those who seek to maintain a highly detached, unobtrusive role in the field, Pearson (1993) argues that the researcher 'is always there, even if it only as a silent, hopefully unobtrusive, but nevertheless significant and looming presence... he or she is always the elephant in the room' (page viii). For these reasons, it is postulated that practitioners should seek to understand the effects of their presence, rather than engaging in futile attempts to eliminate them (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983).

Finally, the perceived value of fieldnotes also varies amongst practitioners. Interviewing seventy anthropologists, Jackson (1990) noted that most perceived fieldnotes as an integral tool of fieldwork practice, advocating very detailed notes. However, a small minority of anthropologists saw fieldnotes as tools for the apprentice, with one interviewee perceiving them to be 'a beginner's crutch, to be cast aside when one has learned to walk properly' (page 25). Ethnographers who hold this latter view clearly rely very little on the use of fieldnotes.

### *The highly emotive nature of fieldnotes*

It is perhaps due to the highly emotive nature of fieldnotes, that their detailed inclusion in the literature has been overlooked. Indeed, Jackson (1990) observed researchers' unease in discussing the nature and personal use of fieldnotes. They revealed it was a topic they typically sought to avoid, a subject which had become regarded as taboo. Perceived as a form of 'backstage scribbling', ethnographers often felt uneasy or embarrassed about the notes they make in the field as they 'seem too revealingly personal, too messy and unfinished to be shown to any audience' (Emerson et al 1995: ix). As such, it is a rare opportunity that readers are permitted access to the original, unedited fieldnotes of a researcher. Rather, it is typically the final polished ethnographic accounts that readers are permitted to peruse, in which fieldnotes have been selected and reordered according to the researcher's analytical lens.

In the analysis of her interview data, Jackson (1990) witnessed that the topic of fieldnotes was fraught with emotion, both during the researcher's time in the field and thereafter. Interestingly, she observed that many of the anthropologists stressed the negative feelings which stemmed from the practice of making and utilising fieldnotes. Throughout the research endeavour, they reported feelings of exhaustion, anxiety, inadequacy, disappointment, guilt, confusion and resentment. The process of recording written notes in the field was reported to be a lonely and isolating activity, which some anthropologists perceived as a chore if not an ordeal. They expressed discomfort in taking notes in front of natives, stating that it hindered the research as it created a distance between the observer and the observed. Upon leaving the research field, looking back on one's collection of fieldnotes also evoked strong memories and feelings. Faced with an overabundance of data, some discussed feeling dominated and overwhelmed by the amount of fieldnote material they had to plough through. Many anthropologists also expressed a heightened concern over the possible loss of the fieldnotes they had accumulated. In reporting the positive feelings which can stem from the practice of fieldnotes, several anthropologists noted the act of writing notes in the field functioned as a source of reassurance, particularly at the start of undertaking

research. As one interviewee pointed out 'You go there, a stranger. It gives you something to do, helps you to organise your thoughts' (id. at 9). In recording fieldnotes, the researcher is essentially accumulating a mass of data and this served to make them feel positive. Some researchers also expressed great pleasure in returning to their collection of fieldnotes once they returned to the academic field.

This section has sought to illuminate that the practice of making fieldnotes is both intricate and highly idiosyncratic. The diversity of fieldnote practice amongst researchers has been discussed, addressing: what forms of writing are considered to constitute fieldnotes, how to go about the act of writing notes in the field, what detail to include, at what point in time s/he should record them and what value they hold in representing the particular social world being studied. Rather than attaching a generalised value to these data recording methods, it seems more appropriate for the researcher to assess their merits 'in situ.' The value of field and/or headnotes will inevitably differ according to the purposes and experiences of the researcher(s), the setting, the time at which the fieldwork was undertaken, the questions asked and the research methods utilised etc.

### ***Interviews***

Although interviews have a relatively short history as a valued method of securing knowledge (Gubrium and Holstein 2002), they are now one of the most widely used and powerful means of accessing information (Fontana and Frey 1994). The overall aim denotes a relatively straightforward process, where the interviewer coordinates a conversation aimed at obtaining the desired information from the interviewee. However, this process is rendered more complex in illuminating the multiplicity of decisions which the researcher must make in employing this technique. Most fundamental is the type and format which the interview will take. Interviews can take a variety of forms, including: face-to-face individual and group verbal exchange, mailed or self-administered questionnaires, public opinion polls and telephone surveys. Moreover, according to their purpose, interviews can be

implemented employing a structured, semi-structured and unstructured format. However, these are not the only two decisions which must be made and as ever, it is the researcher's philosophical beliefs which influence his/her conduct in the research context and his/her use of chosen methods. Specifically, they will shape:

- ◆ The choice of interviewees and the rationale for this choice
- ◆ The questions or research topics deemed worthy of inquiry and those which are not
- ◆ How to phrase and negotiate research questions or topics
- ◆ The methods used to record information
- ◆ Perceptions of the role of both interviewer and interviewee
- ◆ Any understanding of the relative validity of the information elicited in the interview encounter
- ◆ The relative importance of the relationship in constructing and interpreting data
- ◆ Any concern surrounding the representation of a participant's meaning in analysis and interpretation of data.
- ◆ In light of this complexity, the above definition seems somewhat inadequate.

This section gives consideration to the impact of the researcher's beliefs upon the practice of carrying out interviews. Discussion focuses on the underpinning assumptions regarding the nature of knowledge and the consequences of these for the perceived role of interviewer and interviewee.

*Respondents: 'passive vessels of answers' or 'active meaning makers'?*

Conventionally, the interview encounter is conceptualised as an asymmetrical relationship dominated by the interviewer (Gubrium and Holstein 2002). This is most evident in structured interviews and to a lesser extent, those which are semi-structured. These tend to be more quantitative in nature with close-ended questions featuring prominently. Researchers employing these formats act on the assumption that all valued information reside inside the individual. Accordingly, the task of the interviewer is to extract it, maintaining a neutral and objective role throughout. The notion of objectively gathering facts is, of course, only a perceived

ideal for some researchers. As Fontana and Frey (2003) point out, 'the spoken or written word has always a residue of ambiguity, no matter how carefully we word the question and how carefully we report or code the answers' (page 61). In the encounter, the role of the interviewer is to manage the interview process: s/he makes the initial contact, schedules the event, designates the location, sets out the ground rules and asks pre-established interview questions in a specific sequential order until the interview agenda has been fulfilled, at which point the interview is terminated. Typically in the structured interview, there is very little room for variation in response amongst interviewees, as the interviewer will aim to record responses on site according to a pre-established coding scheme (Fontana and Frey 1994). The role of the interviewee is to respond to the set of questions posed, offering 'information from his/her personal cache of experiential knowledge' (Gubrium and Holstein 2002: 3). Positioned as such, the interviewee is characterised as a 'passive vessel of answers' (Holstein and Gubrium 1995:7).

In this highly controlled, asymmetrical interview encounter, there is a number of decisions which the researcher must make, these include: how to ask questions to ensure neutrality; the order in which to ask them; those topics to investigate and those to steer clear of; how to refrain from saying things that may spoil, contaminate or bias the data gathered in the course of the interview; and how to provide an environment conducive to the open and undistorted verbal exchange (Gubrium and Holstein 2002). In this model of the interview, the interviewer seeks to adopt a somewhat passive role in that s/he stands apart from the data collected. In limiting his/her involvement and maintaining distance from the interviewee, it is supposed that accurate and authentic reports from the interviewee can be gathered.

Growing sensitivities surrounding notions of agency, authority, reflexivity and representation (Holstein and Gubrium 2003) have left a number of practitioners dissatisfied with the conventional interview format. Rather, they characterise the interview encounter as a meaning making venture in which both parties are positioned as active agents engaged in the process of co-constructing knowledge and meaning (Gubrium and Holstein 2002). This understanding typically reflects

interviews of an unstructured format which are fundamentally qualitative in nature (Warren 2002) and rely heavily on the use of open-ended questions. Qualitative unstructured interviewing has long been associated with the ethnographic tradition (ibid.) and is integral to conducting fieldwork (Fontana and Frey 1994). Through genuine exchange of views, the use of ethnographic interviews enables researchers to amass rich detailed data directly from participants; to hear from people directly how they interpret their experiences (Sherman Heyl 2001). However, Hammersley (2003) points out that others who have found fault with the practice of qualitative researchers, note an over-reliance on interview data, specifically in its use as a window on the world of informants. Claims by practitioners that open-ended interviews are able to capture the genuine voice of interviewees is criticised for being an over romanticised approach. Rather, it is proposed that the interview context is merely an 'of the moment' construction from which the talk emerges.

In the research field, the ethnographer may note down a number of issues which s/he wishes to cover in conversation with a participant (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983). In this encounter, meaning is co-constructed. It is shaped by the immediate interaction between ethnographer and participant in the interview setting itself, as questions are formulated, answers shaped, meanings negotiated etc. But crucially, it is also shaped by their wider relationship in the field (Sherman Heyl 2001). Thus, respondents are perceived to be constructors of knowledge in collaboration with interviewers, rather than repositories of knowledge or treasure troves of information awaiting excavation (Gubrium and Holstein 2002). In these terms, fieldworkers will undoubtedly commit what structured interviewers deem 'capital offenses' (Fontana and Frey 1994: 366); that is, either the researcher answers questions posed by respondents or lets his/her personal feelings influence him. These acts are considered capital offenses as they brandish the researcher away from the ideal notion of a cool, distant and rational interviewer. However, for those adopting interviews of an unstructured format, a neutral role for the researcher is not deemed necessary or achievable, as interviewer participation is viewed as an inevitable consequence of interaction as opposed to a source of contamination (Gubrium and Holstein 2002).

In seeking to access the meanings of participants, Sherman Heyl (2001: 370) proposes that in carrying out ethnographic interviews, researchers should:

- ◆ 'Listen well and respectfully, developing an ethical engagement with the participants at all stages of the project;
- ◆ Acquire a self-awareness of our role in the co-construction of meaning during the interview process;
- ◆ Be cognizant of ways in which both the ongoing relationship and the broader social context affect the participants, the interview process, and the project outcomes; and
- ◆ Recognise that dialogue is discovery and only partial knowledge will ever be attained.'

These criteria serve as a useful guide for the practitioner, stressing the importance of building rapport with participants and crucially, illuminating that the wider social context influences all knowledge and understanding ascertained in the field. The above guidelines also make visible the possible critiques of interviewing methodology. They illuminate that any knowledge elicited in the interview endeavour itself, and in the ethnographic field as a whole, can only ever be partial. The emergent story is always mediated through the interaction of researcher and participant, whose relationship is embedded in a wider setting. With both parties conveying his/her own selection of material, the story which emerges is inevitably one of many possible stories.

This section has sought to illuminate that, whether qualitative or quantitative in nature, decisions underpinned by the researcher's philosophical standpoint are ubiquitous features of interview practice. These render the process more complex than is often first assumed. As such, interviews cannot be considered neutral tools of gathering data (Fontana and Frey 2003); rather they are ultimately meaning making ventures founded on the active participation of all parties involved. In that each party brings their own knowledge, ideas and assumptions to the encounter, the roles adopted by interviewer and interviewee, together with the nature of the interview process and any emergent meaning, can best be considered as ongoing processes of negotiation.

## **Ethnographic analysis**

Upon leaving the research field, the ethnographer returns to the academic one to fulfil his/her research agenda. Prior to producing a polished ethnographic account, s/he must undertake analysis and interpretation of the fieldnotes amassed. Back in the office, 'confronted with a mountain of impressions, documents, and fieldnotes, the qualitative researcher faces the difficult and challenging task of making sense of what has been learned' (Denzin 1994: 500). Due to the sheer complexity and vastness of data, the researcher's initial immersion experience may be one of chaotic confusion (Liamputtong and Ezzy 2005) and may further evoke feelings of being overwhelmed. In order to make meaningful sense of this 'mountain' of data, it must be transformed into a particular form, making it amenable to analysis. It is within this process that we see fieldnotes reordered, rewritten, selected and shaped through the author's analytical lens (Emerson et al 1995). There are a range of qualitative approaches available to the ethnographer to transform raw data into text, these include, but are not limited to: content, discourse, thematic and narrative analysis. Previously, any analysis and representation of qualitative data was characterised as an unproblematic yet inevitable stage of fieldwork, requiring no detailed advice or critical reflection on behalf of the researcher (Coffey 1999). However, these stages are increasingly perceived to be critical in shaping the research process and are now subjected to further explication. Again, choice and use of analytical methods is driven by the researcher's philosophical position (Hammersley 1992). This section provides an outline of two different approaches to data analysis: thematic and narrative. It considers the suitability and power of each approach in application to this piece of research.

### *Thematic analysis*

Thematic analysis involves the identification of concepts or themes in the data. These can be characterised as a statement of meaning that either runs through the entirety of the data or alternatively, as one in the minority that carries heavy emotional or factual impact (Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner and McCormack

Steinmetz 1991). This process can be thought of as 'Sorting through the fabric of the whole for understanding of the threads and patterns that run throughout and lifting them out – as a seamstress lifting threads with a needle – to make general statements about them' (Ely et al 1997: 206). Through identifying emergent themes or concepts in the mass of fieldnotes, the researcher is subsequently able to generate theory. In reviewing the literature, it is apparent there are multiple ways of carrying out thematic analysis. Common to all is immersion in the data through careful reading and re-reading (Liamputtong and Ezzy 2005). After which, researchers undertake varying approaches to coding, sorting and organising the data before themes are decided upon. Critically, the way the researcher sees the data will be influenced by his/her own experiences and understanding. This infers that the analytical construction which emerges is but one of many possible constructions; no other researcher would necessarily discover the same themes or concepts (Holliday 2002).

The thematic analysis approach is inductive (Liamputtong and Ezzy 2005), identifying themes and generating theories that emerge from the raw data. Because a predetermined theory of structure is not imposed upon the data, a principle advantage of this approach is the possibility for previously undiscovered relationships to emerge. In addition, there is the opportunity to identify any overlap between the new and existing literature (ibid.). It is difficult to locate critiques of the thematic approach to analysis within the qualitative domain. Nonetheless, a chief disadvantage is that in the process of breaking down data and reassembling it, the situation or participants are not considered as a whole, but rather there is an assumption that they are the sum of their parts (Tobbell 2006). Additionally, there is the possibility of distorting the data at the time of extraction.

### *Narrative analysis*

The narrative approach is concerned with the ways in which people make and utilise stories to interpret and understand the world about them. Narrative analysis is a means of examining the stories which people impart. Such stories are viewed

to be a social product, constructed by people embedded in specific social, historical and cultural contexts. In accordance, this approach stands apart from the others in that it seeks to give attention to the structure of narratives as a whole (Liamputtong and Ezzy 2005). This practice is underpinned by the notion that meaning cannot be understood by sole reference to isolated themes or concepts, but rather in relationship to the other phenomena which surround the research context. Thus, working with the mass of fieldnotes as a whole rather than deconstructing it into smaller components, this form of analysis adopts a holistic approach and seeks to record and represent the whole story. Multiple methods are subsumed under the narrative analysis approach; all draw on narrative conventions and the genre of story-telling to create and people the social world. These methods include: life history, oral history, biography and life story. All share a commitment to the value of giving or restoring voice to the experiences of the focal participant(s) through recording and interpretation. However, each method also recognizes that an analysis cannot reveal what someone really thinks or feels because any truth is simply a construction, shaped by the person, at a particular time and a particular place.

In application to ethnography, Richardson (2003) refers to such analytic approaches as creative analytic practices (CAP ethnography). She suggests that the following criteria be used as a guide to judge the writings produced via these methods:

- ◆ *Substantive contribution*: does it contribute to our understanding of social life?
- ◆ *Aesthetic merit*: is the piece interesting? Does it invite interpretive response?
- ◆ *Reflexivity*: Does the author inform the reader about how s/he undertook the task of writing the text? How the information was gathered? Demonstrate sensitivity to ethical obligation? Demonstrate awareness of epistemological position and how this impacted on the research process?
- ◆ *Impact*: Does the piece of writing affect the reader? Emotionally? Intellectually? Does it generate new questions? Does it move the reader to discover more?
- ◆ *Expresses a reality*. Can the piece be considered a credible account of the real?

Several of these criteria will inevitably be judged differently across readers. For example, the extent to which a story or narrative is found interesting or whether the research area is further investigated will be dependent on the particularities of the reader.

Both of the approaches to qualitative data analysis outlined in this section involve intimate familiarity and manipulation of the fieldnotes amassed in the research setting. This necessitates the meaningful engagement of the researcher: s/he is required to get to know the data - reading, rereading, creating, reflecting etc. Ultimately, fieldnotes are further personalised through the researcher's analytical lens, it is s/he who makes decisions about and connections amongst the data set collected. As Coffey (1999) states 'We are responsible for discovering themes and patterns, deciding what goes where in a narrative account, what is significant, important, salient or typical. Our analysis relates to how we feel about the data, the field, the people, and often ourself' (page 139).

### **The production of polished ethnographic accounts**

After undertaking analysis and interpretation of the data, consideration must be given to the final stage of the research process, that is, the composition of a polished ethnographic account. In this act, the researcher must refashion the fieldwork experience, translating what has been learned into textual form that communicates understanding to the reader (Denzin 1994). As stated by Geertz (1973: 16) 'The claim to attention of an ethnographic account does not rest on the author's ability to capture primitive facts in faraway places and carry them home like a mask or a carving, but on the degree to which he is able to clarify what goes on in such places, to reduce the puzzlement.' In writing the final ethnographic account, the researcher must decode his/her experiences in the field (captured in the mass of fieldnotes) and produce a piece of writing which recodes this experience to suit the particular characteristics of the reader or audience for which it is intended. In this interpretive process, the researcher must ensure that any account, whilst being recoded to secure accessibility and meaningfulness, remains

true to the particular social world being studied. This is no easy task and carries with it certain ethical responsibilities. In representing a particular community, or selected aspects of that community, there are multiple narrative and rhetorical conventions that the author can employ. Vann Maanen (1988) identifies three major writing or representational styles which are used by authors to organise and depict finished fieldwork accounts: realist, confessional and impressionist tales.

Realist tales are deemed the most prominent form of ethnographic writing. Typically narrated in a dispassionate, third person voice, this style is characterised by 'the almost complete absence of the author from most segments of the finished text' (id. at 46). These tales are devoid of self-description and give an impression to the reader that data has been objectively gathered and reported. The researcher provides a limited account of how the fieldwork was carried out with any methodological writings separate to the report itself. Instead, the focus is on describing concrete details of daily life and routines alongside what people commonly do, say and think. The author goes to great lengths to ensure the portrayal of events and meanings are from the native's point of view and not the fieldworker's. However, as Pearson (1993) notes, claims to versions of authenticity are limited when consideration is given to the distance between researcher and participant in the field setting: the researcher is always positioned an outsider.

Confessional tales provide a sharp contrast to realist tales in that the researcher and his/her experiences are moved centre stage. The primary concern is the immersion experience and how the researcher lived amongst the natives of the community or culture being studied. This style seeks to explicitly demystify the nature of ethnographic fieldwork. It draws on a range of personal and methodological issues that the researcher endured whilst in the field and ultimately depicts the dynamic and messy nature of ethnographic practice. Throughout this style of writing, it is apparent that the point of view being represented is that of the fieldworker, with his/her feelings and emotions driving the narrative. Confessional tales can be found in books or articles which explore the nature of doing fieldwork, where the value of the researcher's personal experience in the field is increasingly being recognised. Alternatively, confessional tales can also appear in separate

texts which are specifically formulated to address how the author carried out a piece of research reported elsewhere.

Impressionist tales are personalised accounts of particular fleeting moments of fieldwork experience cast in dramatic storied form. Told in first person, they pertain to rare rather than mundane occurrences, those the author regards as especially notable and hence, reportable. 'The intention is not to tell readers what to think of an experience but to show them the experience from beginning to end and thus draw them immediately into the story to work out its problems and puzzles as they unfold' (Van Maanen 1988: 103). In this way, the audience is asked to relive the tale with the fieldworker; rather than interpret or analyse his/her work, they are invited to see through the researcher's eyes what s/he had seen.

Van Maanen notes that all three styles are typically evident in the production of polished ethnographic accounts. However, each style pertains to varying characteristics of fieldnotes, the nature of which, limits the options of representation available. For example, if a researcher chose to write impressionistic tales, the author would require fieldnotes that detailed the inclusion of the researcher's feelings, thoughts, actions, interpretations, perceptions etc. From the outset, detail and richness of fieldnotes are inevitably shaped by the researcher's philosophical beliefs.

This section has sought to demonstrate that the act of ethnographic writing is anything but a straightforward, unproblematic task. It has been depicted as a complex process shaped by the multiplicity of decisions made by the researcher. Prior to constructing a final polished ethnographic account, the researcher must give consideration to: the nature and characteristics of the target audience; whether to adopt a primarily descriptive or interpretative stance; what fieldnote detail to include and omit; which participants to give voice to; which verbatim quotes to incorporate; and what style(s) to draw on to present the data to the reader. Ultimately, the tales of the field which are eventually imparted are shaped by multiple lenses. This is reflected in the work of Hobbs (1993), who writes 'The text is influenced at very stage of its production up to and beyond publication by

the rules specific to the intellectual, political, and economic milieu within which the writer performs' (page 61).

Consider for example, the impact of experiential, theoretical and political lenses upon the construction of ethnographic writings. By the very essence of ethnography, written accounts are experientially driven, drawing directly on the data accumulated during the researcher's time in the field. Ethnographic accounts are also shaped by the specific discipline from which they emanated, for example, anthropology, psychology, education etc. The researcher's underpinning philosophical position is influenced by his/her membership in these communities and this inevitably shapes the data amassed in the field. Ethnographic accounts are politically mediated. At the outset, all field research involves working through a hierarchy of gatekeeping in order to gain access to, and have the opportunity to, become immersed in a particular community or culture. All ethnographic writing also involves the power and authority of one person or group in representing another. But the political web is cast wider than the immediate research setting. Consider the funding of ethnographic research. In the field of academia who defines which communities and cultures are deemed worthy of study and which are not? Who chooses which research studies will be financially aided and allocated a budget? In recognising the impact of such lenses upon the writing process, it becomes clear that there always remain limitations to the account that can be presented. However, an awareness of such limitations is preferable to a denial of their existence. In producing polished accounts, what is being described is not merely an understanding rooted in the participant's and/or researcher's personal experience, but the complexity of the relationship between author-subject-object-audience-text (Pearson 1993).

### **Ethics in ethnography**

Across field domains, professional ethical codes of practice have been developed in an attempt to guide the practitioner when undertaking research endeavours. For example, studies conducted in the field of psychology within the United Kingdom

must conform to the ethical guidelines set out by the British Psychological Society. Similarly those pursued in the field of education, must adhere to the ethical guidelines outlined by the British Educational Research Association. The development and adoption of such codes and procedures are useful in that they alert researchers, particularly novices, to the issues which must be considered when undertaking research studies (Anderson and Arsenault 1998). However, given their wide application, it is inevitable that such codes of practice lack specificity. They offer advice and direction on a number of prominent issues, but serve only as general guiding principles rather than a definitive recipe.

Alongside the ethical standards set out by regulatory and professional bodies, the researcher is further bound by his/her own personal code of ethics. The variation in philosophical beliefs that underpin a researcher's approach results in divergent concerns. These translate into different guiding principles which impact upon any understanding and management of ethical issues in the research setting. Thus, despite the existence of formal principles, rules and conventions set out by regulatory and professional bodies, ethical choices and responsibility ultimately reside with the individual researcher. Differences in research focus, field work setting, use of methods, participant pool and the nature of relationships with participants, means the onus is on the researcher to be aware of and manage the multiplicity of ethical issues which emerge. This is particularly pertinent in terms of ethnography, where fieldwork is replete with the unexpected (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983) and where ethical dilemmas can consequently emerge 'like snakes from a swamp' (Price 1996: 207).

Nonetheless, irrespective of philosophical position or field domain, Murphy and Dingwall (2001) state there is some level of agreement amongst researchers with regard to ethical concerns. They draw on the work of Beauchamp et al (1982), who outline a useful set of principles which act as a guide to managing ethical issues during the research process. It is suggested that any research endeavour should consider all four ethical principles:

- ◆ *Non-maleficence*: participants should experience no harm as a consequence of taking part in the research

- ◆ *Beneficence*: any research should result in an identifiable and useful outcome rather than be carried out for its own sake
- ◆ *Autonomy or self-determination*: the values and decisions of research participants should be respected
- ◆ *Justice*: all participants should be treated equally

Given the skeletal nature of this framework, there remains opportunity for researchers to adopt diverse interpretations of each principle. Taking each in turn and exploring the ramifications for research practice, this section discusses the challenges and dilemmas that may confront ethnographers as they undertake studies. Particular emphasis is also given to the issues which stem from working with children as it is relevant to this research.

### ***Non-maleficence***

The notion of non-maleficence means that is incumbent on the researcher to ensure that all precautions have been made to safeguard focal participants from experiencing harm. In the field of educational research, such focal participants may include pupils, parents, teachers, support staff and school liaison workers etc. Principle means of ensuring participants do not experience harm as a consequence of taking part in the research are the ethical tenets of anonymity, confidentiality and informed consent; routine elements of multiple ethical codes of practice.

To address issues of anonymity, pseudonyms are typically employed to disguise the identities of focal schools and participants. In addition, the researcher may believe it necessary to omit from written publications and conference presentations, any distinguishing features of the area, school, staff or pupils. Nonetheless, the richness of detail offered in descriptive and interpretative ethnographic accounts will inevitably enable some school communities and members therein, including focal participants, to recognise each other and themselves. Herein lies the potential for harm on part of the participants, notably in reference to the write-up of research and the publication of data. These areas are

fraught with ethical dilemmas, several of which are outlined below. Whilst the researcher can commit to taking the above measures to address any concerns arising over identification, s/he cannot guarantee absolute anonymity for participating schools and/or individuals. Linked to the issue of anonymity is that of confidentiality. The researcher must ensure at the outset that all participants have a clear understanding of how s/he intends to utilise the data which emerges during the course of the study. Whilst the researcher can follow precautions to protect the identity of those that took part, any emergent material cannot be bound by confidentiality as it is the core ingredient of written and verbal research papers.

The most fundamental principle developed to safeguard participants from experiencing harm is that of informed consent. As Anderson and Arsenault (1998) state, 'the involved participants must be informed of the nature and purpose of the research, its risks and benefits, and must consent to participate without coercion' (page 18). This is typically achieved through the use of written documentation in which the researcher is obliged to inform participants about: the intentions of the research, how it will be carried out, what it involves for them as participants, what the intended outcomes are and how information will be shared. Researchers must also ensure that all participants are aware that their involvement is voluntary and that they are free to withdraw from the study at any time. Upon receipt of this information, all potential participants must provide their written consent prior to taking part in the study. However, in practice it is not always possible for the researcher to envisage the full consequences of carrying out the research. This is particularly pertinent in terms of the ethnographic approach, which, fluid in nature, is not constrained by structured research methods or fixed outcomes. For example, in the process of forming close relations with those in the field, the ethnographer may access information not anticipated. As noted by Anderson and Arsenault '...it may be that certain people feel the need to provide you with contextual information to enhance your understanding, or on other occasions, participants may have a personal agenda and will use an evaluation to air dirty laundry' (id. at 25). In the field, the ethnographer may also observe practices hitherto unexpected; practices which shed some parties in a negative light. In both scenarios, the data may fuel additional insight and as such, the researcher may

feel inclined to draw upon it. But, in the act of including and publishing this material, the researcher may find him/herself compromising ethical principles.

This is powerfully illustrated in the work of Malin (2003) who discusses her ethical dilemma in publishing ethnographic research which exemplified the systematic social and academic marginalisation of three, five year old Aboriginal children during the course of one academic year. Whilst the pervasive marginalisation process was recognised to be a by-product resulting from classroom processes rather than an intentional, deliberate action on behalf of the particular teacher concerned, Malin nonetheless struggled with her decision to publish. She stated '...if I don't publish the story of these students, then this type of racism, which is invisible to White Australians, is not exposed. If I do publish, I risk undermining that particular teacher's self-esteem and self-confidence, causing harm' (page 22). In attempting to address this dilemma she points out that the official guidelines were of little use. On the one hand, she had an obligation to disseminate her research findings to a wider audience in order to contribute to the increasing body of knowledge which addressed the teaching and learning relationship. This act conflicted with her responsibility to the particular teacher concerned, and the notion of preventing harm as a consequence of taking part in the research. Moreover, protecting the teacher seemed to be at odds with her responsibility to the children involved in the research. This situation is complex; although as a researcher, Malin had a responsibility to protect participants from experiencing harm, she could not act in line with the ethical rights of *all* involved. In her intention to help one party, harm may be done to another and in this respect she would be required to compromise her ethical responsibilities. This was inevitable whether she decided to proceed with publication of her work or not. As Malin concluded, there is no clear answer to dilemmas of this nature.

Indeed, the publication of research is an area replete with ethical dilemmas. Because the richness of ethnographic data and accounts means it is difficult to ensure all data is totally unattributable (Murphy and Dingwall 2001), recognition of those involved is a possibility. It is the ramifications of this identification that is an area of potential emotional harm for participants. In shining the spotlight on

aspects of everyday life which previously warranted little attention, the content of a research report can become very sensitive for those involved. This situation can be exacerbated if the identity of participants is recognised by others in the focal community. Research accounts have the potential to offend or distress those about whom they are written; participants may feel wounded not only by the content of the report, but also by the material which the researcher has chosen to exclude. Some may experience anxiety, stress, guilt or embarrassment; feelings which in turn, may affect perceptions of self-efficacy and participation within the community to which they are a part. In particular, ethnographic accounts have greater potential to cause offence because the researcher will have developed a more intimate relationship with those involved during his/her prolonged time in the field. Despite perceiving themselves as sensitive and respectful, ethnographers may find themselves unintentionally causing hurt because they were unable to foresee the reactions of the researched. Moreover, dissemination of findings both within the academic community and beyond, means the researcher has decreasing levels of control and influence over published works. Thus, it is apparent that even in the latter stages of writing up and publication, participants remain personally vulnerable. This behoves the researcher to be vigilant of the consequences of his/her actions throughout the entirety of the research endeavour.

Given the fluid nature of the ethnographic approach, not all events can be anticipated; as a contingent and unfolding process, it demands a heightened awareness of ethical issues. Accordingly, any black and white conceptualisation of ethical issues can only be of limited use. Rather than outside agencies producing a set of concrete principles or rules which the researcher must abide by, it would appear that any effective management of ethical dilemmas needs to be considered within the embedded context of the research. In Malin's study, it is apparent that the principle of informed consent did not act as an overriding safeguard to harm; although obtained, the personal vulnerability of the participants remained. This reinforces the notion that the onus remains with the researcher to manage emerging ethical complexities. Many issues are ultimately recognised at the discretion of the researcher and are open to interpretation. The principle of non-maleficence is inextricably linked to that of beneficence.

## ***Beneficence***

The guiding principle of beneficence dictates that any research undertaken should result in an identifiable and useful outcome rather than be carried out for its own sake. In making any decisions and taking any actions, the researcher must endeavour to act in the best interests of others without regard for personal gain. As witnessed in the study by Malin (2003) discussed above, ethical dilemmas can arise at the stage of publication and dissemination. Ethically, the researcher must only proceed if the anticipated benefits of publishing the findings of the study outweigh the potential harm for the participants involved. In making a decision, consideration needs to be given to the extent to which the research findings can contribute to a particular body of knowledge and understanding. Amidst her ethical dilemma, Malin decided to go ahead and publish. She rationalised her decision by arguing that an understanding of the classroom practices which engendered racism, outweighed the potential harm to the particular teacher involved. The weighting of the benefits and costs of this situation is of course open to interpretation, but often it is the researcher's own views which pervade all decisions and actions made. In going ahead and publishing one's work despite experiencing ethical and moral dilemmas, one can question whether the research ultimately benefits the researcher more than anyone else. After all, it serves to heighten their prestige in academic circles and advance their careers. Moreover, as outlined at the end of chapter two, any one person can only have partial knowledge and understanding of that which goes on around them. As such, it is difficult to ascertain how any researcher can claim that the insight and proposed 'way forward' outlined in their study, can improve the experiences of all those researched. The heightened awareness of issues which reflect both the researcher's and participant's experiences is no doubt of value. Nonetheless their worldview fails to capture the whole picture, a notion which stakeholders must be mindful of when proposing alternative practices to those currently in place.

Decisions regarding publication and exclusion and inclusion of rich detail are rarely black and white, they are highly intricate, embedded in the researcher-participant relationship and the research endeavour as a whole. The ethical tenet of beneficence highlights the moral importance of acting in the best interests of

others; any harm which participants may suffer must be justified in terms of the greater good of the research outcomes. Thus, the researcher must continually ask him/herself: 'do the benefits of my decisions and actions outweigh the potential for harm on the part of those involved in my study?'

### ***Autonomy or self-determination***

This ethical principle highlights respect for the decision-making capacity of autonomous persons, where it is recognised that individuals can make reasoned and informed choices. Discussions surrounding this tenet centre on people's decision to participate in research studies and are closely linked with the notion of informed consent. Given the fluid nature of the ethnographic approach and the complexity of relations in the field, it is difficult in practice for the researcher to foresee all conditions and consequences of the research they undertake. Mindful of this, the researcher must be sensitive to the changing needs and roles of those involved. There may be times in a classroom ethnography, where despite previous consent, the teacher decides that they want certain data excluded from the research write-up. Out of respect, the researcher must abide by the wishes of those involved despite the perceived value of the data in terms of their research. The notion of autonomy is a particularly contentious issue when working with children and is given greater consideration at a later point in this chapter.

### ***Justice***

The final ethical principle of justice seeks to ensure that all participants involved in the research are treated equally. This issue is particularly pertinent in classroom and school research. As pointed out in chapter one, it is not unusual to find studies that privilege the perspectives of the more powerful parties in this setting; that is, those which place teachers' experiences centre stage over that of their pupils. In that both teacher and pupil are integral parties of the teaching-learning relationship, it is to the detriment of research to pay scant attention to the

perspectives of either party in exploration of this process. The ethical tenet of justice would serve to preclude this practice, ensuring that one group is not promoted at the cost of another. Herein lies the potential of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model as an effective research tool. To ascertain a more holistic picture, this theoretical framework encourages the researcher to gain insight into the perspectives of multiple stakeholders present in a particular child's world.

### ***Doing ethical research with children***

Increasingly, there is a wealth of literature available which addresses the act of doing research specifically with children (for example, Greene and Hogan 2005; Christensen and James 2000; Graue and Walsh 1998; Greig and Taylor 1998). This, in some respects, has fuelled the notion that the practice of undertaking research with this age group differs markedly to that involving adults. A case in point is the ethical principles outlined above; whilst these remain pertinent, they become somewhat more problematic because of the obvious disparity in status between adult researcher and child participant. In that this thesis attempts to access the voices of children in terms of their learning experiences, the practice of working ethically with children warrants greater consideration. In this section, I reflect on the belief that the researcher is indeed, beset with particular ethical tensions and methodological challenges when carrying out research involving children.

### ***The impact of researcher baggage***

As I repeatedly accentuate, the researcher's philosophical standpoint permeates the entirety of any research endeavour and this includes work undertaken with children. As an adult researcher, we bring to our encounters with child participants, a particular mindset, a 'package of attitudes and feelings, constructed through our own personal childhood history and our contemporary perspective on childhood, often coloured by one or more of the prevailing ideologies of childhood'

(Greene and Hill 2005: 8). Principle to this mindset is the practitioner's ontological position about childhood (assumptions about the nature of children and childhood) and his/her attendant epistemological commitments (beliefs about the nature of knowledge it is possible to gain about children and the role of both researcher and child in research). In that these philosophical beliefs shape each stage of the research process, it behoves the researcher to scrutinise and take account of their own position as enquirer. This act essentially serves to exemplify the highly idiosyncratic nature of research and moreover, draws attention to the potential limits of studies undertaken.

For many years, the study of children has fallen under the realm of the social sciences. In that the overarching goal of developmental psychology is to understand the process of change in the psychological functioning of individuals with respect to their age (Hogan 2005), it is unsurprising that children have increasingly become a prominent focus of investigation. Despite the diversity of paradigms working in the field of developmental psychology, there is a particular ontology of children and childhood which exerts a powerful influence over research activity and publication (ibid.). The assumptions about children inherent in this 'mainstream' model manifest themselves in specific research practices, which, long standing, tend to go unchallenged by the majority of practitioners working inside the discipline (see Appendix 3.C).

In a challenge to this mainstream model, there has been a shift in the ontological positioning of children and childhood amongst some practitioners of contemporary social science research. This is primarily evident across Europe, where the sociology of childhood or what has become known as 'the new social studies of childhood' has emerged (Christensen and Prout 2005). Whilst the principle parties of this movement are sociologists, there are researchers from other fields involved, not least a number of critical developmental psychologists (Hogan 2005). Research in this arena has begun to acknowledge children as subjects rather than objects of the research process (Grover 2004). Perceived as sentient beings who act in and upon the world in which they live, it is recognised that children have the capacity to shape their own life journeys. As active agents in the development

process, children's knowledge and understanding of their own experiences thus gains heightened value. They have become regarded as 'a reservoir of expertise on their own lives' (Roberts 2000: 226). This viewpoint links with an ontological position which respects and promotes children's entitlement to being considered per se, as persons of value and persons with rights (Greene and Hill 2005). Similar movements can be found across a number of public fora where, increasingly, children's perspectives are being placed in the foreground by practitioners working within and outside academic disciplines. I concur with the positioning of children as subjects rather than objects of research. In Appendix 3.D, I outline my underpinning philosophical beliefs in an attempt to illuminate for the reader how they shape my approach to undertaking research with children.

#### *Attendant notions of power*

A practitioner's ontological beliefs about children and childhood and their attendant positioning of the child as object or subject, holds connotations of power, or lack thereof, for both the adult researcher and child researchee. This serves as an overarching factor shaping the entirety of the research process. In characterising children as objects of study: unformed, incompetent and vulnerable, power is thought to reside principally, if not fully, with the adult researcher. Because of the perceived powerless role of the child in the research context, it is believed that the practitioner is presented with unique dilemmas and concerns. Indeed, abundant literature cites the potential for abuse on behalf of the researcher, provoking widening discussion of ethical issues when working specifically with children (for example Fasoli 2001; Morrow and Richards 1996; Thomas and O'Kane 1998). Positioned as subjects of research, children immediately gain a degree of power. The extent of this will vary depending on the nature of their participation in the study and the level to which they are involved in each of the constituent stages. Levels of participation are not solely the result of researcher discretion, but are also shaped by the behaviour of the child: to what extent is s/he willing to engage in the research tasks at hand? In recognising this, one can see it is an oversimplification to suggest that all power resides with the researcher. Rather, one must recognise

that power dynamics are bi-directional and that in any encounter the researcher-researchee power relations are continually renegotiated.

Despite a practitioner's efforts to ensure that children have a comparable degree of agency to that of adult participants, s/he must accept that there are a number of ethical issues that gain prominence when undertaking research with children. These issues stem from the difference in social status between children and adults. This positioning is shaped by mediating factors operating both within and beyond the researcher-participant relationship. Unable to exert control over all factors, the issue of social status cannot be avoided and the practitioner must address the subordinate position of the child rather than overlook or attempt to disguise it (Hill 2005). Comparatively, adult parties typically possess greater verbal competence and thus have a superior capacity to express themselves and understand others. Mindful of this, the adult researcher needs to tailor his/her language to the understandings of child participants. Secondly, it is important to consider that in nearly all areas of life, adults are ascribed authority over children: at home, at school, sport teams, youth clubs etc. Indeed, in the primary school context, adults possess a disproportionate amount of power and exercise this in judgements regarding children's behaviour, space, time and activities. With children maintaining a minority status in relation to dominant adult groups in many domains (Devine 2002), it can be difficult for children to dissent from research activities. In seeking consent from researchees, this situation behoves researchers, particularly those undertaking ethnographic research where the boundaries are more complex and messy, to explicitly state that participation is not compulsory. Moreover, s/he must reassure researchees that they will not suffer negative consequences if they choose not to participate. Whilst the issues of ability and authority are particularly salient when working with children because of the obvious disparity in social standing between adults and children, they are also worth consideration when working with adult participants. There may be times in a study when adults feel incompetent and powerless, perhaps as a consequence of the tasks they are asked to undertake or their failure to understand and engage in the language used by research parties.

In this section, I have sought to illuminate that research practice is underpinned by particular ontological beliefs about childhood and adulthood and the attendant positioning of the participant as object or subject. Given the diversity of people and situations, I strongly believe that there are no universal answers to ethical issues when working with children or adults. Rather, practitioners must be vigilant as they work with the particularities of the research study.

### ***Section summary***

The practice of research is bound by the ethical codes and procedures set out by regulatory and professional bodies. However, procedural ethics in themselves cannot provide all that is needed for the researcher to effectively deal with ethically important moments that arise throughout the research endeavour, particularly those adopting a fluid ethnographic approach. The practice of research is further bound by the researcher's own personal code of ethics, which is shaped by his/her philosophical beliefs. These underpin: what is considered to be an ethical dilemma, the researcher's perceived responsibility of the situation and how such concerns are managed pragmatically in the field. There are no simple or easy solutions to many of the ethical issues which emerge during the research endeavour. Although ethical guidelines assist in highlighting potential ethical dilemmas that may arise, each research project will inevitably demand the researcher(s) involved to make personal choices.

Such ambiguity accentuates the need for ongoing reflexive practice on behalf of the ethnographer. In undertaking any research endeavour, it seems almost impossible that the researcher will be able to fulfil his/her ethical responsibilities to all parties' at all times. As witnessed in Malin's study cited previously, the complexity of situations calls for compromise. It may be that the best the researcher can do is aim to be sensitive to ethical obligations throughout the course of the research and reflect on the rationale for decisions made and assess each of them in terms of the four ethical principles discussed above. Aware that ethical issues extend past the approval of a regulatory board at the outset of a

project, the onus is on the researcher to manage emerging ethical complexities. As Morrow and Richards (1996: 102-103) point out: ‘...for research to be regarded as ethical, ethical considerations need to be situational and responsive, and no researcher or research body can anticipate all ethical problems that may be encountered.’

### **The role of reflexivity**

An underpinning tenet of the qualitative approach is the belief that the researcher permeates all aspects of the research process. His/her intense personal and emotional involvement shapes the endeavour, from formation of initial research aims to dissemination of findings and interpretative accounts. Drawn on extensively in the literature, where it is associated with diverse interpretations, activities and goals (Gough 2003), the term ‘reflexivity’ is essentially about embracing rather than discounting this subjective involvement. Each researcher possesses individual characteristics that ‘affect research activities in ways immediately recognizable, ways that become apparent only over time, and ways that may never be known’ (LeCompte and Preissle 1993: 91). In that the subjectivity of the researcher inevitably adds to the complexity of any research process, it is incumbent on him/her to attempt to recognise, examine and understand how and why aspects of their subjectivity have impacted upon the research process; to reflect on his/her ‘own experiences, interactions and positions in the field’ (Coffey 1999: 115). The act of reflexivity involves more than merely thinking about the complexities of an event after it has taken place; it demands immediate, dynamic and continuing self-awareness on part of the researcher (Finlay and Gough 1993).

In reviewing the literature, it is apparent that the desire and extent to which researchers engage in and make explicit any self-reflexive practice is highly variant and idiosyncratic. In adherence to the notion that qualitative researchers are inextricably linked to the research process, one could assume that the act of illuminating subjectivity within written tales of the field is a common occurrence.

Indeed, Tierney (2002) notes that the personal experiences of the author constitute a core element of many qualitative texts. He states, 'We do not see articles or books with absent authors perched above the theoretical and methodological fray. Indeed, oftentimes... the authors themselves are the central characters in the story' (page 389). However, whilst there may be increasing inclination on behalf of the researcher to locate him/herself in the text, this does not imply that all accounts are necessarily reflexive.

For many researchers, there appears to be some trepidation in publicly acknowledging the subjective influence of the researcher upon the endeavour (Gilbert 2001). This is apparent in the multiplicity of ways subjective experience is presented in the ethnographic literature. Some researchers choose to omit in totality any evidence of personal and emotional experiences from published accounts. Some relegate their subjective experiences to the preface or appendix section rather than viewing it an integral aspect of the account itself. Other researchers choose to report their personal and emotional experiences in the form of a confessional tale (Van Maanen 1988). More recently, the subjectivity of the researcher has taken centre stage in the form of autoethnographic accounts, an approach which has steadily been gaining popularity amongst some academic communities. This approach sees researchers draw extensively on their own experiences as a vehicle to gain further understanding and insight of a particular community or culture. They are required to look both inward and outward in an attempt to make connections between his/her personal life and the cultural, social, and political realms of the research (Ellis 2004).

In considering the trepidation which stems from any explicit discussion of researcher subjectivity, it appears that there is particular ambiguity regarding the nature and role of emotionality. May (1993) reports that the use of personal feelings in ethnographic research is frequently deemed an impediment to good practice and analysis, where any reference to them is viewed with suspicion and hostility. In the field of psychology Gilbert (2001) notes that there is limited literature which illuminates the positive aspects of acknowledging and actively exploring the role of emotions in the research process. Rather, much emphasis is

placed on the danger of emotionality in research and the need to exercise caution and maintain some level of distance throughout any research endeavour. Although any discussion of personal and emotional experiences may be frowned upon by some, their presence and influence in shaping the research process is inevitable; after all, such experiences are features of everyday life when immersed in the research field. Their influence persists whether an ethnographer's subjectivity remains unrecognised or is actively removed from accounts. In light of this, it could be argued that any steps taken to actively exclude writings pertaining to a researcher's personal experiences is dishonest and misleading.

Although the importance of being reflexive is acknowledged by many researchers, the difficulties, practicalities and methods of actually doing it are rarely addressed (Mauther and Doucet 2003). The elusive nature of subjectivity means the process of entering into a process of reflexivity is not an easy feat. Indeed, the practice requires huge efforts on part of the researcher to identify and interrogate his/her own practices (Finlay 2003). It is evident that to any research endeavour researchers bring baggage which, 'if unexamined, can adversely influence the research process' (Gilbert 2001: 3). Through engaging in ongoing reflexive practice, the researcher can increasingly become aware of his/her bias, distortions and blind spots. In highlighting these in any writings, readers are given a glimpse into the researcher's personal sense making framework and are consequently further informed when reviewing research. Thus, in utilising reflexivity the subjectivity or 'baggage' of the researcher is transformed from a problem into an opportunity (Finlay and Gough 2003). It becomes a unique strength rather than a negative impediment. In producing reflexive accounts, the ultimate aim is to make more transparent, the process of carrying out the research and constructing tales of the field. This aids both the researcher and reader in any analysis, interpretation and understanding. This act seems fundamental, as each of us, regardless of whether we are a researcher or not, filters everything we experience through our own biases, views and feelings. In this respect, one can argue that the author's subjectivity is indeed, a critical aspect of any research process and interpretative ethnographic account. This premise accentuates the notion that the researcher is his/her primary instrument in the research context (McLeod 1994).

## **Ethnography in the field of education**

In this section, I review several ethnographic studies carried out in the field of education. Despite the potential of the ethnographic approach for the exploration of school practices and the teaching and learning relationship, multiple literature searches have revealed a limited number of studies carried out this century. My sustained efforts have uncovered two principle texts: the first, a book entitled *'Researching school experience: ethnographic studies of teaching and learning'* (Hammersley 1999) and the second, a chapter entitled *'Ethnographic research in educational settings'* (Gordon, Holland and Lahelma 2001). Although the first publication includes studies pertaining to the day-to-day practices of teachers and pupils in relation to policy reform, much of the research was conducted in the early to mid 1990's and as such, is arguably of little value now. This appraisal is equally applicable to the chapter compiled by Gordon et al (2001), who again make reference to a number of dated educational ethnographies. Many of the studies cited in this second source were conducted in the late 1990's and moreover, looked at schools outside the realm of the UK. I now go on to review the handful of more recent educational ethnographies which I have managed to locate, giving consideration to the particular decisions, techniques and procedures of the researcher(s) involved and how these served to shape the research endeavour undertaken.

Gordon, Lahelma and Holland (2000a 2000b) carried out an ethnographic study spanning one academic year involving two secondary schools in London, England and two secondary schools in Helsinki, Finland. During their prolonged time in the field, the group of researchers amassed a large, rich data base: fieldnotes pertaining to lesson and break time observations, research diaries, transcriptions of interviews conducted with students and teachers, questionnaire responses, and a collection of documents in the form of curricula materials and exemplars of students' work. The authors were interested in exploring the complexity of practices and processes within each school community. To aid observation and analysis of these, they chose to make a distinction between three layers of data:

- ◆ The official: material regarding teaching and learning, the curriculum, pedagogy and formal hierarchies.
- ◆ The informal: data relating to interactions amongst teaching staff, amongst students and between both parties.
- ◆ The physical: information pertaining to space, time, movement and sound/voice.

Whilst acknowledged to exist as ‘intertwined’ aspects of everyday life at school (Lahelma 2002: 368), this framework inevitably served to shape the data amassed by the researchers; it directed their focus and impacted on what observational and interview data was considered pertinent and what was not. Moreover, in one of the series of papers that have stemmed from the material gathered in this ethnographic study, Lahelma recognizes that although the authors draw on a limited selection of analyzed data collected in the ethnographic endeavour, the influence of the whole data set is nonetheless apparent. She states ‘we have much data that is not analysed, but that still has its impact on our thinking and shows itself in ways that we state our questions’ (ibid.).

Investigating classroom discourse, Duff (2002) carried out an ethnographic study of communication in a Canadian high school. She focused on the instruction of an ethnically mixed Canadian social studies course run by one particular teacher and chose to adopt a micro- and macro- level to her data collection and subsequent analysis. Areas of foci within the micro approach included instances of: speech acts (for example questioning, turntaking); code-switching; personal pronouns; grammatical particles, silence and its significance. The macro approach involved studying the wider social, cultural and historical contexts of such communicative events. Utilising multiple methods, Duff undertook data collection for a period of six months:

- ◆ She sat in on Canadian social studies lessons once a week and made detailed observations of student and teacher interactions.
- ◆ In an attempt to access understandings of language socialisation processes from multiple vantage points, she spoke with teachers, students and administrative staff.

- ◆ She collected school and course documents including curriculum guides and assignments and was able to access student course notes;
- ◆ To gain greater insight into the school culture, she also attended extra-curricula events such as assemblies, orientations evenings for parents and the school dance.

Using as her primary focus data collected in two hour-long lessons, Duff's paper furnishes the reader with a thick, contextualised description of speech acts between teacher and student in the classroom setting. In depicting the scene, she provides a diagrammatic and physical description of the classroom layout, together with student's self-selected seating locations. This short vignette enables the reader to visualise her primary research context. This picture is then elaborated upon through the use of lesson overviews and rich, detailed transcripts of teacher-student conversational exchanges. Embedded in the wider context of formal and observed classroom behaviours, analysis of these excerpts permit exploration of the communicative roles adopted by teacher and student in whole-class discussions. Duff suggests that careful observation and deconstruction of such conversational acts serves to assist teachers in their instruction of an ethnically diverse classroom.

Although not explicitly identified as such, Agee (2002) illuminates the potential power of adopting an ecological approach to qualitative educational research endeavours. She proposes that consideration must be given to the multiple settings of participants in order to achieve a rich understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. In application to formal education, this means looking at the lives of pupils and teachers both within and beyond the school walls. Although no mention of Bronfenbrenner's work is made by Agee herself, the likeness to his conceptualisation of the ecological model is apparent. To represent the complexity of identity and power relations in educational research, Agee suggests the use of six lenses which she has developed over time and in relation to the literature in multiple research fields, including psychology, education, anthropology and qualitative inquiry. In unison, these lenses 'offer a multilayered picture of participants' lived experiences across multiple settings' (page 569).

The first lens, entitled *boundedness and permeability of settings*, involves the discovery of explicit and implicit values and practices which define the bounds of a particular setting, such as a school. Agee proposes that this lens is particularly useful to researchers interested in the exploration of participation and practices within social groups. The second lens focuses on the nature of participant's *movement across settings* and involves the examination of practices between one bounded environment and another. The third lens, *variability of setting*, offers insight into the structures and mechanisms operating within different bounded contexts. In acknowledging that behaviour within the focal school environment is shaped by cultural imperatives operating in wider settings, it encourages the researcher to reflect on these sources of influence. The fourth lens focuses on the *histories of settings* and notes that schools are not constructed in the moment, but rather, are shaped by other settings, both past and present. Agee suggests that attempts to understand history helps in the identification and representation of existing practices. The fifth lens, *cultural representations of settings*, focuses on the physical and visual aspects of a given setting. The final lens, *cultural ecology of settings*, is broader than the others. It involves the intersection of the previous five lenses and requires the researcher to map stakeholders differing reactions to events on to a wider, more global picture.

These lenses are not proposed as a recipe, but rather, are a suggested way of seeing and responding to participants' relations within and across multiple settings. In capturing different aspects of the same phenomenon, not only from a different theoretical lens but also across multiple parties, it is inevitable that a more complex representation of that under investigation will arise. In their investigations, the researcher may seek to include the perspectives of both insiders and outsiders. Agee also places particular emphasis on the philosophical standpoint of the researcher. She proposes that her six lens framework serves to bring to the fore, 'questions and perspectives that force the researcher to examine his/her own assumptions' which in turn 'may yield fresh perspectives on participants' relationships in multiple settings' (page 572). This is a powerful premise and accentuates the need for ongoing reflexivity on the part of researcher. Agee's work is persuasive in suggesting that inquiry into the perspectives and assumptions that

educational researchers and participants hold about schools can assist in revealing a richer picture of teaching, learning and school lived experience.

### ***Section summary***

Drawing on others' experiences of doing ethnographic research, this section has sought to illuminate how a researcher's philosophical standpoint underpins his/her practice. A review of above papers has revealed that practitioners typically make no explicit mention of their philosophical standpoint. As pointed out earlier, this constitutes a large part of the research picture and thus leaves the reader ill-equipped to draw informed conclusions about the research presented. Nonetheless, it is apparent, in reading the above papers, that researchers make a multiplicity of decisions throughout the entirety of the research process. Insufficient detail often means the reader is left with little insight into the rationale behind these decisions or the particulars of procedures. Nonetheless, particular philosophical beliefs can be inferred. For example, in all of the educational ethnographies reviewed above there is an underpinning epistemological thread: the concern for understanding the contexts and meanings of focal participants. Methodologically, the researchers looked to wider contexts and societal factors to help understand the lived experiences of their focal participants. Implicitly, this infers that the exploration of subjective experiences alone is insufficient to account for the complexity of educational phenomena under investigation. In this respect, the research practices of many educational ethnographers can neatly be framed using Agee's multiple lenses model, which proposes a 'winks upon winks' conceptualisation of lived experience.

### **Chapter summary**

This chapter has sought to illuminate the highly intricate nature of adopting an ethnographic approach to carrying out research. Fundamentally, the researcher's particular philosophical beliefs shape the entirety of the research endeavour.

Scrutiny of underpinning assumptions exemplifies the highly idiosyncratic and complex nature of this approach. As pointed out by Rock (2001), no researcher enters the social worlds of others without presupposition or expectation. In this respect, any data sets, analyses and reports can be viewed as social products rather than objective sources of knowledge about the world. '...The way in which they were assembled – the meanings and assumptions they incorporate, the patterns of activity that constituted them, the things that were seen and were not seen by those that compiled them – cannot be taken for granted. They require some explication, decoding or 'unpacking' (id. at 30). In the next chapter, I guide you through the journey of 'doing' my ethnographic research, detailing the methods and procedures used in the data gathered for this piece of research.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 'DOING' MY ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

In the preface of this thesis, I sketched the landscape of my research. Outlining its inception, I traced my emergent interest in the learning process and highlighted the underpinning role of my classroom experience in shaping this research. My initial observation of children's learning in the classroom gave rise to two theoretical perspectives, these were used to formulate my research proposal and objectives (see Appendix 4.A). The aim of this chapter, is to guide you through the journey of 'doing' my ethnographic research from this point forth. I focus here on the collection and recording of my data, detailing the decisions I made and the actions I took. In seeking to present a clear vision of the steps involved, the process of method which I outline may seem somewhat 'simple, smooth, deliberate, linear and unproblematic' (Goodley et al 2004: 71). However, this is far removed from the often messy reality which I experienced. In making some attempt to capture this, I have chosen to include a record of my subjective experiences in the field. As I go through the process of unpacking my research journey, I have peppered throughout some of the personal dilemmas which I experienced. This will hopefully serve as a vehicle to illuminate some of the complexities involved in adopting an ethnographic approach to research.

#### **Adopting a qualitative ethnographic approach**

In any research endeavour, the methods of data collection and the form of analyses used are driven by the aims of the study. Here, it is my intention to make explicit the reasoning behind my decision to utilise a qualitative ethnographic approach. In chapter two, I pointed out that every child encounters his/her world in an individual and idiosyncratic manner. This results in learning journeys which are different and specific to each child. To gain a fuller understanding of learning and

performance, it was apparent that I would need to give consideration to the complexities of the world in which particular children lived. I decided that a detailed study of a small number of children and their lives was the most effective method to meet my aims. This approach would enable me to gain insight in to the intricate web of factors shaping the children's quotidian experiences, whilst also permitting me to trace the progression and development in their learning over time.

In present day society, schools are the hub of educational activity and for this reason I felt the most effective method of gaining insight into children's learning was to be immersed in situ. Positioned as a member of the school community, I believed I could access rich data pertaining to the myriad proximal and distal influences operating in the child's world; data which could not be accessed by an 'outsider.' Firstly, I wanted to access the perspective of the particular children involved in the research and give prominence to the role of subjective experience. However, because development and learning are wider phenomenon encompassing both the individual and multiple settings in which s/he is embedded, this information alone would provide an incomplete understanding of the learning experience. In this respect, it was necessary to look beyond the focal person in order to gain a fuller understanding of the intricacies involved. I needed to supplement children's subjective experiences with data pertaining to factors shaping their environment. Herein, lies the value of others' perspectives; their understanding permits exploration of influences operating in the wider systems of Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework. Previous classroom experience had afforded me the opportunity to identify a number of main players whose decisions and actions served to shape children's school experiences. Some of these parties were regular features of the children's day-to-day lives (parents/carers, teaching staff, Head teacher) whilst others had a more distant role (School Governing Body and LEA representatives). Thus, from the outset I asserted my intention to access the perspectives of these additional parties. Given the respective positions of these stakeholders in the child's world, this would go some way towards addressing the embedded nature of children's learning and development.

As methods of data collection, I was reluctant to use quantitative tools such as structured questionnaires and observational scales, as I believed they served to inhibit the uniqueness of the learning journey through the use of prescriptive and uniform criteria. Rather, I felt that qualitative methods were best suited to the breadth and depth of data which I sought in relation to my research aims. Wishing to access data pertaining to the factors operating in each ecological system, I set out to utilise a range of methods in my collection of data. Specifically: participant observation, interviews, analysis of children's work, document analysis and ecomaps.

### **Starting out: accessing Roseberry Hill**

Following previous employment, I was fortunate to be offered the opportunity to continue in my role as full-time classroom assistant in Year 6 for another school year (2001/2). Prior to taking up the offer to continue at the primary school, which I will refer to by the pseudonym of Roseberry Hill, I informally approached the Head teacher and Year 6 teaching staff. I outlined my proposed research project and requested their co-operation, fortunately all parties informally agreed to participate.

### **Forming and maintaining relationships**

A central concern when carrying out ethnographic research is the nature of relations with those in the field, the quality of which, underpins the richness of the data collected. Having gained previous experience working at the school, I had already formed relationships with the team of teaching staff in Year 6 and the Head teacher. In these terms, I was not positioned as an 'outsider'. Whilst at the end of the previous academic year, these parties had informally agreed to co-operate with my research project, I was unsure how they would relate to me in the classroom and wider school environment once my study officially began. Although I had secured access, I was now required to negotiate entry to the field in my new dual role. Mindful that it would be some time before I was granted ethical approval for

the study to take place, I decided to spend the autumn term ploughing my time and energies into developing relationships with children and teaching staff within the Year 6 community. I strongly believed that this would serve to facilitate my roles as classroom assistant and researcher. Accordingly, I made a conscious decision to start my data collection in the second school term.

## **Ethics**

In this section, I detail my management of the ethical issues which arose during the course of my research. In practice, many of the more explicit concerns were prominent at the inception of the project as I sought ethical approval. Highlighted within a number of introductory texts on qualitative research, I was able to give considerable forethought to these issues. Alongside these, were those ethical concerns of a more implicit nature. Emerging during the course of the research, these tended to be more intricate and thus messier to work through. Indeed, there were several times when I experienced intense personal struggles with the ethical decisions I was required to make; several of the more prominent issues are discussed below. In managing such issues, the researcher is required to make decisions and take actions which are instrumental in shaping the research project; in this respect s/he is recognised to be a primary research tool.

### ***Working through the hierarchical chain: obtaining consent***

Based at the time of registration within the Department of Psychology and Speech Pathology at the Manchester Metropolitan University, this research was subject to the Departmental Ethics Committee. Undertaking an empirical study, I was at the outset required to complete an ethics check form (Appendix 4.B). A clear priority at the beginning was to obtain informed consent from all parties involved in the study. Positioned as the focal participants in my research, the written consent of the focal children, their parents or carers and the Year 6 teaching staff took precedence. Within this group of focal participants, it was apparent that there was a hierarchical

chain of authority or gatekeeping (Hood, Kelley and Mayall 1996) which I was required to follow, specifically: Head teacher; teaching staff; parents and carers; children. I approached the Head teacher first and informally discussed my intentions with her, following up our conversation with written documentation (Appendix 4.C). This essentially served to detail the aims and intentions of my research and clarify the nature of the school's involvement in my study. Upon receipt of written confirmation that she was both aware and approved of the research being conducted at Roseberry Hill, I proceeded to the second level of gatekeepers: the Year 6 teaching staff.

To ascertain written consent from my colleagues in Year 6, I chose to approach each of the three principle members of staff in turn (two full-time teachers and one part-time classroom assistant). I stressed that in my capacity as researcher I was not there to make judgements of their teaching but to record the everyday events in the classroom. Again, I followed up each meeting with written documentation (Appendix 4.D) and asked each member of staff to complete a research contract (Appendix 4.E) which signified their consent to take part in the study. All were signed with very few questions regarding the ethics of my research or the practicalities of collecting data in the classroom. However, one Year 6 teacher, Mrs Eastwood, did express an overt interest in my intended choice of focal children.

### ***Choosing focal child participants: agenda bound***

To enable me to trace the complexity of children's individual learning journeys, I decided to focus on the experiences and lives of eight focal children. In my role as classroom assistant, I worked with sixty children across two classes and decided to select four pupils from each class to form my research group.

## *Class 6E*

Class 6E was taught by Mrs Eastwood. As I had not yet approached the focal children or their parents/carers, I was initially hesitant to name them in conversation with Mrs Eastwood. She interpreted this hesitancy as a space to make several recommendations as to which pupils in her class she felt would benefit most from taking part in my research. Although initially taken aback at her presumptuous attitude, we discussed her suggested children alongside those I had intended to approach. Our selection criteria were quite different. I wished to include within the focal group boys and girls of varying abilities and different social and cultural backgrounds. Moreover, mindful that the richness of my data would be dependent on the nature of the relations I had formed with the children, I inevitably favoured including those pupils with whom I had formed an effective working relationship. Unsurprisingly, these tended to be those children I had been assigned to work with regularly on an individual or group basis. Mrs Eastwood had a different agenda; she focused on those pupils who she felt would benefit from additional attention which she could not provide in her capacity as teacher. She had three specific pupils in mind: Daniel, Aneela and Tariq. All but the latter overlapped with my original intended sample. I was more than aware that I had not formed a particularly close relationship with Tariq and, as such, was reluctant to choose him as one of the four focal children from class 6E. I discussed my reservations with Mrs Eastwood, but she felt strongly that Tariq should be included. I conceded, going ahead and selecting Tariq in order to maintain a positive relationship with Mrs Eastwood.

Making up the group of four focal children from class 6E, I also discussed my intention to ask Leanne to participate in the research. Mrs Eastwood was curious about my decision to include her. Leanne was a very capable pupil and able to work well independently on class tasks and in assessment situations. As such, she was not one of my 'targeted pupils' in my work as a classroom assistant. Nonetheless, I had formed a good relationship with Leanne and felt her participation added another dimension to the research group. Not only was she deemed more capable in the eyes of the class teacher but moreover, she was one

of only two pupils of Black African ethnic origin in Year 6. Mrs Eastwood clearly felt my rationale for her inclusion was inappropriate. She was quick and rather curt to point out that although Leanne was of Black African ethnicity, her nationality was nonetheless British and for this reason Leanne was no different from the rest of the children in the class. Although the school had an ethnically mixed pupil population, it seemed from the teacher's rather sensitive reaction, that there were clearly issues surrounding notions of ethnicity and nationality. I did believe that belonging to a specific ethnic group had ramifications for schooling experiences, particularly if you belonged to one other than the dominant White or Asian groups which comprised the pupil population at Roseberry Hill. In acknowledgement of this, I decided to go ahead as planned and approach Leanne as a focal participant.

### *Class 6B*

Class 6B was taught by Mrs Brookes. In contrast to the directive manner displayed by Mrs Eastwood, Mrs Brookes expressed no interest in knowing which children in her class I intended to approach. Class 6B comprised thirty pupils; its composition was rather unusual in that two thirds were girls. In accordance, I decided to tailor my research group, selecting three girls and one boy. I chose to approach two girls whom I was assigned to work with on a regular basis in literacy: Jaleela and Isabel. In addition, I decided to approach two pupils of higher ability: Charlotte and Jun. Although I rarely worked with them on a one-to-one basis, I had formed good working relationships with them.

### ***The next link in the chain: obtaining consent from parents and carers***

With the intended sample of focal children identified, the next stage was to ascertain consent from the children themselves and their parents/carers. I decided to informally approach each of the eight children individually in order to gauge their level of interest. I told each focal child that their name had been randomly chosen; this was untrue, but a white lie I deemed necessary to protect the feelings of other

pupils in the class. I was mindful that others would soon be aware of the research study and I wanted to avoid causing any unnecessary hurt or rejection on their part. I talked to each child briefly about the nature of my research and what it would involve for them as participants, asking them if they would be interested in taking part. All were enthusiastic to participate and I explained to them that the next step was to gain written consent from their parents/carers; this was necessary if they were to take part. I gave each child a letter to take home (Appendix 4.F). This detailed my dual role, the nature of the intended study and what it involved for the children in terms of their participation. The process of obtaining written consent from the majority of children's parents was relatively straightforward. However, there were some unforeseen difficulties in relation to two pupils: Aneela and Jun.

#### *Unforeseen obstacles: a conflict of interests*

Unfortunately the parents of one pupil in class 6E, Aneela, refused to give consent for their daughter to participate in the study. Aneela reported that her parents felt she already had too much work to do in Year 6 and that the research would serve as a distraction. Because Aneela indicated that her parents did not want to discuss the matter further, I felt it was best to withdraw from any further contact regarding the subject. This situation brought to the fore issues of control and authority in research and the notion of the powerless child. No matter what steps a researcher may take in an attempt to empower children in the research process, the agency accorded is subject to the layers of gatekeepers who exercise power over children (David, Edwards and Alldred 2001). As in this case, the wishes of the child can be overridden by the authority of others. In place of Aneela, I decided to approach Beth. Although not a member of the groups I predominantly worked with, I had formed an effective working relationship with Beth and she regularly came over to chat about her life inside and outside school. Beth's mother was also a regular visitor in class 6E and would, towards the end of the academic year, become a member of Year 6 teaching staff.

In class 6B, one of the intended focal children, Jun, was off school for some time with a suspected serious illness. After a month of uncertainty surrounding his illness and mindful that his absence from school might be extended, I decided it was best to forgo his participation. Instead, I chose to approach his best friend Roberto. I was honest with him about the situation and asked if he would like to take Jun's place in the research. He was keen to know which other pupils comprised the research group; once in receipt of this knowledge, he decided he wanted to participate. Two weeks later Jun was back at school, fortunately cleared of the suspected serious illness. After a few days, he broached the subject of the research with me and asked if he could take part. Roberto, in cahoots with Jun, sat alongside him and informed me it would be really good if they could both be involved. With four 6B children already participating and research activities under way, I reluctantly had to refuse. Declining Jun's participation felt awkward, not only because he was one of the originally intended focal participants, but also in view of his recent ill health.

### ***Working with children: scrutinising the process of informed consent***

Working through the requisite hierarchical layers of gatekeepers, I was finally permitted to formally approach the children about the research. Reference to the Ethical Principles and Guidelines published by the British Psychological Society (1993) found limited information about undertaking research with children per se. However the guidelines did state: 'Where possible, the real consent of children... in understanding or communication should be obtained. In addition, where research involves any persons under 16 years of age, consent should be obtained from parents or from those in loco parentis' (page 9, paragraph 3.3). In view of this, the principle issue was the informed consent of parents/carers; their input was deemed necessary for their child to participate in the research. In that the children taking part were aged ten to eleven, obtaining their consent was characterised as secondary to this. Indeed, the guidelines regarding this issue seemed rather ambiguous; with the phrase 'where possible' open to abuse by the particular researcher(s) involved. As pointed out by Morrow and Richards (1996: 94), '...in

this respect children are to a large extent seen as their parents property, devoid of the right to say no to research.'

Although the consent of the gatekeepers I had gained to date would have been sufficient for this research to go ahead, I personally felt that proceeding without consulting the children themselves was inappropriate. After all, the children were positioned as the focal participants of the study; giving up their time to take part in research activities, it was only just that I should attempt to obtain their informed consent or dissent to take part. In respecting each child's own decision, the process of seeking informed and voluntary consent provided them with a sense of control over their own individuality, autonomy and privacy (Weithorn and Scherer 1994) and moreover, served '... to protect them from covert, invasive, exploitative or abusive research' (Alderson 2000: 243). This decision also allowed me space to make some attempt to address the obvious discrepancy in power between adult and child parties in the research domain. This was apparent not only in relation to the hold of gatekeepers (as noted in the situation of Aneela described previously), but also in view of the researcher-researchee relationship. As pointed out by Woodhead and Faulkner (2000: 12): 'The power relationships in the research process are weighted towards the researcher as the expert on children, and how to study children and on what to study about children.'

As outlined in chapter three, the notion of 'informed consent' has become an integral aspect of research and constitutes a core principle of numerous ethical codes of practice. However, the concept itself and the process of obtaining it has received little interrogation (David et al 2001). Based on the receipt of information (typically the presentation of research objectives and details pertaining to methods of data collection) potential participants are asked to make an informed decision about taking part. Communication of this information is thought to be relatively unproblematic and it is implicitly assumed that the mere presentation of it infers that participants will 'know' and 'understand' what it means for their subsequent participation. Whilst clearly an oversimplification of the process, it is interesting to note that how one actually goes about gaining consent, particularly from children, is rarely made explicit in the literature.

Nonetheless, in view of the BPS ethical guidelines, I needed to access the children's understanding of the study and their involvement in it before I could ascertain whether the children could provide active informed consent to participate in this research. Moreover, I needed to clarify issues of confidentiality, anonymity and the children's right to withdraw from the research at any time. To address these issues I decided to informally discuss the project with the eight children as a group, before asking them to sign a consent form (see Appendix 4.G). The structure of this form was also underpinned by the same core ethical issues listed above. Guided principally by this agenda, I led the discussion. However, I also encouraged the children's ongoing participation in and contributions to shaping the conversation through the use of questioning. Wanting to ascertain the extent to which the children had comprehended the issues we had discussed, I asked them to independently note down their understandings. To facilitate this exercise, I wrote down on the whiteboard, a list of the issues we had discussed to serve as prompts:

- ◆ Understandings of research
- ◆ The right to withdraw
- ◆ Limits to confidentiality and anonymity

The children's writings were particularly illuminating. A reflective review of the discussion and written work is set out in Appendix 4.H. Overall, the children's work showed that their understandings were not uniform.

Some issues were much clearer than others, but notions of confidentiality caused particular confusion amongst the group. Armed with this knowledge, I was aware that I had only gained partial consent from the children to participate and my personal values questioned whether it was ethical to proceed. Immersed in the school community, I had developed working relationships with the children in both Year 6 classes; the majority of my relationships with those in the research group were strong. The nature of the relationships we had formed and the fact that I was continuously available to discuss the research facilitated my ability to reach a workable solution to this dilemma. I decided to go ahead and proceed with the inclusion of the children despite only gaining their partial consent. Mindful of the confusion regarding the nature and limits to confidentiality, I sought to clarify this

issue with the group upon our next meeting. I also made it explicit to them on multiple occasions that if they ever had any queries about the research, then they could approach me and we could make time to discuss the issues they had. I also found myself rationalising the decision I had made; proceeding despite only gaining partial consent was to some extent inevitable, as in any ethnographic endeavour the practitioner cannot anticipate every eventuality that may occur. In this respect, informed consent at the outset is always limited whether you are working with adults or children.

***Widening the focus: returning to the children's gatekeepers and casting the net further afield***

Upon demonstrating to the ethics committee that I had obtained informed consent from the core parties involved in the research, I was granted ethical clearance for the research to begin. During my time in the field, I returned to the aforementioned adult parties and invited them to contribute their perspectives to the exploration of children's learning. Individually approaching the principle members of Year 6 teaching staff and the school Head teacher, I verbally negotiated time to conduct one-to-one interviews. I wrote to the focal children's parents/carers and asked them if they would like to meet to talk about their thoughts and ideas surrounding learning, with a particular focus on their child (Appendix 4.I). Of the eight children involved, seven parents/carers agreed and interviews were subsequently arranged through responses to the letter and via communication with their child. Towards the end of the academic year, I invited a number of additional parties to contribute their perspectives to the exploration of children's learning. I approached representatives of the School Governing Body and the Local Educational Authority. Writing a letter to the chair of the school committee (Appendix 4.J) and the Link Advisor from the LEA (Appendix 4.K), I invited both parties to attend a formal one-to-one interview. Allocating time at the start of each interview, all parties were given the opportunity to read through the consent form and ask any questions before being asked to fill it in. At the end of each interview, all adult parties were asked if they would like to read through a transcript of our interview together in

order to have the opportunity to omit any material they would prefer not to include; all but the LEA representative declined.

### ***Debriefing***

This research involved the participation of multiple parties. During my time in the field, I offered all adult participants (Head teacher; Year 6 teaching staff; parents/carers; chair of the school governing body; Link Advisor) access to the analysis and conclusions of the research in the form of a debriefing report. I also offered to give the Head teacher and Year 6 teaching staff a copy of the full thesis, but given its length, they felt that a summary would be more suitable. Five years has passed since the research was carried out; nonetheless, I intend to contact all parties involved and reinstate the offer of the debriefing report and access to the full thesis. I will also offer to provide a presentation of my research as part of an in-house teacher training day.

In the last few days of the 2001/2 academic year, I met with and talked to the focal children in two separate groups, 6E and 6B. I wanted to say goodbye and thank them for their participation in the research. I had developed close relationships with many of the children and I was grateful for the natural finish to the school year; this juncture in time would be an ending for us both at Roseberry Hill. Explaining that it would be some time before I reached the latter stages of writing up my research, I offered to send each child a copy of their story. They expressed an interest and I collected their home addresses to enable this. I had bought them each a small gift: an A5 art pad and a set of coloured pencils; items which they could use at home or/and at their secondary school. This gift was in recognition of their time, commitment and ongoing enthusiasm; qualities which I admired and felt grateful for. Several of the children asked if they could have my email address so they could stay in contact and I gladly shared it with them.

### ***Summary of ethical precautions***

- ◆ *Consent*: I obtained informed consent from the multiple parties involved in the research: the Head teacher, three core members of Year 6 staff, parents/carers, eight focal children and representatives of the School Governing Body and the Local Educational Authority.
- ◆ *Anonymity*: taking measures to disguise the identity of the focal primary school and all parties involved in the research, I have utilised pseudonyms in the write-up of my research. The location of the school is given as ‘a quiet, leafy suburb of a large city in the North West of England.’
- ◆ *Confidentiality*: it was made explicit to all participants that confidentiality could not be assured as the data gathered would be discussed in multiple fora. This included supervision sessions and written and verbal research reports.
- ◆ *The right to withdraw*: All participants signed a research contract to acknowledge that they understood their right to withdraw themselves and any data pertaining to them, from the research at any time. Beyond this initial juncture, I was committed to ongoing vigilance of their consent, particularly that of the focal children.
- ◆ *Data protection*: throughout the research endeavour all paperwork including fieldnotes has been kept in locked conditions at my home and all electronic data has been password protected. All research notes will be shredded upon completion of this project.
- ◆ *Debriefing*: all parties involved in the research have been offered access to a debriefing report and/or a copy of the full thesis.

### ***Managing emerging ethical tensions in the field***

Despite taking the above ethical precautions, I found that there were additional issues which emerged during my time in the field. Whilst this in itself was unsurprising, I did not anticipate the quantity or the complexity of the dilemmas which arose. The literature surrounding research methods often highlights that additional ethical issues are inevitable, particularly when incorporating an

ethnographic approach. However, rarely does the area receive exploration beyond a perfunctory mention. Nonetheless, the identification and management of these ethical issues has significant ramifications for the research project as a whole. Given their integral role and moreover, their potential to highlight the complexities of undertaking fieldwork, I believe that they warrant mention. Below, I discuss an ethical tension which I experienced during my time in the field, it relates to the maintenance of my relationships with colleagues in Year 6. I illuminate the decisions and actions I took in my attempts to manage the issue and find a 'workable solution.' Although the term 'workable solution' suggests a somewhat simple, quick fix to the ethical dilemmas I experienced, the reality was far removed from this. Embedded in wider personal, social and historical contexts, the tensions were highly intricate, labour-intensive and often emotionally draining. Two additional examples of managing the process of emerging ethical dilemmas can be found in Appendix 4.L.

#### *The classroom assistant as confidant*

As a full-time classroom assistant, I became a confidante to my colleagues. Often serving as a 'sounding board,' I became aware of some of the anxieties and tensions they experienced. In terms of my research, this provided insight that perhaps would not be accessible to visiting researchers. This included information relating to:

- ◆ The micro-politics of the school community
- ◆ The changing nature of the relationship between the two, Year 6 teachers
- ◆ The home lives of colleagues

It was clear through my observations that these factors, although operating external to the immediate classroom environment, served to shape the teaching and learning practices in Year 6. For example, they impacted on the attitudes, beliefs and behaviours of the teaching staff, in turn, shaping their interactions with pupils. Although the Year 6 staff had provided informed consent to participate in the study, I queried whether it was ethically moral to include such details in my work, as they were essentially, unintentional aspects of my data collection.

Crucially, the inclusion of this data served to illustrate the embedded nature of the teacher's day-to-day lives and powerfully demonstrated how this served to shape the teaching and learning processes in the classroom. However, I was apprehensive to approach those concerned and seek consent to include these details in my research. At this juncture, I had committed a lot of my time and energies into making the research happen; I had negotiated access to the school and multiple participants and I had begun my data collection. At the time, it was my belief that explicit questioning of this matter would run the risk of damaging my relationship with the teachers and jeopardise losing their participation altogether. I experienced particular difficulties with this tension whilst immersed as a member in the school community. On the one hand, I felt I had strong obligation to the people I worked alongside and I did not want to betray their trust nor upset our relationship. Whilst the teachers had an obvious right to privacy, I also considered that failure to document any of these potentially illuminating factors served to ethically compromise my research. Able to identify only two possible courses of action, I repeatedly experienced what Loftland and Loftland (1995) aptly term an 'ethical hangover', a persistent sense of guilt and unease over what is viewed as a betrayal of those involved in the study. This tension extended beyond the end of my time in the field.

Upon leaving the school context, I had time and space to engage more fully in a reflexive approach and negotiate a workable solution. It was some time before I was able to reach a compromise, which I felt, enabled me to maintain my integrity as both a colleague and researcher. I decided that rather than drawing on the specific incidents that I had learnt of, I would make use of the general themes which had arisen. For instance, how the illness of close family members had implications for the working lives of teachers: their stress levels, their energy levels, the time available for lesson preparation and administrative tasks. In making this decision, I was able to illuminate the role of wider and more immediate factors in shaping the learning experiences of children at school, whilst also adhering to the psychological contracts (both implicit and explicit) which had been drawn up with my colleagues in Year 6.

## ***Section summary***

In this section, I have draw on some of my experiences in the field to demonstrate the intricate nature of managing ethical issues, particularly those which arise in the field. I believe that others' accounts of managing emergent ethical issues has the potential to be illuminating; they can add shades of grey to the black and white picture often portrayed in research method books. This was powerfully exemplified in the work of Malin (2003), who as outlined in chapter three, talked about the dilemmas researchers can find themselves in regarding the dissemination of negative aspects which emerge from research. Such additional insight, I believe inspires confidence and reassurance in the novice researcher, who, confounded by ongoing ethical dilemmas, can be left feeling inadequately prepared and overwhelmed.

In carrying out my field research, I found that I had to be responsive to the particular complexities of people and their lives; a quality which called for sensitivity, self-determination and courage in my own actions as researcher. Whilst my dual position as a worker and researcher permitted the formation of effective working relationships with multiple parties in the field, the nature of these relations served as both an advantage and a hindrance in carrying out my fieldwork. In terms of managing ethical dilemmas, they facilitated my decisions and actions in some situations (for example, negotiating access and informed consent from gatekeepers), but made them more difficult in others (for example, notions of privacy and richness of data collection). Indeed, exploration of people's everyday lives and experiences is complex, there are no easy answers. Nonetheless, with regard to the ethical issues I experienced, particularly the emergent tensions, I believe I made decisions and took actions which maintained the integrity of both those involved and the research project itself.

It is apparent that ethical issues are an integral aspect of any research endeavour, demanding attention from a project's inception and emerging throughout. Even if one is an experienced researcher, it is not possible to foresee every eventuality that may occur in the field. Rather, the researcher must be ever vigilant

throughout. Reflecting on my experiences in the field, I would argue that workable solutions are often bound up in the intricacies of relationships and situations. As such, this calls for sensitivity on the part of the researcher in making decision and taking actions.

## **Collecting data**

As previously outlined, this research utilised a qualitative ethnographic methodology. Inherent to this approach is the incorporation of triangulation or multi-method use. In essence, every research method illuminates only a partial aspect of a much larger picture. The use of additional methods can thus permit a greater proportion of this picture to be captured. In moving the spotlight and bringing different phenomenon into the foreground, the researcher is able to access rich data in the form of multiple views and foci (Tobbell 2006). My overarching goal was to gain an understanding of the intricate web of relationships and environmental influences shaping children's learning. In order to ascertain the particularities of each child's nested world, the perspectives of the child him/herself alongside those of multiple core stakeholders were sought. Specifically: parents/carers, Year 6 teaching staff, the Head teacher, representatives of the school governing body and the Local Educational Authority. To facilitate the collection of this diverse material, I chose to employ the following methods and data sources:

- ◆ Ecomaps
- ◆ Participant observation
- ◆ Interviews
- ◆ Conversation
- ◆ Diaries
- ◆ Document analysis

From the outset each method was employed to address specific research aims (see table 4.1).

**Table 4.1:** Marrying data collection methods with research aims

Research method	Research aims addressed
Ecomaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ To explore the role of micro- and meso- systems on learning</li> <li>◆ To explore the role of exo- and macro- systems on learning</li> <li>◆ To develop a range of methodologies appropriate to the multi-level theoretical framework</li> </ul>
Participant observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ To examine children’s intra-psychological learning relationship</li> <li>◆ To explore the role of micro- and meso- systems on learning</li> <li>◆ To explore the interrelationships of the micro- and meso- processes in view of exo- and macro- systems</li> <li>◆ To develop a range of methodologies appropriate to the multi-level theoretical framework</li> </ul>
Interviews and conversations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ To examine children’s intra-psychological learning relationship</li> <li>◆ To explore the role of micro- and meso- systems on learning</li> <li>◆ To explore the interrelationships of the micro- and meso- processes in view of exo- and macro- systems</li> <li>◆ To develop a range of methodologies appropriate to the multi-level theoretical framework</li> </ul>
Research diaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ To examine children’s intra-psychological learning relationship</li> <li>◆ To explore the role of micro- and meso- systems on learning</li> <li>◆ To develop a range of methodologies appropriate to the multi-level theoretical framework</li> </ul>
Document analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ To explore the role of micro- and meso- systems on learning</li> <li>◆ To explore the role of exo- and macro- systems on learning</li> <li>◆ To develop a range of methodologies appropriate to the multi-level theoretical framework</li> </ul>

In combination, the contents of this ‘toolkit’ complemented each other well, with the shortcomings of one method compensated for by the strengths of another. For example, observational data represented a principle method of my data collection.

However, this in itself was limited, as 'observation does not give direct access to others' behaviours and actions. Unless we ask those people we have observed what they experienced, we cannot comment on their experiencing.' (Goodley et al 2002: 12). To address this gap in my data, I incorporated the use of conversation, interviews and dairies. In unison, the chosen array of tools enabled me to shift the focus of data collection and gain access to the views held by different parties. Immersed in the school community for the duration of the academic year, data collection took place over the spring and summer terms. Whilst the majority of the methods and sources listed above were specified within my research proposal, there were two additional methods of data collection employed which emerged in response to my experiences in the field: diaries and conversations. I now go on to discuss my use of each method, reflecting on its effectiveness in the generation and collection of data.

### *Ecomaps*

An ecomap is a diagrammatic representation of the network of significant people in a child's life. The child is placed at the centre of the diagram and then each person that forms part of his/her network is named and placed within a circle; these may include family, friends and professionals. Used in this way, the ecomap enabled the collection of microsystem data and served as a vehicle to identify each child's web of pertinent relationships. In addition to this, I decided to adapt the ecomap slightly and also collect data pertaining to the wider systems comprising the child's nested world. The use of this method enabled me to gather information pertaining to the child's family group and primary carers (microsystem); their friendship groups (microsystem and mesosystem); any teams and activities they were involved in on a regular basis within and outside the school community (microsystem, mesosystem); and the nature of their parents/carers employment (exosystem). All of the focal children's ecomaps are presented in Appendix 4.M.

This task was completed with each focal child on a one-to-one basis. Space issues within the primary school frequently prohibited research tasks to be

conducted in a private location. The staff room was a difficult space to access exclusively as it was often in demand by fellow staff. Consequently, the majority of activities took place on the stairwell between the two Year 6 classrooms; this was not ideal. It meant audio-recording was impossible as there was background noise and ongoing interruptions from fellow Year 6 pupils who were curious as to what we were doing. These circumstances will have impacted upon the quality of the data collected, affecting the children's disclosures and the flow of our conversation. Moreover, whilst I endeavoured to give the children space to construct the diagram themselves, time limitations often meant it was co-constructed, with both the child and myself writing down information. Nonetheless, the time and space provided in the completion of this task, allowed for the ongoing development of an effective working relationship between researcher and researchee. The children enjoyed participating in the construction of their ecomap and were enthusiastic about sharing their perception of their lives.

As a starting point, the ecomaps were very useful in obtaining an overview of the everyday lives which the focal children led. The original version enabled me to ascertain the web of people comprising the child's more immediate world, whilst the adaptations permitted insight into some of the more distal and environmental factors in play which served to shape the child's day-to-day lives. The ecomaps provided insightful leads which I could subsequently follow up, through the use of alternative research methods.

#### *Unstructured participant observation*

As a researcher, I was totally immersed in the school and Year 6 communities. I had a recognised role in the school and was considered by all parties present as a member of staff. Through my role as Year 6 classroom assistant, I collected observational data in the form of field and head notes; switching between the two in response to the particularities of the people I worked alongside and the situation I was in. My dual role allowed me to observe focal children and teachers throughout the school day. I made the decision to observe both parties during

registration periods, lessons and school trips. In addition to this, I was able to observe teachers at the start and end of the day and during break times.

In composing my fieldnotes, I sought to record all that I observed in the Year 6 classrooms (for example, interactions between children, peers and teaching staff; teaching and learning behaviours) and in addition, those events in the wider school which affected parties in Year 6 (for example, the cause and aftermath of pupils being reprimanded during assembly, break or lunchtimes). All phenomena which involved the focal children formed the bulk of my daily notes; whilst that which pertained to the micro-politics of the school community and the relations between teaching staff was recorded in a separate research diary. The former fieldnotes were on the whole behaviour driven, but they did contain reference to conversations and interactions which I either overheard or was involved in. For example, in observing lessons in the classroom, I would record: the structure of the lesson, the number of times a pupil contributed to whole class teacher-led periods, the extent and nature of his/her interactions in group work, the child's focus during independent tasks and the extent to which s/he sought assistance and from whom.

Alongside taking down the behaviours of children and teaching staff in the classroom, I also tended to record my interpretations. For example, in observing a child during whole-class teaching sessions, I might record: 'child swinging on chair, talking with fellow pupils on their colour table, playing with pens and pencils, looking out of the window' and my subjective interpretation may state 'child seems distracted, disinterested, bored or confused.' As a classroom assistant working with the children and teaching staff for a prolonged period, I had learnt to interpret their behaviours and take actions to address them if required. For example, in response to the above behaviours of a child, I would as a classroom assistant, be expected to focus the child back on task. Placing pressure on the back on the chair to ensure all four legs were on the floor, I would remind the child how dangerous it was to swing on two legs of a chair. Taking the pens and pencils out of his/her hands, I would ask if s/he was listening to the teacher and understood what she was saying.

Initially, as I attempted to strike a balance between the demands of my dual roles, I found myself making quick notes on scraps of paper, relying heavily on the use of key words to spark off my headnotes. However, it became apparent early on that there were flaws in this method; at times my memory failed me and as such, details were often lacking. It became clear that I needed to develop and establish some sort of structure to facilitate my note-taking. Accordingly, at the start of each lesson, I decided to divide a sheet of paper up into six sections (see figure 4.1).

**Figure 4.1:** Recording notes in the field: classroom observations

<b>Year 6 class</b> <b>Teaching staff present</b> <b>Subject domain and topic</b> <b>Structure of lesson</b> <b>Role assigned (if any)</b> <b>Time</b> <b>Date</b>	
<b>Pupil's name</b>	<b>Pupil's name</b>
<b>Pupil's name</b>	<b>Pupil's name</b>
<b>Additional comments</b>	

Not only did this provide at a quick glance, a summary of the notes which I had made in relation to each focal child, but also ensured I recorded key contextual factors. Over time, I did develop my own form of short-hand in recording my observations and this meant that I could take down notes on the spot more regularly. Nonetheless, I remained reliant on headnotes in some situations. With time, the key word method became increasingly effective and I also chose to

record direct quotes from children and teachers to aid memory and provide further insight. I ensured the morning sessions' fieldnotes were written up by lunchtime each day and I completed the afternoon session's notes on my return home. In that my 'in situ' notes were often messy (and at times illegible) I decided to type up my fieldnotes on a daily basis. Memory permitting, I would elaborate on my initial observations as I recorded them on the computer. I chose to discard the original scrappy pieces of paper which I had recorded my fieldnotes on as they were often nonsensical on subsequent reading!

As a consequence of my physical and emotional immersion in the Year 6 community, I also recorded the feelings and reactions to what was going on around me. However, I did try and keep these to a minimum in my fieldnotes and make them more a feature of the research diary which I kept. With a focus on teachers' behaviours and interactions, the observational notes recorded in my research diary were frequently combined with conversational material. They often referred to tensions experienced by Mrs Eastwood and Mrs Brookes, for example, occurrences in their home lives or disputes at school. I also used the diary to record any tensions and thoughts I experienced in my dual role. I did not write routinely in this diary each day, but as issues arose and time permitted (see figure 4.2 for an extract from this diary).

In this section, I have attempted to outline my use of participant observation and the format which my fieldnotes took; both in my daily log of observations and my research diary. In doing so, I have reflected on the decisions and actions I took as a researcher. Unable to record all phenomena during my time in the field, I became increasingly aware that my biases and assumptions dictated the phenomena I chose to observe and record and in addition, the subsequent sense I made of it. As a classroom assistant, I was involved in activities and tasks alongside the children and teaching staff and as such, I influenced what occurred on an ongoing basis. Several years on, the description conveyed in my fieldnotes still enables me to transport myself back into the classroom and wider school community. I can remember some events more clearly than others, but my vivid recollections tend to be those instances in which I experienced emotional

reactions. My understanding and affective responses to these situations have changed, with the intensity of my feelings fading over time. However, several occurrences still manage to provoke strong reactions in me, particularly if on reflection, I felt I could have done more to support those parties involved.

**Figure 4.2:** Extract from my research diary

28/02/02

Sophie told me she was staying in Year 6 next year – she found out this morning. This was a huge tension just before Christmas. Gillian had mentioned that she would like to move to another year group at the beginning of the next school year; Sophie had never commented. Gillian asked Kathryn and Sophie followed, asking the very next day, claiming ignorance over Gillian's wishes. Gillian was vexed because politically, Sophie received first choice as she had worked in Year 6 longer. Therefore, she got to move first if she chose to. Gillian informed me of the choice given to Sophie by the Head teacher: she could go to Year 5 and work with Mr Tate or stay in Year 6 with Gillian; Sophie had chosen the latter. Basically, Sophie had said she didn't want to work with three specific members of staff and this translated as no Year 4 or Year 5. Gillian was told by Kathryn to 'bear the cross.' She would have to stay in Year 6 because she was management and according to Gillian, because she has been given no choice. Sophie will have first choice again next school year. Gillian is very distressed and annoyed by it all; she commented 'I can't carry on doing what I am.' She looked exhausted. I attempted to empathise with her situation, stating 'mm, it is very stressful.' Gillian reported that she had felt the need to say something to Sophie: 'If you stay in Year 6, will your mind be on the work? As it hasn't been lately.' Gillian said Sophie got all worked up and said 'My mind hasn't been on anything lately.' She volunteered this information on the way to the CCC, obviously she needed to talk about it.

### *Interviews and conversations*

The rationale for my use of interviewing was to gain further understanding of participants' lived realities. Indeed, the material I ascertained added to that collected through the use of participant observation and ecomaps. As pointed out by Harden, Scott, Backett-Milburn and Jackson (2000), 'Interviews can offer unique insights into the experience of respondents, allowing them to describe and explain their own social worlds' (page 2). I carried out formal semi-structured interviews

with all adult parties (Head teacher, teaching staff, parents/carers, chair of the school governing body and LEA Link Advisor). Drawing on the use of topic areas as a cue for discussion (see Appendix 4.N), I provided an overarching framework for the interview. However, I was keen to allow participants to talk freely about the prescribed areas and give them the opportunity to discuss any further matters of interest and relevance. To facilitate an open and honest discussion, the interviews were carried out on a one-to-one basis. Without the presence and input of additional interviewees, it was hoped the focal participant would feel empowered to talk more freely about their experiences and feelings. All participants chose the venue for the interview. The majority of the interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. In those situations where tape recording wasn't appropriate, I took down notes which were subsequently typed up when the earliest opportunity arose.

At the outset, I also sought to employ semi-structured interviews with the children, but this proved to be an untenable approach. Rather, much of the data collected in relation to the children was a result of daily conversations; specifically, when the children chose to 'chat' with me in the classroom, on school trips or when undertaking research activities. This was an unforeseen set of circumstances, highlighting that power does not only reside with the adult researcher but also the child as a participant. As noted by Graue and Walsh (1998: 56): 'In research with children, children are the knowledge holders, the permission granters, and the rule setters - for adults.' Conversations take on a different status to interviews in that they tend to be causal and unplanned encounters, somewhat less purposeful than an interview (Tobbell 2006). Working alongside the children for the duration of the academic year, I clearly did not record every conversation we had. Rather, I made notes of those conversations which seemed to be relevant, details of which were dependent on my recall of the events. I always sought to take down verbatim quotes at the earliest opportunity in order to aid my memory and facilitate the richness of my fieldnotes which I would type up each day.

Opportunities for dedicated research time were limited as both the children's and my own daily timetable were crowded. At the start of my data collection period, I began to use morning assembly time as an opportunity to undertake research

activities. Picking up on the gap in the timetable, the teachers saw this as a window of opportunity for small group work. The research stopped and in its place, I did group reading every morning, working alternate days with children in each class. Reflecting on my confined opportunities to spend one-to-one time with the research children, I took advantage of the weekly school trips to the local city computer centre and often arranged for focal children to walk near the front of the line with me. This proved a fortuitous move. Not only were the children keen to take up the responsibility of leading the class but they were also enthusiastic to chat. Conversations were unstructured and free flowing, covering various topics: friends, family, activities inside and outside school, class gossip and their move to secondary school. Through not limiting the field of inquiry through specific questioning, I found their talk highly illuminating in terms of their interests, hopes, fears and development, both social and academic. Clearly, the nature of the relationship I had developed with the children shaped the extent to which they were willing to share with me, their perceptions, experiences and feelings.

Conversations were also a primary source of data in my interactions with teaching staff. Again, immersed in the school community for the entirety of the academic year, I did not record every conversation I had but rather, selected relevant ones. For example, I was keen to note down in my research diary conversations which reflected the embedded nature of the teacher's work practices as these were most illuminating in terms of my research. This included discussion of: events in the teacher's home lives, relations with school colleagues and the micro-politics of the school community. As outlined earlier, the inclusion of these details in my research data and the idea of their subsequent dissemination in my publications, proved to be a principle ethical dilemma which I experienced. However, mindful that I could always choose to disregard them in the end, I ensured I made notes of these events as they arose. By taking this course of action, I left my options open and through engaging in ongoing reflexivity, was able to find a workable solution which I believed upheld the integrity of all parties concerned.

## *Diaries*

During the research process the children were asked to keep two diaries which sought to gain additional insight into their lived experiences. The first was designed to complement the data revealed through the construction of each child's ecomap. The diary was entitled 'A week in the life of ...' and was for the children to write a short summary of the activities they engaged in and with whom in that given week (Appendix 4.O). This task was given to seven of the eight children as one focal child, Daniel, was off school for the duration of the task. The majority of focal children did spend approximately five minutes a day recording their activities, in turn providing an overview of the typical things they might do during the week. A couple of children forgot to complete the diary and struggled to recall the activities they had been involved in. Nevertheless, they decided to write brief comments under each day of the week before giving it back to me. Overall, I felt the use of this diary was an effective technique for collecting data, the material ascertained both confirmed and elaborated on some of the details found through the ecomap method.

The second booklet was entitled 'Research diary' and was designed for the children to record any thoughts and feelings they experienced as a consequence of taking part in the research (Appendices 4.P). This diary was under the children's safekeeping for the duration of the research process and it was made clear that it was their choice to record in it. I thought that providing them with some form of responsibility would serve to empower them. Unfortunately, as I reviewed the diaries sporadically throughout my time in the field, I found that the children chose to write very little in it. Indeed, there were very few comments other than the task I had initiated when the diaries were first handed out. In this task, I had asked the children to note down their feelings about being asked to participate in the research; this was a means to gain further clarity on notions of informed consent as discussed earlier in this chapter. When I collected this diary in at the end of the school year, only three children still had them. The others had been lost, misplaced or thrown away with the other Year 6 stuff no longer deemed important! It may be suggested that the success of the initial diary was due to: the shorter

duration of the research exercise, my daily prompts to complete the diary entries and the concrete expectations of the research task. The second diary required greater self-reliance and self-motivation skills and moreover, requested the children to engage in self-reflection, the abstract nature of which, was perhaps unfamiliar or uncomfortable to them.

### *Document analysis*

Whilst there are some exceptions, the methods of data collection outlined above tend to focus the spotlight on those factors operating in the child's more immediate environment; that is, his/her micro- and meso- systems. To gain an understanding of the wider picture, I needed to access additional insight into the more distal factors which mediated the lived experiences of children and teachers in Year 6. To achieve this, I chose to review a range of documents. With a focus on the classroom and wider school community contexts, I collected copies of handouts given out in lessons and written communication going home to parents and carers (including the weekly newsletter and formal letters) where available. The sample collected is representative of the documents which shaped the children's day-to-day experiences at school. I also made photocopies of home-school agreement booklets, pupil reports, SATs papers and examples of the children's work, making a note of the written comments received each time their work was marked.

### **Leaving Roseberry Hill and returning to the academic field**

No longer immersed in the field, I was with time and space able to identify a principle gap in my research data. I became increasingly aware that the strengths of my data lay in the exploration of factors operating the child's more immediate contexts. Moreover, this was mirrored in my use of theory, specifically the integration of Vygotsky's ZPD concept. Illuminating only part of the bioecological theory which I had set out to investigate, it was imperative that I address the paucity of material concerning the role of the wider nested systems in mediating

children learning experiences. Transferring from a MPhil on to a PhD, this became the focus of my research, where I undertook further data collection and integrated additional theoretical perspectives to explore the role of distal and environmental factors.

In terms of data collection, I found the influence of factors in the exo- and macro-systems more difficult to identify. However, I had already located the role of local and central government policy as a pertinent concern; as such, I chose to direct my energies in the exploration of their effects. I tenaciously pursued an interview with the LEA representative working in conjunction with Roseberry Hill. Whilst working at the school I had not managed to secure an opportunity to talk to the Link Advisor, however, her perspective was a crucial aspect of the wider picture I sought. With persistent efforts, I managed to enlist her participation as an interviewee the following academic year. To explore the values and practices of Central Government, I looked at government policy and initiatives. I gave particular consideration to the NC and NLNS as frameworks for both schools and teachers to work within. I also gained access to more formal documents regarding Roseberry Hill via the web, specifically, the most recent Ofsted report, pupils' ongoing SATs performance and the school's position in the league tables.

I was also keen to identify or generate a theoretical framework for holistically understanding children's day-to-day learning experiences. It seemed clear that the two theoretical lenses I had utilised to underpin my initial research aims, failed to fully capture and elucidate the intricate web of children's learning. It fell short on two levels: exploration of more distal influences and the child's own agentic qualities. Whilst Bronfenbrenner and Vygotsky recognised the role of both factors in shaping developmental experiences, sufficient insight into their workings fell beyond the scope of their work. I returned to the literature, hopeful to find additional theoretical lenses to elucidate the role and strength of inner and external factors in shaping children's learning experiences. The process of identifying and incorporating these additional perspectives is outlined in the preface. Whilst a theoretical framework for understanding children's quotidian experiences was

useful, I also wanted to use this insight to propose actions for the management of learning, specifically targeting educational policy and practice.

Building on my MPhil study and transferring on to a PhD, the aims of my research thus became:

- ◆ *To examine children's intra-psychological learning relationship*
- ◆ *To explore the role of micro-, meso-, exo- and macro- systems on learning*
- ◆ *To explore the interrelationships of the micro- and meso- processes in view of exo- and macro- systems*
- ◆ *To explore whether the literature available is applicable and helpful in understanding the themes arising from this research*
- ◆ *To develop a range of methodologies appropriate to the multi-level theoretical framework*
- ◆ *To identify or generate a theoretical framework for understanding children's day-to-day learning experiences*
- ◆ *To inform practice and policy in relation to the teaching and learning relationship*

## **Chapter summary**

In this chapter, I have guided you through the decisions and actions I took during the collection and recording of my data. In unpacking my research journey, I have also included a number of personal dilemmas as a means to illuminate the highly intricate and emotive nature of carrying out research. It is clear that in managing these complexities, the research process becomes highly idiosyncratic. In the following chapter, I look at the final stages of my research journey, detailing the rationale and method of my analyses before presenting my research data in the form of eight, learning stories.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### ANALYSIS

In this chapter, I will provide an analysis of the field data I amassed during my time at Roseberry Hill, seeking to re-present the quotidian lives and experiences of the eight, Year 6 focal children. To achieve this, I utilise storytelling as my interpretative and analytical tool. Rather than providing a mere descriptive summary of each child's learning journey, psychological theory is integrated in an attempt to provide readers with a framework for understanding the complexity of the learning and development process. In doing so, each child's story serves as a vehicle to illuminate the embedded nature of development per se and explores the multiplicity of factors in play, both immediate and more distal, which shape children's learning experiences. The wider questions and themes regarding educational policy and practice which emerge from these stories are addressed in the following chapter. The focus here is the child's lived world, with Roseberry Hill primary school positioned as the central shared setting. I begin this chapter by deconstructing the method and process of analysis which I have adopted. In an attempt to embrace the subjectivity of the research process, I have peppered throughout, some of the personal thoughts and feelings which I experienced.

#### **Seeking to illuminate the complexity of the learning process**

In chapter one, I employed the broad distinctions of Talbert and McLaughlin's (1999) framework to explore the more distal and immediate settings which shape children's day-to-day experiences in Year 6. Giving prominence to the existence of school on a macro-level, I looked at the organisation of schooling in an attempt to make visible the core educational values and norms which dictate children's learning journeys. Building upon this macro landscape, I gave consideration to the existence of school as part of the wider English education system controlled by

Central Government. I highlighted that a review of policy enabled the reader to gain an appreciation of the underpinning structure of the teaching and learning process in primary schools nationwide. Specifically s/he is able to gain an understanding of Year 6 curriculum content, structure and delivery. Finally, I looked at the school as a community in its own right and focused on the micro experiences and perspectives of the participants therein. Through accessing the voice of pupils and teaching staff, the more intricate aspects of life for both parties in Year 6 came to the fore.

Of use here, is the stratified ontology of critical realism, which I previously outlined in chapter two. To reiterate, an underpinning premise of this philosophical position is the complexity of social reality. Crucially, it is thought that the material presence of the social and natural world exists outside our knowledge of it. As a means of accounting for this complexity, a three world level ontology is proposed: the empirical, the actual and the real (Sayer 2000). The *empirical* is defined as the domain of experience and pertains to those events which we observe. The *actual* refers to that which that happens that we do not experience. For example, there are infinite events in the world which we have no experiential knowledge of as yet, and perhaps will never know. The *real* consists of underlying processes, structures, powers and causal mechanisms which result in tendencies to generate particular effects. Principally, these are postulated or inferred through scientific practice and theory. For example, researchers often strive to identify the underpinning causal mechanisms that produce recurrent patterns of events. In unison, these stratified layers offer the researcher valuable tools to understand the plethora of occurrences and relations amongst them which are in operation. They permit a place for the subjective experiences of teacher and pupils (proximal processes in the microsystem), the existence and effects of unobserved phenomena (factors operating in the mesosystem and exosystem) and moreover, demonstrate the deeper structures and relations that lie behind these aspects of reality (forces operating in the macrosystem).

It is this complexity of social reality which I seek to capture in the analysis of my research data. Only through giving consideration to this multi-level understanding

of learning and development can the stated aims of this research be addressed. Through shining the spotlight on the individual child and his/her ever-changing nested world, an alternative understanding of the learning process emerges, one which renders it more complex than that currently portrayed by the English education system. As I argued earlier, learning is widely characterised as the unproblematic, unidirectional delivery of knowledge and skills from teacher to pupil, with success or otherwise in education is attributed to the individual pupil or teacher. But in acknowledging the true complexity of the learning process, it becomes a wider embedded phenomenon, one which is distributed across agent, activity and world. Pupils' and teachers' lived experiences provide us with critical insight into the intricacies of the teaching and learning relationship and serve to challenge the over simplistic, yet dominant view, which permeates schooling practices today. This insight is invaluable in terms of informing educational practice and policy and it is thus crucial that the form which my analyses takes 'gives voice' to the reality of the participants involved in the learning process.

### **Refashioning the fieldwork experience: communicating with the reader**

Having spent two school terms undertaking ethnographic research at Roseberry Hill, I had, amassed a huge quantity of data: field notes, interviews, diary entries, ecomaps, documents etc. Confronted with this vast amount of information, the final stages of the research process beckoned: the analyses of my data and the composition of a polished ethnographic account. I needed to find a way to represent my year long fieldwork experience, translating what I had learnt into an accessible ethnographic account which essentially communicated my insight and understanding to the reader. The sheer quantity and complexity of the notes I had gathered evoked feelings of being overwhelmed. A sea of questions haunted me from the outset, several unrelenting throughout the entire endeavour: Which qualitative method of analysis should I use to decode my experiences in the field? What method is the most suitable means of recoding this experience for the reader? Will my chosen method enable the richness of my data to be communicated to my audience? Am I able to compose an account that will

adequately capture the complexity of those lives I have made a commitment to portray? In order to make meaningful sense of my amassed fieldnotes, I needed to transform it into a particular format which would lend itself to analysis. There are infinite methods of analyses which could be applied to the mass of data I collected; each illuminating varied phenomenon and as such, drawing different conclusions and recommendations for wider policy and practice. Ultimately however, my concern was to meet my research aims and remain true to the ontological and epistemological beliefs which underpin my work as a researcher.

As stated previously, the research aims are structured by an ecological approach to children's learning, an approach which fundamentally marries with my ontological and epistemological position as a researcher. As outlined in chapter two, I argue that development is an ontological imperative of being human; it remains the overarching goal of our existence across time and space. This process is not individual but distributed over people and systems. Epistemologically, I recognise that the process by which we as humans come to understand and construct that which goes on around us is not simple, but critical and representative of our experiences. Whilst it may be that certain truths, events, mechanisms and tendencies exist regardless of our interpretation of them, I believe a person's subjective experience of these phenomena impact fundamentally on his/her life. For example, whilst the primary school careers of many children in England start at the age of five and end approximately age eleven, their experience of schooling is not uniform. This is the case despite the fact that they proceed up through the years in the same class and as such, receive instruction from the same teachers. It is through giving prominence to the role of subjective experience that the development and learning journey can most readily be recognised as unique to each individual. In light of this, it follows that my experiences in the field are decoded and recoded using the ecological approach. Specifically, I draw on the nested levels comprising Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model to reorder, select and shape my data. This transformation of the data is further aided by the four additional theoretical perspectives that I have chosen to embed within Bronfenbrenner's core framework. These perspectives essentially provide a means of exploring the intricacies of factors operating within the developing

individual and his/her multi-level environment. In unison, they serve as a powerful theoretical blueprint for understanding a child's developmental journey, offering an explanation for learning on all levels: the wider conditions that surround learning, the intricate mechanisms of the learning process itself and the role of the learner. Proposing a multi-layered understanding of the learning process, this series of analytical lenses are an effective means to communicate the richness of my data to the reader.

### **Portraying lives: description and analysis through storytelling**

Over recent years, narrative inquiry has gained in popularity as a research tool and is increasingly being drawn on in the fields of education and the social sciences (Ollerenshaw and Creswell 2002). For example, researchers have utilised life histories (Goodson and Sikes 2001), descriptive biographies (Pollard and Filer 1999) and fictional writings (Clough 1999; 2002) as a means to portray the lived experiences of diverse people. Whilst there remains a diversity of opinion amongst practitioners surrounding the purpose, interpretation and presentation of narrative, a unifying thread is the prominence given to personal experiences (Tovey and Manson 2004). In the educational field, a focus on the subjectivities of learners, teachers and researchers enables each party to adopt the role of storyteller and character in the construction and reconstruction of their own and others' stories (Connelly and Clandinin 1990). In this sense, storied narratives enable us to make sense of our experiences and those of others, over the course of time and in response to particular circumstances.

Nonetheless, two principle contentions in the use of storytelling as an interpretive and analytical tool remain. The first stems from 'The 'truth' of narratives, the authenticity of accounts and whether narratives risk privileging what the self has to say, as reality' (Tovey and Manson 2004: 230). In view of the stratified ontology proposed by critical realists, the empirical domain of experience and self-understanding is indeed an aspect of reality and, as such, can justifiably be drawn upon. As pointed out by Bochner (2001), for the most part 'We are not scientists

seeking laws that govern our behavior; we are storytellers seeking meanings that help us cope with our circumstances' (page 154). He draws on the work of Freeman (1998) and states that 'Narrative is true to experience in the sense that experience presents itself in a poetic dimensionality saturated with the possibilities of meaning, however perishable, momentary, and contingent' (page 154). A second conflict of ideas pertains to the structure and composition of story narratives. Some researchers adopt a more traditional, rigorous form of analysis. This may involve the application of recognized procedures such as the coding of words and sentences within narrative accounts, scrutiny of which enables the construction of theory. Other researchers adopt a more descriptive representation of data; they acknowledge that a snapshot of lived reality can only ever be captured and value the subjective lens of storied accounts. In giving consideration to these areas of contention, it is apparent that the use of narratives is complex, multifarious and fluid (Tovey and Manson 2004). As ever, the differing philosophical position of the particular researcher(s) involved, underpin the meaning, purpose and use of storied narratives in research.

In adopting a narrative approach, Bochner (2001) believes the researcher 'Moves away from a singular, monolithic conception... toward a pluralism that promotes multiple forms of representation and research; away from facts and toward meanings; away from master narratives and toward local stories; away from idolizing categorical thought and abstracted theory and toward embracing the values of irony, emotionality, and activism; away from assuming the stance of the disinterested spectator and toward assuming the posture of a feeling, embodied, and vulnerable observer; away from writing essays and toward telling stories' (134-5). In embracing this viewpoint, I would argue that there is no blanket narrative that applies to the learning journey of all Year 6 children; rather, their experiences are unique to them. To capture the diverse and complex nature of the focal children's quotidian lives and experiences, I use storytelling as my interpretative and analytical tool. This approach allows me to act both as storyteller, detailing for the reader the necessary description of characters and events at Roseberry Hill and story analyst, providing a framework for understanding the complexity of learning through the use of theory. I chose to integrate theory into the stories as I

felt it was important for the reader to ascertain how the multi-theoretical framework could explicitly be used to explain everyday events. Moreover, in my literature search, I had identified two works which had been inspiring in terms of communicating information via descriptive stories; specifically, Etienne Wenger's (1998) portrayal of Ariel's experiences as a claims processor and Wendy Wallace's (2005) observations of life in an inner city primary school. However, as a reader I felt the use of theory within these stories would have been further illuminating. Given its elucidatory power, I thus use the theoretical blueprint discussed previously, to underpin each focal child's story. Upon this, I plot the specific details which relate to each child, drawing on a fund of real life examples to highlight the individuality and intricacies of his/her life. In adopting this approach, theory and practice thus become inextricably linked.

### **Composing the story narratives**

As repeatedly emphasised, the researcher's philosophical position underpins all stages of the research process, including that of data analyses. As such, the narratives presented here do not serve as mere simple stories; rather, their construction reflects as ever, my particular beliefs and actions as researcher and storyteller. Each story is the product of my chosen methodological approach (ethnography) and my chosen mode of research production (participatory); an approach permitted through my dual role as researcher and classroom assistant at Roseberry Hill. The details which comprise each story are the product of my immersion in the Year 6 community. Thus, whilst the focus is on those events and activities which shape the experiences of a particular child, the embedded nature of his/her learning inevitably means that other characters enter the fray. Specifically, I was able to access the perspectives of multiple stakeholders (teachers, parents/carers, Head teacher, school governing body representative, LEA representative). Although the first hand accounts of these parties permeate the stories presented, it is ultimately my voice as researcher and storyteller which dominates.

As the composition of each story is founded on my ownership of the data collection and my narrative construction, issues regarding the representation of 'voice' are inevitably raised. One may question the authority of the stories in representing the learning experiences of the focal children. After all, it is important to emphasise that the parties involved in the research had no hand in writing the stories themselves; rather, they constitute my interpretation of selected events, anecdotes and conversational exchanges which took place during my time in the field. In constructing the children's stories, I not only draw on their words and actions, but also integrate those of other stakeholders. Moreover, I use theory to interpret and comment upon the children's learning and development throughout the academic year. Indeed, given that both the children and teachers involved in the research are unlikely to be familiar with the theoretical perspectives used to interpret their stories, they would perhaps find it difficult to relate to the interpretative accounts of their experiences which I present here. Going beyond this juncture, I also draw on examples from the eight stories to comment and theorise about the wider implications for children's learning and development. In this respect, it is reasonable to question my authority on three issues: In using story narratives, what authority do I have to represent and analyse the children's experiences? What authority do I have in identifying the ramifications of the research for children's wider learning? What authority do I have to use the research to suggest changes to current educational policy and practice?

In adopting a truly participatory ethnographic approach to my research, I believe my authority in accessing the experiences of the children and teachers stems from my immersion in the school and classroom communities. Positioned as an 'insider' I shared the day-to-day lives of pupils and teaching colleagues for the extended period of one academic year. As a core member of the Year 6 community I became privy to the intricacies of life at school. With knowledge and understanding of the children's lives, I was motivated to bring the children's stories centre stage. However, I was also aware that the children had limited awareness of the complexity of their learning. To compensate for this, I drew on the perspectives of multiple stakeholders, both immediate and distant to the child, in an attempt to embrace the embedded nature of learning. Used in this way, 'Narrative

supports a view of educational knowledge less as stable and unchanging, but rather as one of critiquing the stories we hear and tell, not then making our knowledge less trustworthy, but inviting review and revisiting in the light of new perspectives as we attempt to be 'truthful' in the light of our evidence. Narrative can point up how all empirical evidence is partial, but that nonetheless through partial stories larger moral truths can be told' (Walker and Unterhalter 2004: 283-4). In adopting a wider view of the learning process, I was able to identify some of the factors operating in the children's nested worlds which served to shape their developmental experiences. With experience in the field as a classroom assistant and researcher, I have a heightened sense of awareness regarding the practical application of policy and how it plays out in practice. It is apparent that there is a discrepancy between theory (government policy) and practice and my dual role empowers me to propose feasible changes to bridge this gap.

In utilising a participatory ethnographic approach, I seek 'To make use of a collection of narratives that allow some insight into the specific and localised life worlds or discursive spaces and material conditions of a small number of people' (Goodley 2004: 59). This ethnographic stance encourages me, as both researcher and storyteller, to try and capture the children's quotidian experiences in meaningful and accountable ways. In this sense, the narrative approach 'Involves research practices in which subjectivity and experience are acknowledged, celebrated and recognized to be powerful and compelling' (Walker and Unterhalter 2004: 283).

Throughout my thesis, I have repeatedly called for an acknowledgement of the subjectivity inherent in all stages of the research process. It might seem somewhat unusual then, that I have chosen to write up my role in the stories in third-person ('Helen') rather than first-person ('I'). As pointed out by Tierney (2002), the avoidance of employing the first person can be viewed as a hallmark of positivist texts. Clearly, the use of the first-person would seem to represent a more honest approach in embracing my role as storyteller of the text, so why have I chosen not to adopt the current dominant narrative method? Whilst it is apparent in the qualitative field that there has been a move towards explicitly locating the author in

narrative texts, there is danger of merely following suit without question because it has become the norm. Indeed, discussing the guiding principles of the qualitative approach, Tierney states 'Just as one ought not generalize about one's research findings, one also ought not assume that one kind of writing is acceptable' (Id. at 385).

Amidst the move by qualitative researchers to write texts which use the active voice and first person in an attempt to capture a more dramatic replay of events, Tierney is calling for a balance. He acknowledges the need for authors to extend the narrative strategies employed so that 'Texts are built more in relation to fiction and storytelling, rather than in response to the norms of science and logical empiricism' (ibid.). However, he also notes that in reviewing ethnographic texts which makes use of the first-person, it is apparent that they can often result in the author taking centre stage. Positioned as the principle character, the story becomes more about the author than the focal people involved in the study; a situation I was to keen avoid. In turn, Tierney urges qualitative researchers '...to maintain a central concern for agency, praxis, and the Other, rather than only focusing on a cathartic I-centric agency of the self' (page 385). It is in moving beyond the I-centric agency that Tierney believes that researchers can '...participate in creating worlds that are more equitable and just' (page 397). In view of the above points, it is my understanding that I need to acknowledge within the stories, my multifaceted presence as classroom assistant, researcher and storyteller but crucially, not focus on my role. Immersed in the Year 6 community, I was clearly one of the central characters in the children's school lives. Nonetheless, the overarching aim of the eight stories is to represent the focal children's experiences and in this respect it is they who should be in the foreground. By referring to myself as Helen, rather than I, I believe that this is achieved.

## Writing the stories

Before presenting each of the children's stories, I set the scene, introducing Roseberry Hill primary school as the shared central setting and listing the focal characters involved. I situate the school geographically, physically and socially, providing the reader with a necessary backdrop in which to situate the children's learning stories. I then add a second lens, moving from the wider surroundings of Roseberry Hill to the domain of the school itself. In an attempt to furnish the reader with sufficient detail to enable him/her to form a picture of the school community, I detail a number of practices taking place both inside and outside of the school building. I gradually begin to introduce some of the principle characters, providing a little background information to enable the reader to relate to the people involved. My aim is to extend an invitation to the reader; I want him/her to be able to envisage the suburb in which the school is situated, Roseberry Hill itself and the people who comprise the school community.

With the audience's interest hopefully secured, I start to introduce the focal year: the geographical location of Year 6 in the school; the physical descriptions of the classrooms; the teaching staff; the practices which define Year 6 in and outside the classroom; the weekly timetable; and extra-curricula activities etc. With Year 6 positioned in the foreground, I then go on to review the two classes separately. Consideration is given to the teaching philosophies of both Year 6 teachers as they serve to underpin the nature of teaching and learning practices in their respective classes. Attention then turns to the four focal children in each class. The structure of each of the children's stories is shaped by the inner systems of the ecological model; specifically the micro-, meso- and exo- systems. This has resulted in the narratives adopting the following format:

- ◆ Family background
- ◆ Social activities
- ◆ Relationship between home and school
- ◆ Classroom experiences
- ◆ SATs performance
- ◆ Summary of learning journey

The stories are composite of my day-to-day experiences in the school: that which I observed, the conversations I had, the formal interviews I conducted, the ecomaps I drew up with the children, the documents I had sight of (for example, the children's research diaries and school publications). Data from these sources is threaded throughout the narratives: for example, direct excerpts from interviews, rephrased conversations, verbal and diagrammatic description of events or locations. The stories of Roseberry Hill, the Year 6 classes and each of the children's learning journeys, seek to re-present the lived experiences of the focal children through my lens as researcher and author.

Whilst the nature of the above description indicates that the process of writing the stories was smooth, linear and unproblematic (Goodley et al 2004), it was far from this. Immersed in the mass of data I had collected, I read and re-read the material. Mindful of my aim to illuminate the embedded nature of the learning and development process, I decided to deconstruct the data using the Bronfenbrenner model. With a different colour for each of the nested systems, I highlighted within my fieldnotes and interview data, pertinent examples of factors operating within the micro-, meso- and exo- and macro- systems. I used another colour to highlight that which pertained to the role of the child. Taking a sheet of A3 paper for each child, I divided the space into five sections labelling them: child, microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem. Using the fund of real life examples highlighted in my data set, I wrote down within each section, a number of events which powerfully elucidated the role of the child or system in shaping the learning journey. In constructing these summaries, it was apparent that there were common denominators across the children's lives: for example, the role of family members, friends, teaching staff, outside clubs and teams, the SATs etc. Of course, the nature and roles of these parties and groups was different for each child, nonetheless, identification of these common threads provided an underpinning structure for the stories. This exercise formed the descriptive basis of my eight stories. Using the same summaries, I noted down next to selected events, how my additional four theoretical lenses (the ZPD concept; the communities of practice framework and notions of self-efficacy and metacognition) aided in the explanation of what was observed, reported or experienced. This

stage formed the basis of my theoretical interpretation of reported events in the eight stories.

In undertaking the above stages, I had selected much of the data I would draw on in the composition of the stories. I drew up the six broad stages which I felt reflected the common denominators of the children's nested worlds (outlined previously). However, as I sat down to write the first story of 'Daniel' I felt there was something missing. I wanted the reader to be able to envisage the child whose story I was writing. Hence, I decided to begin each story with a physical description of the child; these were based on photographs, observational notes and my memories. In practice, forming an image of the child for the reader aided my undertaking. With an image of the child in my mind, I no longer felt as distanced from my experiences in the classroom and I was able to approach the task of writing the story with greater ease. As I drafted each of the stories, the formula became more readily apparent and in turn, the process became easier and quicker. However, the weaving of theoretical interpretation within each of the stories remained difficult and time consuming; this was primarily due to the uniqueness of each child's story. I went back to the stories numerous times; adding, removing and amending until I was satisfied with the content. The finishing touch was the story titles. I chose to utilise direct quotes from the children or their teachers; selecting those which I felt captured the essence of a child's character or a powerful glimpse into their learning journey.

Dipping in and out of my data for details of events and conversations, I found the process of writing the stories quite an emotional and revealing journey. On reflection, some of situations which I shared with the children in the classroom could have been managed more effectively. For example, it wasn't until I wrote Isabel's story and pulled the data sources together, that I identified the extent of her difficulties with her class teacher. The quality of my relationships with each of the focal data was apparent in the nature and richness of the data I had collected. There were some children that I knew so much more about than others. This was also evident in the narratives written. Some stories were far easier to compose than others because I was more familiar with the child, the primary figures in

his/her world and the communities s/he belonged to outside school; these texts tend to be more detailed and thus longer in length. There was one story which I found particularly difficult to write, Tariq's. Not only were my notes on him limited in comparison to the other children, but I also had not fully reflected on his behaviour at school and home. This stemmed from the difficulties I experienced in establishing a positive relationship with him.

Whilst the series of eight stories presented here principally serve as a vehicle to highlight the unique learning experiences of each child, the overarching goal is to authentically demonstrate the diverse but intricately embedded nature of children's learning and development per se. In doing so, they inform the reader about a multiplicity of worlds: individual and collective, private and public, structural and agentic (Goodley et al 2004). Being demonstrative of the embedded nature of children's development and learning journey, the stories seek to be persuasive of the need for stakeholders to take account of this in proposed and implemented educational policy and practice.

## SETTING THE SCENE: ROSEBERRY HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

The past twenty years has seen a move towards a more centralised control of schooling throughout England. The implementation of multiple policies and strategies by Central Government (including the National Curriculum and the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy), has attempted to impose uniformity on the content, structure and delivery of learning for children in primary education. However, whilst a school does exist as part of the wider English school system, it can also be recognised as a community in its own right. It is comprised of particular children, teaching and non-teaching staff, buildings and, moreover, is part of the specific wider community in which it is situated. As such, Roseberry Hill primary school, like every other schooling institution throughout England, remains unique. These unparalleled factors contribute to the intricacies of pupils' and teachers' lived experiences in the classroom; experiences which are both varied and particular to the individual. As the spotlight shines on Roseberry Hill, the learning stories of eight children in Year 6 are captured. This is the final rung of their primary school career.

### **The focal people**

#### ***At Roseberry Hill Primary School***

Ms Kathryn Thompson, *Head teacher*

Mr Joe Tate, *Deputy head teacher*

Mrs Georgina Mullen, *Chair of school governing body*

Mrs Sophie Brookes, *Year 6 teacher (class 6B)*

Mrs Gillian Eastwood, *Year 6 teacher (class 6E)*

Helen, *full-time Year 6 classroom assistant and author of this thesis*

Alison, *part-time Year 6 classroom assistant and lunch time organiser*

Charlotte, *6B pupil*

Isabel, *6B pupil*

Jaleela, *6B pupil*

Roberto, *6B pupil*

Daniel, *6E pupil*

Elizabeth, *6E pupil*

Leanne, *6E pupil*

Tariq, *6E pupil*

### ***Parents and Carers***

Mr Hannon and Julie, *Charlotte's father and partner*

Ms Finn and Richard, *Charlotte's mother and partner*

Mr and Mrs Wilson, *Isabel's parents*

Mr and Mrs Ali, *Jaleela's parents*

Mr and Mrs Lazarus, *Roberto's parents*

Mr and Mrs Redpath, *Beth's parents*

Mr Jones and Mrs Richardson, *Daniel's father and mother*

Mrs Taylor, *Leanne's mother*

Mr and Mrs Khan, *Tariq's parents*

### ***Further Afield***

Ms Andrea Holmes, *Link Advisor (LEA Representative)*

Roseberry Hill Primary School is located in a quiet, leafy suburb of a large city in the North West of England. Larger in size than the average primary school, it provides education for over four hundred pupils between the ages of three and eleven years. Pupils are organised into fourteen classes, two in each year group from Nursery through to Year 6. Whilst the suburb in which it is situated is thought of as an affluent ward with high levels of academic achievement, low levels of unemployment and ever increasing house prices, the school's pupil population is not representative of this. Rather, it is mixed, both socially and culturally. The socio-economic circumstances of pupils vary widely. As the Head teacher Kathryn Thompson points out, 'there are pockets of unemployment, there are pockets of deprivation.' The school has an ethnically mixed population. Whilst the majority of children who attend the school are white and of British heritage, a large proportion, over 40%, speak languages other than English at home. Indeed, the number of

pupils in receipt of funding for speaking English as an additional language is well above the average for primary schools nationwide. These pupils come from a wide variety of ethnic groups with Pakistani backgrounds being most prominent. Adopting a wider approach than that of Central Government rhetoric, Roseberry Hill embraces a more holistic approach to children's wellbeing. It accentuates their emotional, social, and personal development alongside their academic attainment. The emphasis is on equipping children with an ever growing toolkit of skills and abilities to enable them to succeed in life beyond school, a set of qualities which go beyond those categorised as academic.

Positioned away from the hustle and bustle, Roseberry Hill primary school stands within a large housing estate and serves primarily those children living in close proximity. Roseberry Hill is a non-denominational primary school. The variety of faiths and cultures which comprise the pupil and staff population are all celebrated; this is witnessed in assemblies and in the school's multi-faith religious education syllabus. Quotations from a range of religious figures and texts are also included as thoughts in the weekly newsletter, a copy of which is sent home with the eldest pupil in each family. A perusal of the newsletters published during the academic year sees reference to the following faiths: Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism, Hindu and Sikh. Whether drawing on religious extracts or poems, the 'thought' section is used to detail and emphasise the value of particular behaviours, including love, peace and community spirit. Examples of these thought extracts are illustrated in table 5.1. The weekly newsletter, as the primary means of communication between school and home, also includes reference to: lunchtime and after school activities, PTA and Governing Body meetings, uniform issues, cleaning and lunchtime staff vacancies, forthcoming school and local community events, holiday dates, pupil and school successes and any other messages deemed pertinent to parents and carers.

**Table 5.1:** Thought extracts from the weekly newsletter

<b>Newsletter thoughts</b>		
<b>Thought: Our Neighbourhood</b>	<b>Words of the Buddha</b>	<b>10<sup>th</sup> October 2001</b>
<p><i>'Just as a mother cares for her children all her days, so our minds must be full of loving kindness to all living things everywhere. We should fill the whole world with love and kindness and joy – above, below, around and everywhere. Never in this world is hate stopped by hate – only by loving – kindness can hate be conquered.'</i></p>		
<b>A resolution for the New Year</b>		<b>9<sup>th</sup> January 2002</b>
<p><i>When I am tempted to take the sloping track of laziness, the wide, flat street of greed and selfishness, the thorn-lined way of anger and dislike, the slippery cliff path of gossip and sharp words, or the narrow alley of prejudice, show me the high road of your kingdom.</i></p>		
<b>Thought from the Guru Granth Sahib (Sikhism)</b>		<b>27<sup>th</sup> February 2002</b>
<p><i>'The person who lives in a ruined hut with all his clothes torn, a person will no class or family or respect from anyone, a person who wanders in the wilderness, a person with no relations or friends, this person is the king of the whole world, if his heart is full of the love of God'</i></p>		
<b>School Creed</b>		<b>19<sup>th</sup> December 2001 and 18<sup>th</sup> July 2002</b>
<p><i>'This is our school Let peace dwell here, Let the rooms be full of contentment, Let love abide here, Love of one another, Love of mankind, love of life itself And love of God. Let us remember That, as many hands build a house, So many hearts make a school'</i></p>		

Boundary fences encircle the school site. With entrance gates located at both the front and back of the school, children and their parents/carers can enter through the junior, infant or nursery playgrounds. Both parties are however, discouraged from entering via the main entrance door which as a security door, is operated via

a buzzer system. Use of this door is permitted by school staff and visitors. The gates leading on to the playgrounds are open well before the start of the school day, which is marked by the sound of a loud resonating bell at 8.55 a.m. For many of the staff however, the school day starts much earlier; teachers' cars can be seen arriving as early as 7.30 a.m. At this time, the school is a quiet, calm and empty space. An opportune time to undertake preparation as there are very few others present to make demands. Indeed, it contrasts sharply with the hectic, noisy and crowded atmosphere when the children pour through the school doors and head to their respective cloakrooms and classrooms. Being a two form entry school, the team of staff at Roseberry Hill is quite substantial. It comprises: one Head teacher, one Deputy head teacher, two full-time school administrators, sixteen teachers (twelve full-time and four part-time), eight classroom assistants (one full-time in each year group and an additional part-time post in Year 6), three nursery nurses (two full-time and one part-time post), one ICT technician, one special educational needs co-ordinator, one additional literacy support post, three ethnic minority achievement service staff, three one-to-one extra support staff, the lunchtime staff (a mix of catering assistants and lunchtime organisers), one caretaker and a team of cleaners.

Taking up her first headship post, Kathryn Thompson arrived at Roseberry Hill in 1990. Prior to that, she had gained thirteen years of teaching experience across two schools, before being appointed a Deputy Head for the duration of five years in a school of a more challenging nature in the same city. Whilst she undertakes minimal teaching at Roseberry Hill in the form of occasional cover for her staff, she has been described by Ofsted inspectors as providing 'strong and inspirational leadership' in her role as Head teacher of the school. Although the ultimate responsibility for managing the school and people therein falls to Kathryn, she does receive strong support from multiple parties. Located next door to her office is that of the two school secretaries, who have been with Kathryn for the duration of her career at Roseberry Hill. Deputy head teacher Joe Tate, has spent a considerable proportion of his teaching career at Roseberry Hill, initially joining as a class teacher before working his way up and being appointed Deputy head teacher prior to Ms Thompson's arrival. Alongside his responsibilities in this role, Joe has a

Year 5 class and teaches just short of a full timetable. Four teachers, one from each primary stage (Nursery, Reception, KS1 and KS2), are members of the senior management team; each in a post with a range of responsibilities. Many of the remaining teachers within the staff team also have roles and corresponding responsibilities outside that of class teacher; for example there are co-ordinators for ICT, literacy, numeracy, music, modern languages etc.

Roseberry Hill also has a helpful and supportive seventeen member governing body, lead by the chair of governors, Georgina Mullen. She stated, that the governing body 'have a largely strategic role...the governors decide what they want the school to achieve and set the framework for getting there. They set suitable aims and objectives, they agree policies, targets, priorities, they monitor and interview to make sure these policies are being carried out and targets are being met.' Working for the benefit of the school, the governing body work with the Head teacher adopting the role of 'critical friend.' As a community school, the Local Education Authority also has a hand in steering Roseberry Hill on its journey, again, adopting more of a strategic than operational role. This is never more evident in the funding of schooling. Whilst LEAs are primarily responsible for public spending on schools, the Government is keen for authorities to distribute money directly to schools to spend as they see fit. In addition, the LEA to which Roseberry Hill belongs, owns the school buildings and lands upon which it sits, is responsible for employing the staff at the school and decides the arrangements for admitting pupils. Thus, there are multiple parties working together to ensure the effective management of Roseberry Hill on a day-to-day basis, with their input ranging from the more immediate, operational role to the more distant, strategic role.

Whilst teaching staff are busy undertaking preparation for lessons, children and adults can be seen gathering in the playgrounds up to half an hour before the school bell at 8.55 a.m. Children run about and play or huddle together talking in small groups and parents and carers stand together, chatting. Many of the older children, such as those in Year 6, walk to school alone or with siblings; younger children are typically accompanied by a parent or carer. Despite the close

proximity of many pupils' houses, a large number of children are also brought in cars. However, given ongoing problems with parking within and outside the school site, the Head teacher actively discourages children being driven all the way to school. Rather, she repeatedly suggests that parents and carers park on side roads a short distance from the school and then walk with their children the remainder of the way; even going as far as to list a number of nearby roads and detail a small map in one edition of the weekly newsletter. The school also organised a 'walk to school day' at the start of the academic year (3<sup>rd</sup> October 2001) to encourage all parents and carers to ensure their children walked at least part of the way to school. Following its success, the school set up a 'walking bus' with volunteers at either end of the line to encourage children to walk to school from a local meeting point (approximately fifteen minutes from the school). Despite these efforts, inconsiderate parking was a recurring issue throughout the year and addressed multiple times in the weekly newsletter. Concerns were voiced over the danger of parking on double yellow lines and blocking neighbours' driveways. This eventually resulted in the presence of traffic police before and after school throughout the working week.

Although both the infant and junior playgrounds have a tarmac surface and are dotted on the outskirts with several waste bins in the design of pencils, there are marked differences between the two. As you walk along the path running by the front of the school, the infant playground can be viewed amongst the bushes and trees growing to cover the boundary fence. The playground is situated in front of a large red brick building; a more recently erected part of the school which houses Year groups 1 and 2. There are multiple games marked out on the tarmac, with the opportunity for children to sit on one of the many wooden benches and seats available. There is also a small grass area which children are permitted to play on in dry weather during the summer term. Infants are not permitted to play football on the playground at any time, but given permission, can use the small grass area. To the right of the playground stands a separate nursery and reception area surrounded by concrete fences, which decorated by the school children, now depict colourfully painted scenes. During playtimes, children in reception and nursery can be seen engaged in a range of activities.

The junior playground is perhaps three times the size of the infant one. However, there are no games marked out on the concrete. On this blank canvas, children typically use their school sweaters to mark boundaries and act as goal posts. There is also only one small bench in the entire playground upon which, one or two children could sit. In the summer, dry weather permitting, the outside area available to the juniors grows threefold, with children given the opportunity to use the large school playing field located at the back of the main school building. As highlighted by Mrs Eastwood, a Year 6 teacher, 'not many schools have playing fields like ours...I don't think the children realise that.' On the far end of this field stands one set of football posts, used for home games and after school training; an area which tends to be used by 6E in the summer. Again, many other children, typically grouped by class, use their sweaters as boundary markers. Use of the grass areas is restricted to lunchtimes and is heavily dependent on the weather. Children are allowed to bring their own skipping ropes and balls to use at lunchtimes, with the school also making equipment available for children's use; a system organised by the lunchtime staff.

During dry break and lunch times, the playgrounds are a blur of green and white; children engaged enthusiastically in a range of activities. At Roseberry Hill, the school uniform consists of: a green sweatshirt, a white polo shirt, grey tailored trousers or a grey knee length skirt and black shoes. Many of the pupils' sweatshirts and polo shirts are embroidered with the school logo. All children from Reception upwards conform to the requisite uniform. There were occasional variances, for example, one Year 6 pupil and her brother lower down in the school regularly wore light grey jogging pants to school but staff were not heard commenting on their appearance. There were occasional prompts in the weekly newsletter regarding the wearing of jewellery, with the Head teacher asserting that children were only permitted to wear stud earrings and a watch. The largest issue concerning school uniform was in relation to trainers. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 were allowed to bring trainers to change into at lunchtime. In the summer term with the school field dry and football games plentiful, there were simultaneously, increasing problems with children 'losing' their school shoes and wearing trainers instead. This was a persistent problem particularly in class 6E. This issue was brought to

the attention of parents and carers in the weekly newsletter several times, with the Head teacher requesting that they ensure children have the correct, full school uniform. To aid this, the school held regular school uniform sales in conjunction with a large local retailer in the dining room. The school office also sold P.E. bags, book bags and woolly hats throughout the year. During the summer term, children were also allowed to bring hats to wear outside during break and lunch times as a means of protection from the sun.

Prior to the sound of the morning bell, only a handful of pupils are permitted inside the school, those given specific jobs by members of staff. These privileged few include those children in Year 6 who have been designated responsibility for register duty. Year 6 is responsible for this task throughout the academic year; performed in pairs, it is divided equally amongst the two classes. Sitting in the school foyer, the pupils distribute the registers to requisite members of staff as they either leave the staffroom or enter the school through the security door. The pupils are then required to deliver any outstanding registers to the necessary classrooms at the sound of the bell. Simultaneously, children in the junior playground are met by two members of the teaching staff. The shrill sound of the whistle being blown stops children in their tracks; once standing still and in silence, children are permitted entrance to the school building, year by year and class by class. This is a familiar routine, with children following the same procedure at morning break and lunch time.

Upon entering the school building, Year 6 children head to their designated cloakroom. Supervised by a Year 6 teacher, they remove from their bags any items needed for forthcoming lessons, leaving any other possessions on their labelled coat hook before heading for their respective classrooms. Typically, supervision falls to Mrs Eastwood as pupils in her class more commonly get into trouble for one thing or another and as such, she prefers to ensure her presence. Mrs Brookes remains in her classroom, finalising any preparation for the day ahead. She is joined by one of the two Year 6 classroom assistants, Alison or Helen, with the other remaining in Mrs Eastwood's classroom awaiting the arrival of 6E. The classroom assistants share their time equally between the two Year 6

classes and work in accordance with a weekly timetable put together by Mrs Eastwood (see figure 5.1).

**Figure 5.1:** The classroom assistants' weekly timetable

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
<b>REGISTRATION 8.55 – 9.10</b>					
<b>ASSEMBLY TIME</b> 9.10 - 9.30	Lesson preparation ICT at the CCC 6B or Group reading 6B	Lesson preparation Group reading 6E	Preparation time	ICT at the CCC 6E	Group reading 6E Lesson preparation
<b>MORNING SESSION ONE</b> 9.30 – 10.30	Numeracy 6E ICT at the CCC 6B or Literacy 6B	Numeracy 6B Literacy 6E	Teaching ICT/Numeracy 6E	ICT at the CCC 6E or Literacy 6B	Preparation time
<b>BREAK 10.30 – 10.45</b>					
<b>MORNING SESSION TWO</b> 10.45- 12.00/12.10	Numeracy 6B ICT at the CCC or Literacy 6E	Numeracy 6E Literacy 6B	Teaching ICT/Numeracy 6B	ICT at the CCC 6E or Literacy 6E	Music 6B or 6E
<b>LUNCH 12.00/12.10 – 1.15</b>					
<b>SILENT READING</b> 1.15 – 1.50	Group reading 6E	Group reading 6B	Group reading 6E	Group reading 6B	Group reading 6E
<b>AFTERNOON SESSION ONE</b> 1.50 - 3.20	Science 6E	Art or Design and Technology 6B	Preparation time	Science 6B	Modern languages 6E

**KEY:**

— Alison

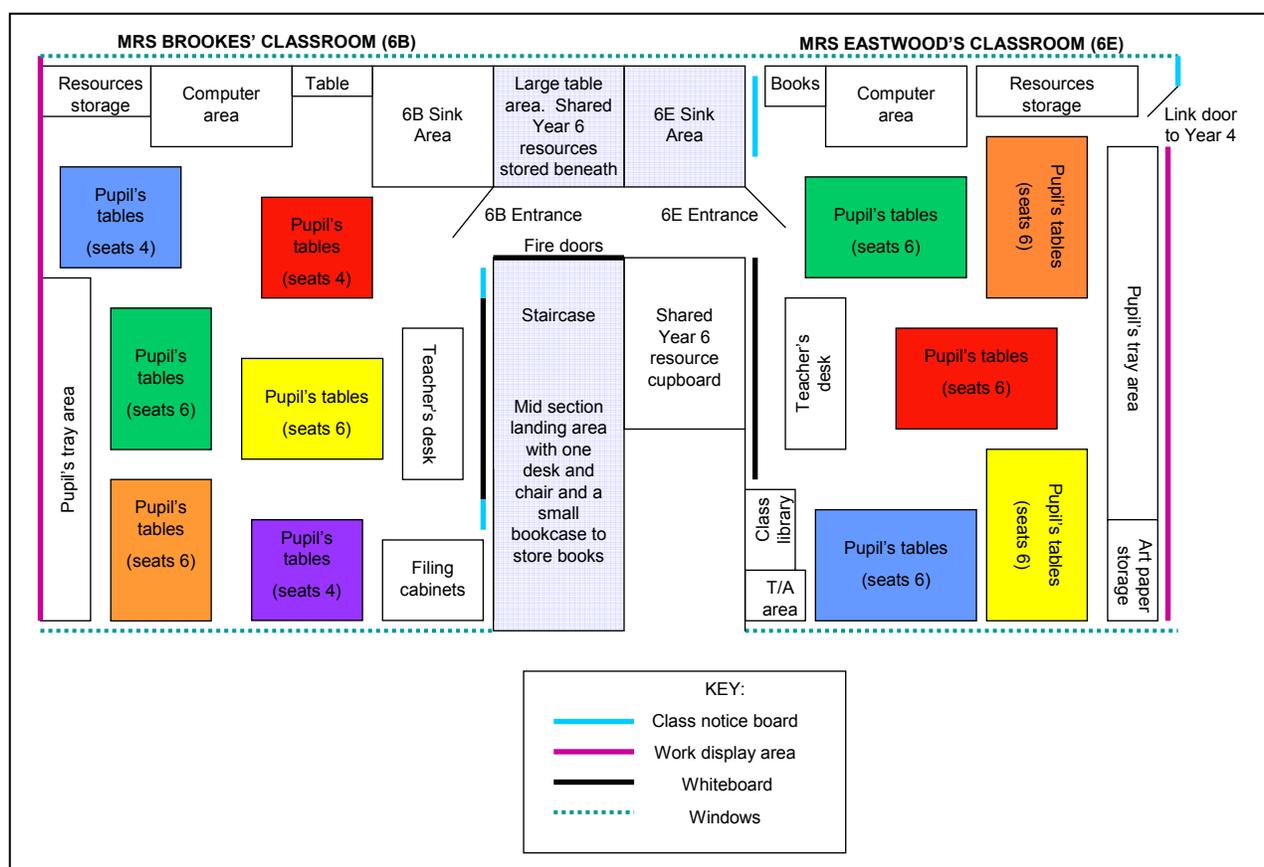
— Helen

— Together

The Year 6 classrooms are located upstairs, either side of the staircase. 6B stands alone to the left and 6E stands to the right. At the back of the 6E classroom is an adjoining door to a Year 4 classroom but it remains shut at all times. Year 6 and Year 4 are the only two year groups taught in the upper parts of the school building. The plan detailed in figure 5.2 illustrates the layout of each classroom. Painted in the same nondescript yet inoffensive colour, the two classrooms are similar in size and contain the same furniture. The teacher's desk takes a prominent place in both, located at the forefront of the classroom just in front of the whiteboard. All pupils sit on blue plastic chairs arranged around tables. Chairs are positioned two to each table, with both Year 6 teachers choosing to arrange the tables to form larger ones, meaning that children sit together in groups of either six or four. Grey slat metal venetian blinds hang in the large windows of both classrooms, closed only to watch the television or shade the classroom in the summer. The back wall in both classrooms has display boards fastened to them, each adorned with the children's work. Mrs Eastwood's are finished with coloured borders co-ordinating with the backing sheets and a title of the work drawn up on

the computer. The display board backing sheets and matching borders are typically left over wallpaper samples from decorating shops; nonetheless, the effect is excellent. Mrs Brookes' display boards are rather less fancy. Accompanied by a title label and description of the activity written out on the computer, children's work is simply stuck up with drawing pins on plain coloured sheets of sugar paper. Mrs Eastwood also displays children's work in the space above the main pupil seating area, hanging work from horizontal lines of string spanning the length of the classroom; for example children's prayer mats designed on A3 paper.

**Figure 5.2:** Year 6 classroom layouts



Both classrooms have a computer area with one desktop computer each, but more often than not, both teachers set up their laptop computers to enable two individual children or two pairs of children to work on the computers at any one time. Mrs Eastwood makes space for a library area in her classroom; a small book shelf which although not particularly well stocked, was a safeguard for those children who forgot to bring their reading book from home. Having no library area, the

pupils in 6B could not benefit from this arrangement, but this did not seem to be a problem, with children always remembering their book or arranging to borrow a friend's. In the corner of her classroom, Mrs Eastwood had also provided a cupboard surface space and two chairs for the classroom assistants to use as their base: to undertake preparation, store any equipment and folders etc. Alison and Helen were also allocated a tray each at the back of the classroom in which to store any paperwork. No specific space was provided for the classroom assistants in the 6B classroom. Using the space in 6E as their base, Alison and Helen spent much of their preparation time during and outside school hours in this classroom.

Entering the classroom first thing in the morning, pupils sit down in their seats, placing their reading books and pencil cases either in front of them on their table or in their labelled tray located at the back of the classroom. Once settled, the teachers complete the registration process, recording attendance, gathering in any reply slips, and on Mondays, collecting dinner money for the week ahead. This process is done as quickly as possible as both Year 6 classes are shortly required to attend the morning assembly held in the main hall. The hall is the school's principle indoor space and thus serves a multiplicity of functions. It is the venue for assemblies, PE, dance and drama lessons, and lunchtime activities such as music groups and discos. Because of the demand for this indoor space, a strict booking system is in place. A timetable held in the school office ensures all classes get their turn using the space for PE, dance and drama lessons.

With one child in each class allocated the responsibility of dropping off the register at the school office, the Year 6 classes line up on the stairs in alphabetical order. Whilst 6B regularly line up without fuss or assistance from their class teacher Mrs Brookes, 6E are supervised by Mrs Eastwood. Every time she calls their names out in register order to ensure they line up correctly. Any children staying behind for group reading with Helen or Alison remain seated until the remainder of the class has left the classroom. They then gather around one of the tables with the requisite group reading book and their written review book (a book in which the children are required to write a short summary of their assigned reading

homework). In silence, the rest of the classes walk down the corridor and line up outside the assembly hall.

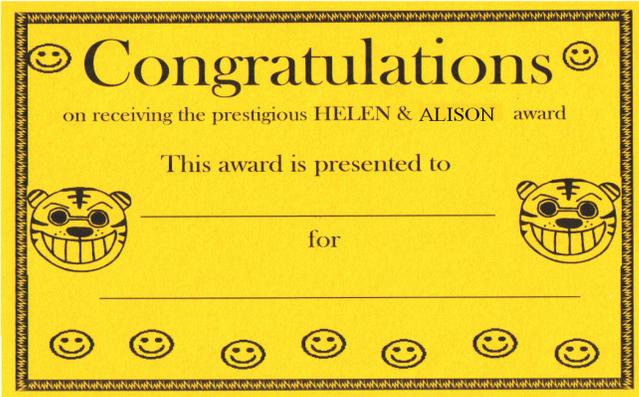
Monday through to Thursday, the juniors and the infants have separate assembly times, with the former always held first thing after registration. On a Friday however, the whole school comes together and the assembly is longer in duration than those held throughout the week. On Fridays all teachers are required to attend assembly, but throughout the remainder of the week, only one teacher from each year group stays in the hall to supervise the children and ensure they are behaving appropriately. Seating all the school children in the hall is inevitably a bit of a squeeze and requires strategic management! In year and alphabetical class order, children sit cross-legged on the floor with the youngest children located at the front of the hall and Year 6 pupils, being the oldest in the school, sit at the back. Assembly time is used as an opportunity to share with teaching staff and children: news of forthcoming events, issues of concern and celebration of pupil and school successes. It is also a means of inculcating moral behaviour, with speakers drawing on personal experience, fables and stories taken from various religious texts to communicate strong messages.

The majority of assemblies are taken by the Head Teacher, Ms Thompson or the Deputy Head Teacher, Mr Tate. However, once every week, this duty fell to a particular class. The order and date of class assemblies is pre-organised, with every class performing twice throughout the academic year. Years 3 through to 6 are required to perform in front of all the juniors and are additionally asked to perform it separately for the infants, if it is a particularly enjoyable assembly. During the academic year 2001/2, class 6E performed a French assembly, organised in conjunction with their French teacher from the local high school, Greenwood. She visited the school one afternoon a week to take the class for French; simultaneously her colleague taught 6B German. After studying Victorian life as part of the National Curriculum, 6B chose to portray life at school during the Victorian era for their assembly; enacting lessons and playground activities. Both assemblies were educational, entertaining and thoroughly enjoyed by fellow pupils and staff. Despite the non-denominational nature of the school, parents and carers

can choose to routinely withdraw their children from assemblies throughout the academic year if they notify the class or head teacher; only one family attending the school had chosen to do this.

In order to maintain a positive learning environment within the school as a whole and individual classrooms, the staff at Roseberry Hill utilise methods of positive behaviour management. To establish and maintain this purposeful and harmonious environment and in turn, limit the time they need to spend managing 'difficult' or 'problem' behaviour, teaching staff heavily incorporate behaviourist methods of reward and punishment. In the classroom, members of staff can be seen allocating personal and table points, which once amalgamated and totalling one hundred points can be exchanged for a prize. As classroom assistants in Year 6, Helen and Alison are also encouraged to adhere to these practices. After discussion with Mrs Eastwood, they introduced weekly classroom assistant certificates, designed by Mrs Eastwood (see figure 5.3) and printed on coloured card.

Figure 5.3: Classroom assistant certificates

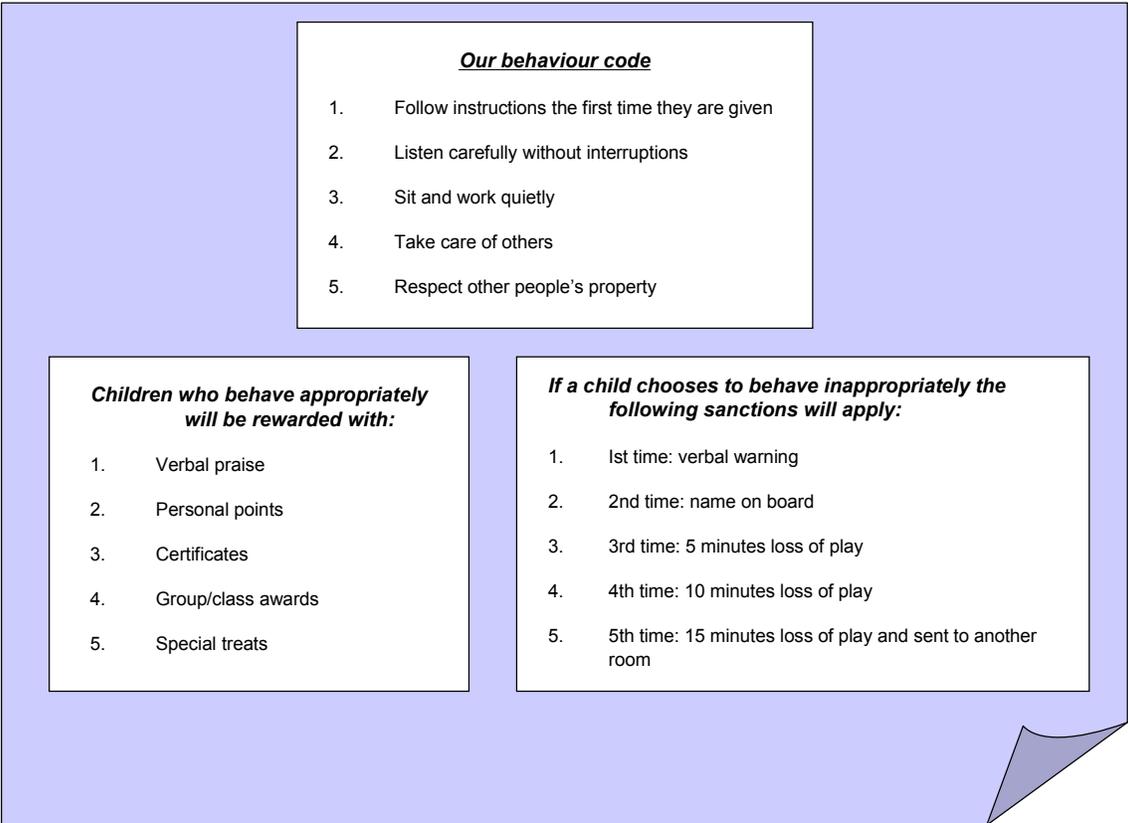


These were awarded to pupils for their efforts in lessons or displays of general positive behaviour and attitudes towards others in the classroom. Although initial encouragement and support for this scheme came from Mrs Eastwood, Helen and Alison implemented it in both Year 6 classes. Handing out two or three in each class on a weekly basis, the classroom assistants ensured every pupil in the class received at least one certificate each term. The two pupils in each class attaining the most certificates each term received a prize. The school did not cover the costs of the prizes; rather, the classroom assistants were reliant on their own limited funds. Hence, prizes were often chocolate in nature: a selection box at Christmas (autumn term), an Easter egg at Easter (spring term) and a box of chocolates at the end of the academic year (summer term).

As the reward system was deemed to be effective, this method of encouraging desirable behaviour was further utilised by lunchtime staff following bouts of disrespectful and rude displays of behaviour towards non-teaching staff. To encourage positive behaviour at lunchtimes, green smiley cards were introduced as a new scheme. They were handed out by lunchtime staff only and given to pupils as a reward for particularly helpful, sensible and caring behaviour. The two children in each year group with the highest number of cards at the end of each school term were treated to lunch out at a local pizza restaurant and other high scoring pupils were rewarded with book vouchers. Whilst this scheme did have the desired effect, diminishing rude and disrespectful behaviour, it was noted by both pupils and teaching staff that many of those actually receiving the reward cards were those previously displaying inappropriate behaviour. This meant that more often than not, many lunchtime staff overlooked those children whose behaviour was respectful and appropriate most or all of the time. To assist lunchtime staff with managing incidents at this peak time, the school also introduced a playground squad, consisting of a small group of volunteers from Year 5 and 6. Adorning red sweaters to enable easy identification, these children helped out with games, befriended lonely children and sorted out minor disputes between pupils, in turn, giving more time to lunchtime organisers. Given the success of the scheme in the junior playground, it was extended and introduced in the infant playground in February 2002.

In line with the school policy to promote positive behaviour, both Year 6 classes had pinned up on their respective notice boards a copy of the behaviour code, a list of rewards and a list of sanctions. As a point of interest, these were pinned up in rather remote areas of both classrooms, separate to the more obvious areas designated for pupil awards. Following an interview with Sophie Brookes at the end of academic year 2001/2, Helen found out that these ground rules were formulated by the classes themselves. This had not been apparent to her as she had not been present in either class during this activity. The formulation of the ground rules for the class stemmed from a rights and responsibilities exercise. After looking broadly at the notion of people’s rights and responsibilities, the class moved on to look at their function in the school and the classroom. Sophie points out, that in order to have specific rights it becomes evident that you need to have responsibilities, which leads neatly to the explicit setting of ground rules for behaviour in class. These were displayed on the wall in both classrooms with the rules and sanctions formulated in each class very similar (see figure 5.4).

**Figure 5.4:** Explicit Year 6 class rules and sanctions



However, throughout the year, Helen noted that these explicit practices were not always abided by, in particular the sanction procedures. Rather, the series of practices seemed to undergo negotiation in each class community, changing as a function of the situation, the time and the people. The emergent practices increasingly followed the format set out in figure 5.5. However, the 'new' practices in place never replaced the explicit ones displayed on the classroom notice boards.

**Figure 5.5:** Sanction procedures followed

- Sanctions***

  1. Verbal warning
  2. Name on the board (6E)  
Isolate in class or withdrawn to another class (6B)
  3. Stay in at playtime or lunchtime
  4. Refer to Ms Thompson
  5. Inform parents of concern

The school houses a separate dining room and has the kitchen facilities to provide hot meals for pupils, although many children bring packed lunches from home. Achieving a bronze healthy school award at the beginning of January 2002, the school encourages healthy eating. For example, children are only permitted to bring in fruit, nuts, raisins, crisps for their break time snacks, with the school also selling selected pieces of fruit and breadsticks in both the infant and junior playgrounds. No sweets, chocolates, biscuits or chewing gum is allowed. Costs for hot lunches are £1.32 a day or £6.60 per week and milk money for break time amounts to £3.00 a term or £9.00 a year. Both are payable to the Local Educational Authority. Following a trial with Year 6, the school also issued all pupils throughout Years 3 to 6 with a labelled bottle, full of water from the schools filter machine. They wished pupils to have access to water throughout the day and it was left to the discretion of individual teachers how to manage this.

Despite the separate space, there isn't sufficient room for all children to sit down and have lunch simultaneously, so juniors and infants have separate sittings. The lunch supervisors run a tightly managed schedule which allots specific times to each year group who are moved along quickly to ensure all children have sufficient time to eat. Tables and benches are movable but remain in place unless there is a special event being held, for example, a school fair. During the day, the dining room is also an essential space used by support staff at the lower end of the school working with individual or small groups of children. Finding space can be extremely problematic and it is not unusual to see classroom assistants from all years wandering around with a small group of pupils trying to find space to work. Helen predominantly relied on the staffroom which was not ideal given the presence of other staff, but it was preferable to working in the corridor. After school, the lunch hall became a mosque where children learnt to read the Qu'ran. It was attended by Islamic children from the local community, including pupils and ex-pupils of Roseberry Hill.

Roseberry Hill also holds multiple lunch time and after school activities for the children to get involved in, many of which are held by in-house teaching staff. Because these classes do not run all year round and are inevitably limited in capacity, many children miss out on the opportunity to participate. The activities open to Year 6 pupils include: lacrosse, basketball, chess club, dance club and the weekly junior lunchtime disco. Year 6 pupils were also the most prominent year group comprising the school's netball and football team. Although both teams practice regularly, I noted that only the former played matches on a regular basis. Violin and guitar tuition was also available to Year 6 pupils at the school for £20.00 a term. Provision of these extra curricula activities enables us to gain a little insight into the more holistic approach to pupils' wellbeing at Roseberry Hill; the focus is clearly wider than mere academic attainment.

In their careers as primary school teachers, both Sophie Brookes and Gillian Eastwood have worked exclusively at Roseberry Hill. This is also true of the Year 6 classroom assistants, Alison and Helen. Like many other members of staff, they live within the wider city boundaries in which the school is situated. Indeed, all but

Sophie were born in the city and had until this point, remained living and working there. Sophie, Gillian and Alison have been working together in Year 6 for a number of years; Helen joined the team the year before, initially in a voluntary capacity. All but Alison work full-time in Year 6. Studying for a qualification in the early years, Alison attends a nearby college one day a week. She also works as a childminder on weekday afternoons, looking after two young children living in the same suburb as the school. Alison's time is precious; she makes the bus journey to the family home upon completion of her lunchtime organiser duties, with no time to benefit from a helping of the school's cooked lunches. Whilst Helen was appointed as a Year 6 classroom assistant for the duration of the academic year, her role changed slightly during the last month of the final school term. From mid June, Helen was appointed a support worker for a child in 6E called Jane. Up until this point, Jane had attended Roseberry Hill on a part-time basis (mornings only) and had benefited from assistance off a support worker appointed by an outside agency. From mid-June, Jane enrolled as a full-time pupil and as a consequence of her change in role, Helen was obligated to spend all afternoons working in 6E. Another person, Mrs Redpath, was appointed classroom assistant to work in 6B on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons; she is a parent of one of the focal research children in 6E, Beth.

This meant that Year 6 pupils throughout the academic year received instruction and assistance from an all female staff team. This includes the more permanent team members and those who visit on a weekly basis to provide additional support in literacy lessons (one teacher per class). This set up was not unusual given the higher proportion of women to men working at Roseberry Hill and, indeed, in the primary education sector as a whole. At Roseberry Hill, pupils refer to all members of staff, teaching and non-teaching, by their title and surname: Mrs Brookes, Mrs Eastwood and Ms Thompson etc. However, observation of Year 6 practices saw an exception. Pupils talked to the classroom assistants on a daily basis using their forenames: Alison and Helen; a newly established practice, introduced at the start of the academic year by Gillian and followed by Sophie. Perhaps it was a means of reducing the distance put in place by the more formal addressing of staff, which worked to keep pupils at arms length. Regardless of the reason, this practice did

not stem beyond the Year 6 community; Alison and Helen were referred to using their title and surname by those outside Year 6, both staff and pupils.

Although preparation for all curriculum subjects is split equally between Sophie and Gillian, the majority of the curriculum is taught to each class by their respective teachers. This includes: literacy, numeracy, science, information and communication technology, design and technology, history, geography and religious education. But for music and physical education, Sophie and Gillian swap classes as they each prefer and hold greater skills in those subject domains. The weekly timetable for pupils in 6B and 6E is illustrated in figure 5.6.

**Figure 5.6:** The weekly timetable for pupils in 6B and 6E

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
<b>REGISTRATION 8.55 – 9.10</b>					
<b>ASSEMBLY TIME 9.10 - 9.30</b>	ICT at the CCC Or Group reading: Red group	Group reading: Saturn	-----	ICT at the CCC	Group reading: Mercury
<b>MORNING SESSION ONE 9.30 – 10.30</b>	ICT at the CCC Or Literacy: sentence level work Numeracy	Numeracy Literacy: text level work (comprehension)	Literacy: text level work (composition) ICT/Numeracy	ICT at the CCC Or Numeracy Literacy: text level work (composition)	Drama or dance Literacy level work
<b>BREAK 10.30 – 10.45</b>					
<b>MORNING SESSION TWO 10.45- 12.00/12.10</b>	ICT at the CCC Or Numeracy Literacy: sentence level work	Literacy: text level work (comprehension) Numeracy	ICT/Numeracy Literacy: text level work (composition)	ICT at the CCC Or literacy: text level work (composition) Numeracy	Music PE
<b>LUNCH 12.00/12.10 – 1.15</b>					
<b>SILENT READING 1.15 – 1.50</b>	Group reading: Jupiter	Group reading: Green groups 1 & 2	Group reading: Purple group Group reading: Pluto	Group reading: Blue groups 1 & 2	Group reading: Venus
<b>AFTERNOON SESSION ONE 1.50 - 3.20</b>	R.E. or Geography or History Science	Art or Design and Technology R.E. or Geography or History	Outdoor games Handwriting	Science Art or Design and Technology	Modern languages Class meeting
<b>HOMEWORK</b>	Science	English	Maths	Science	Spellings; table; maths

**KEY:** — 6B  
— 6E  
— Both classes (alternately, one after the other or alternate weeks or alternate terms)  
— Both classes

Benefiting from an established close relationship with the local secondary school, both Year 6 classes receive instruction from a secondary school teacher in French or German once a week. Moreover, during the autumn and spring school terms, both classes take advantage of an invite from the local city computer centre (CCC),

where they receive instruction primarily from the staff therein, with both class teacher and Helen providing assistance during these times. The facilities at the CCC are excellent. Pupils benefit from the use of a desktop computer each (compared to one between two or three pupils in the computer suite at Roseberry Hill) and are introduced to the teaching via the use of interactive whiteboards. Not only does this lesson time provide all pupils with the opportunity to develop computer skills, but also during the spring term, permits enhancement of knowledge and understanding in science and mathematics, as the children were required to use the computers in conjunction with topic areas from these subject domains.

Whilst the Year 6 pupils at Roseberry Hill benefit from a wide and varied curriculum, the core focus for staff and pupils in Year 6 has to be in line with the priorities of Central Government: SATs performance. Provision of classroom support is primarily targeted at the three core subject domain lessons. Whilst Alison assists in all Year 6 numeracy lessons, Helen assists in all literacy and science lessons. An additional member of staff also works with one group in each class for literacy lessons (text level work). In 6B, this falls to the school's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator; in 6E, a member of the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service. Whilst the academic attainment of many pupils upon entry to Roseberry Hill is below average (primarily because many children do not speak English fluently when they start school), Ofsted recognises that by the time children leave the school, attainment standards are well above the national average. This is demonstrated through children's performance on the KS2 SATs, which at the end of the last academic year (2000/2001) were higher than LEA and nationwide standards in the three core subject domains of English, mathematics and science (see table 5.2).

**Table 5.2:** Percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 or above in KS2 SATs 2000/2001

<b>Subject domain</b>	<b>Roseberry Hill</b>	<b>LEA</b>	<b>Nationwide</b>
English	87%	66.5%	75%
Mathematics	84%	64.8%	71%
Science	95%	83%	87%

In the academic year spanning 2001/2002, implicit preparation for the SATs began upon children's arrival in Year 6, with all teaching and learning shaped primarily around the test. Explicitly, children began their preparation in December and were required to sit their first set of practice SATs papers in the week following their return to school after the Christmas holidays. They would undergo two more sets of practice papers (one at the end of February and one towards the end of April) before sitting the 'real' SATs papers in mid May.

## Storying 6B

Year 6 teacher Sophie Brookes has had a long teaching career; working twenty three years in secondary schools before completing her primary teaching training at a local university and moving into primary teaching. Roseberry Hill was her first primary school post. Joining in 1992, she has been a junior teacher for the past ten years. As the staff turnover at Roseberry Hill is low, it is not uncommon for teaching staff to stay for long periods with added roles and responsibilities. Initially Sophie taught a joint Year 5 and Year 6 class, but as the pupil intake at Roseberry Hill began to increase and Year 6 groups became an inevitable development, she was responsible for Year 6 pupils only. During the academic year spanning 2001/2002, she had multiple roles and responsibilities: full-time Year 6 teacher, Literacy Co-ordinator, Extra-Curricula Music Co-ordinator and European Awareness and Modern Language Co-ordinator. In the classroom, her priority was her Year 6 class.

As a teacher, Sophie felt that there were two fundamental qualities to her role: firstly, to listen to children and secondly, to be seen to be fair across all pupils. Whilst laudable, Helen observed the difficulties of implementing this philosophy at all times in a class with thirty children. Given the competing demands of the children, school, government and home, perhaps these qualities were unsustainable all year round in the life of the classroom. This academic year, class 6B comprised thirty children, eleven boys and nineteen girls. It was unusual to have such an unbalanced boy to girl ratio and teaching staff observed that it impacted on the atmosphere in the classroom and upon pupil interactions. For example, working with both classes Helen observed that it was an accepted practice in the class community for some girls and boys to converse and 'hang out' together. This characteristic was present from the start of the year in class 6B but it was a quality yet to be developed in Class 6E; indeed much time and energy would be ploughed into ensuring this became an accepted practice.

Reflecting on her teaching experience, Sophie believed that before any curriculum learning could take place it was necessary to ensure a happy and secure

environment for children to work in. To promote this, Sophie follows a set pattern to her first lesson with her new class. She presents to the children an overview of the year ahead: introducing the staff that will be working alongside them, outlining the type of work and activities they will be doing in Year 6 and hopefully laying to rest any misgivings children may have about life in Year 6. Sophie stated that the children entering the class hold 'ideas of what you are like by the bits they see of you and... (what) children say.' She went on to add that in the past, several pupils in her class had tried to frighten prospective 6B children, passing comment that 'when you get into Year 6 you get shouted out if you drop a pencil on the floor.' She felt it was important to address such issues in the children's introduction to the class and to give them the opportunity to ask questions.

Together, the teacher and class then go on to set ground rules for behaviour in their class. Sophie felt it was imperative '...to get the right environment...before you actually start to teach anything' and this exercise contributed to this goal. As outlined earlier, the formulation of the ground rules for the class stemmed from a rights and responsibilities exercise. Initially looking broadly at the notion of people's rights and responsibilities, the class moved on to look at their function in the school and the classroom. Sophie points out that in order to have specific rights it was apparent that you need to have responsibilities. This observation led neatly into the explicit setting of ground rules for behaviour in class, where the children are required to complete a short task which matches responsibilities to rights. In undertaking this exercise the children are also developing three qualities which Sophie believes are important: working together, respecting one another and being tolerant. Whilst this exercise is done upon entry to Year 6, the children are given the opportunity to meet with their future class teacher at the end of Year 5. Towards the end of each academic year, children throughout the Roseberry Hill spend one lesson with the teacher and in the classroom they will be moving into the following year. This gives them the opportunity to meet the teaching staff who will be working alongside them and to ask questions and voice any concerns that they may have.

Sophie believes that children learn in different ways; some 'can learn by finding things out more... others like to be told and find things out...some learn from discussion and talking with others.' She states that, as a teacher, you have got to allow opportunity for each of these different ways of learning to take place within your teaching approach, something she felt she accomplished. She believed genes play a role in children's learning, but not wholly. Sophie's beliefs about how children learn underpin her teaching methods, her classroom practices, the expectations she has of pupils in her class and what behaviour she judges appropriate.

Sophie goes on to explain that rather than dominating the lesson conversation and 'talking at' her class, she seeks to actively involve children as much as possible. Together as a class, she explains that 6B spend a considerable amount of their time in discussion. Although in line with government guidelines her class plans are very prescriptive, she allows for a degree of flexibility to integrate discussion work. She states, 'You've really got to be prepared and planned but I think you shouldn't just stick to it rigidly.' Sophie points out that if the children seem to grasp a point or idea particularly easily, she chooses to pursue it further, going beyond her initial lesson plans. In fact at times, she reports she had posed GCSE questions to her class as a means of extending them. Sophie believes that the challenge such questions present makes them engage more with their learning. Sophie recognises that her teaching in such instances is primarily aimed at the higher ability pupils in the class. Indeed, she admits that she pitches her teaching at their level generally, stating 'I go more to extend the more able ones.' Sophie believes that, in a class situation, this is the best option and is more achievable. To the class she states 'If you don't understand don't worry, if you do we'll go on and the others will listen anyway.' She adds, 'If you address your lessons to the less able, that doesn't work, you have to give them separate work or individual help.' Although Sophie pitches her whole class teaching mainly at the higher ability children, she did towards the end of the academic year 2001/2 start to dedicate half an hour every Friday afternoon, after lunch, to those pupils considered less able. She worked with them individually, going over work they had struggled with

in recent literacy or numeracy lessons. Sophie stated that she would like to incorporate this time in every day as she believed it to be invaluable.

Despite Sophie's explicit intention to be seen to be fair across all children, it is somewhat unsurprising in light of the above that others observed differences in her interactions with pupils in her class. Alison, one of the Year 6 classroom assistants, commented, 'she has a few favourites.... you can walk into Sophie's class and be there for a week and know who her favourites are....the brighter ones.' Asked if she observed any ramifications of this for the children, Alison added 'I think they're given more opportunities...if they've got their hands up, she'll go straight to them to answer questions or for them to ask questions... And they seem to be involved in all the other stuff, you know if people need to put their hands up for Indian music for example, or whatever, it always seems to be.... a few of the favourite ones that are included. Not that I am saying they should be excluded, but that's my observation.'

In terms of allocated seating positions in the classroom, Sophie put those pupils together who she felt would 'work together well.' She added 'sometimes having people of similar ability working together but I think a lot of the time its good to have mixed ability...particularly in the beginning of the lesson, because if you've got paired work or discussion work on the table, then they can give ideas to the others really.' Although this practice was clearly in place on some table groupings in the class, Helen and Alison observed there was one table at the back of the class that comprised entirely higher ability children. Despite changes in table groupings for different subjects (numeracy, literacy, general class seating) higher ability pupils only always sat on this table. Alison remarked '...there's one particular table... and they're all very bright aren't they and quiet and well behaved.'

Throughout the academic year, Sophie experienced numerous events in her home life which impacted upon her life at work. A primary issue was the long-term ill health of a close family member. Battling with the responsibilities of providing care for this person and her full-time obligations at school, Sophie inevitably

experienced difficulties. She was open with fellow teaching staff about some of the tensions she experienced in terms of understanding the illness, coming to terms with what was happening and ensuring suitable care for the person involved. Trying to manage additional responsibilities at home, it was unsurprising that her home life spilled into her school life. Working full-time, she received phone calls and faxes during school hours. A difference in her behaviour was also noted, most noticeably by Year 6 colleagues. Alison noted, 'she seemed very tired and she got quite shouty.' Depleted of strength and energy, Sophie increasingly became impatient and at times, was short tempered with both Year 6 staff and pupils. Her relationship with Mrs Eastwood, her partner in Year 6, became strained. Because Sophie was understandably distracted, her lesson preparation began to suffer and Mrs Eastwood took onboard additional duties. She repeatedly mentioned to Helen that she felt she was doing the work for both classes, an issue which intensified because Sophie failed to recognise and thank Gillian for her sustained efforts.

Indeed, although the Year 6 teaching team was aware that issues in Sophie's home life were affecting her ability to focus on school tasks, it was not once acknowledged by Sophie in conversation. Although both classroom assistants were privy to talk with both Year 6 teachers about the ongoing situation, to their knowledge, the Year 6 teachers avoided explicit discussion of the issues at hand. It was unclear whether Sophie was unaware of the ramifications of her family member's illness upon her life at school or whether she was unwilling to accept it. Indeed, with increased responsibilities she no doubt had very little space and time to reflect upon the situation herself. Moreover, there was no supervision facility in place within the school to aid this process. The former scenario seemed more plausible as an explanation as when Sophie highlighted to Helen the extreme importance of the teaching partnership in each year group. In terms of her working relationship with Gillian, she felt they worked together a great deal. Sophie believed there were three qualities underpinning the formation of a productive working relationship: communication, respect and tolerance. She stated, '...its easier if you do get on but even if you don't get on, you've got to address that before anything else I would say.' The intensity of this situation was eventually dissolved to some extent when full-time care was arranged for the family member

involved, lessening Sophie's responsibilities at home. However, it was apparent to Helen that the relationship between the two teachers never really recovered. Indeed, upon completion of the academic year, their teaching partnership came to an end with Sophie moving into Year 4.

I now go on to introduce to you, the four children in 6B who took part in the research: Charlotte, Isabel, Jaleela and Roberto.

### **'She absorbs everything, like a sponge really': *introducing Charlotte***

Well liked by teaching staff and class peers, Charlotte is one of the more popular members of class 6B. Of petite build, she has shoulder length shiny brown hair framing her face. With her animated expression, huge smile and brown eyes, Charlotte has a certain sense of personal charm which draws others to her. Wearing the requisite school uniform, always with the option of charcoal grey trousers, Charlotte is well presented at all times. She has been a pupil at Roseberry Hill since the start of her educational career in nursery and also has a brother at the same school, currently in Year 3. In light of this, she and her parents have been members of the wider school community for the duration of her education. Although she has a divided home life, her carers provide a safe and secure environment. Charlotte spends half her week living with her dad, Mr Hannon and his partner Julie; the other half of the week is spent with her mum, Ms Finn and her partner Richard. Her brother, Matthew, aged eight accompanies Charlotte, following the same routine. Her parents split up when she was four years of age. Charlotte's mum's house is in walking distance of Roseberry Hill and when staying there, she walks to and from school with her brother. Her dad's house is the original family home and is located further away from Roseberry Hill. When she stays there, she is driven to school with her brother. Charlotte's dad works as a family therapist and his partner is a social worker. Charlotte's mum is a psychologist and her partner works in the education department at the city council.

Outside school, Charlotte has an active life. At the start of Year 6 she was in the girl guides, but left after a new leader started as 'she wasn't as much fun.' She is currently a member of a local female basketball team, which meets up every Saturday for matches and alternate Tuesdays for practice. She regularly spends time with friends, many of whom are fellow pupils in class 6B. With her best friend Amy they 'hangout, gossip and play clothes and shops.' Together they meet up with several boys in the class and 'play football and dares.' As central parties in both her home and school life, they serve to strengthen Charlotte's mesosystem link between home and school. In addition, Charlotte has two friends who don't attend Roseberry Hill. One is an ex-pupil from this same primary school, who she

sees fortnightly. Together, they 'gossip, play and bake cakes.' She also spends time with one girl who lives next door to her dad, they 'play football, hangout and sing'. This latter friend is a year older and attends Greenwood, the secondary school which Charlotte will join at the end of Year 6. Charlotte is also active in her family life. With her dad, she plays football and takes care of their tropical fish. He is the only carer identified by Charlotte to help her out with her homework. Charlotte goes on individual shopping trips with both her mum and her dad's partner, Julie. With Richard, she plays football and basketball. Charlotte reports that she is close to her brother; together they 'play football, argue, wrestle and walk to school.'

In her immediate family circles, Charlotte states that they are 'close' and that she 'can talk to everyone.' Charlotte also has regular contact with her grandparents on her mum's side, seeing them weekly. Because her paternal grandparents live some distance away, she sees them infrequently. In discussion with Helen, it was evident that Charlotte experiences positive proximal relations with friends and family members and in this sense she has a multiplicity of healthy microsystems. Charlotte is able to successfully transfer the skills she has developed in these proximal relationships to wider, everyday interactions; here, demonstrating the use of metacognitive skills.

In the classroom, Charlotte is one of a handful of children to achieve the balance between work and play. This was recognised by Helen and Mrs Brookes. Whilst she works consistently and achieves a high level of educational attainment, she also ploughs her energies into social relationships and activities. As noted by Mrs Brookes 'Charlotte is just one of those children that will just work hard. She's not one that will just do the minimum but she doesn't work too hard either.' In view of this, Charlotte is engaging with the explicit values of the teacher but simultaneously complying with the implicit practices of the class community. In terms of the latter, it was acceptable to actively participate in lessons and achieve high marks but not to demonstrate excessive interest in lessons or be intensively driven by academic performance. In discussion with Helen, Mrs Brookes acknowledged Charlotte's ability to relate positively with her class peers. Whilst this social side was not

identified by her class teacher as a central aspect of her learning journey in Year 6, it did receive greater emphasis from Helen and Charlotte's father. Mr Hannon attended the second parents' evening towards the end of March. After Mrs Brookes had summarised Charlotte's progress in her academic work, he actively sought information about her ability to socialise. If we are to consider that social skills are of equal value to academic performance, Charlotte can be perceived as a model pupil.

Regardless of the member of staff taking the lesson, Charlotte always paid attention, particularly during the introductory 'chalk and talk' sessions. She showed equal respect for Mrs Brookes, the classroom assistants, staff members at the CCC and supply teachers, whether internal to the school or external. In the classroom, her seat was located in an awkward position and she was required to physically turn in order to view both Mrs Brookes and the board. At the start of the year, she did just that and it was clear that she was paying attention. Initially she did not put her hand up to volunteer answers to questions posed, but with some prompting from Mrs Brookes this quickly changed. For example, her active participation was much more evident in February than January and this permeated throughout all subject domains. Minimally volunteering answers at first, her contributions rose dramatically and she started to answer three or four questions in a single lesson. With this change in her level of participation, Helen observed she also stopped turning to face the board. When Helen clarified with her if she was listening, it was evident that she had absorbed the information; she relayed back to Helen, a summary of what Mrs Brookes had said. As Charlotte's time in Year 6 progressed, she started to undertake additional tasks whilst Mrs Brookes addressed the class as a whole. For example, she continued with her work or talked with fellow pupils sat on her table. Despite dividing her attention she was able to undertake the work discussed by Mrs Brookes independently with minimal assistance; it was evident she could multitask effectively. Indeed, at parents' evening Mrs Brookes did comment that she would prefer Charlotte to talk less in class, as although it didn't affect her work, it did affect the work of others.

As Charlotte is considered by Mrs Brookes as 'a high achiever' with 'high ability' Helen is not allocated a primary role to work with her individually or in small group situations. Nevertheless, Helen has frequent contact with Charlotte who instigates assistance and conversation. A core time for this interaction was 6B's weekly visits to the CCC. When situated at the front of the line with her best friend Amy, Charlotte proved herself to be reliable and responsible following Helen's instructions. Located directly behind Helen, the teaching assistant was often invited into their conversation. This typically covered a wide range of topics, spanning favourite television and films, their future desire for additional body piercing and a discussion about becoming vegetarian. Welcomed to participate, Helen was perceived as a collaborative party rather than a distanced member of teaching staff.

On the journey to and from the CCC, Charlotte and Amy also took the opportunity to voice their concerns about their forthcoming transition to secondary school. Although the move wouldn't take place until September, the girls were talking about it in March. Their anxiety stemmed from their lack of knowledge of the practices at Greenwood High School. Familiar with the practices of Roseberry Hill, of which as Year 6 pupils they were now 'experts,' they sought confirmation that certain practices would be continued in the secondary school. Charlotte recalled to Helen a dream she had about eating in the cafeteria at Greenwood; her overwhelming concern was whether she would get to sit with her friend at lunchtime. Presently at Roseberry Hill those who ate sandwiches and school dinners occupied separate sections of the dinner hall and she wondered if this practice would be replicated at Greenwood as she wished to eat school dinners and her friend was intending to bring sandwiches. She also expressed anxiety over whether they would get to be in the same class as they 'wanted to do everything together.' Upon Helen suggesting that the practices would be different, Charlotte expressed concern. Helen reassured them both stating that they would be fine and advised them to familiarise themselves with the practices of Greenwood by asking those pupils who already attended the school. Charlotte ended the conversation on a positive note, telling Helen how much she was looking forward to going to Greenwood. Despite being so early on in the year, Charlotte

told Helen what type of coat and bag she was going to have and recited what she was going to pack in her bag: umbrella, mobile phone, keys, folders, hairbrush and bobble. Despite the emergence of debilitating thoughts around the transition to secondary school, Charlotte is seen to be working through them rather than becoming immobilised by them. She is seeking reassurance from Helen and demonstrates high personal self-efficacy in terms of her ability to manage the forthcoming move. This is confirmed in conversation with Helen, where she states she is growing up and is ready to move on.

Charlotte works independently without assistance the majority of the time. On those occasions when she needs guidance, she seeks help initially from friends or peers seated on her table. If they were unable to assist, she asks teaching staff. At the CCC, she prefers to seek assistance from Helen rather than Mrs Brookes or the teaching staff. Working from the point which Charlotte managed independently, Helen shared her knowledge and skills with Charlotte to give her the tools to move beyond her current performance. Here, we can see the creation of a zone of proximal development in action. For example, in creating her first PowerPoint programme, Charlotte used the word art facility. Helen demonstrated to her that the size and slant of the letters could be changed and in addition, raised her awareness of the variety of bullet points available that she could use. After observing Helen making the changes and then undoing them, Charlotte proceeded to integrate the ideas into her PowerPoint presentation, making alterations to both aspects of her slides. In other CCC lessons, Charlotte found solutions to problems working in collaboration with Helen. For example, in one lesson Mrs Brookes had asked Charlotte and Amy to copy out a story entitled 'I want my mummy' in English and German using the Microsoft Publisher programme. At one point they were trying to insert pictures of three individual owls on to a background. Each owl had a white box around it which they were trying unsuccessfully to delete. Helen asked if it was okay to have a go at finding a solution to the problem and explained that she would undo her attempts if they did not work. Helen then inserted a line border the same colour as the background and this successfully disguised the white line. The girls were impressed and repeated the same approach with another owl, but it

was unsuccessful. Seeking assistance again, Charlotte then suggested to Helen to use a thicker border line and it proved successful.

Throughout the year, Charlotte managed her relationships with class peers effectively. She was able to undertake collaborative work with any child or group of children without issue. However, there was one incident which she initially struggled to manage. In March, Charlotte experienced some difficulty in her relationships with two male pupils in her friendship group, Roberto and Jun. These difficulties continued throughout April. She reported her concern to Helen stating that they were calling her names. Helen observed their attempts to wind her up and recognising it was a ploy to get attention, she advised Charlotte to ignore them. When required to work collaboratively in group situations, the friction continued and Charlotte and Roberto bickered. However by June, they were working well together, producing an excellent piece of work together on racism for which they received a teaching assistant award. Although initially phased by the boys' behaviour, she developed coping strategies to manage the situation effectively, preferring to resolve the problem without taking it further and involving the class teacher. Here, she is again working within the accepted parameters of the class community of practice.

From the viewpoints of multiple stakeholders, Charlotte's learning journey in Year 6 is highly successful. For those interested solely in academic attainment, Charlotte excelled, surpassing government expectations for her age group. This was evident in consultation of her performance in both Year 5 and Year 6. Upon leaving Year 5, Charlotte was independently achieving Level 4 in both English and maths. In the practice SATs papers undertaken at the start of January and the end of February in Year 6, she attained Level 5 in all three subject domains: English, maths and science. Upon leaving Year 6, she had achieved again Level 5 in all areas, moreover her teacher's assessment thought her capable of achieving even higher, with a predicted Level 6 in English. Indeed, at parents' evening Mrs Brookes exclaimed that Charlotte was 'fantastic' and said to her father, that Charlotte could be her 'sidekick as her suggestions were valuable to everyone in the class.' In discussion with Helen, Mrs Brookes felt that Charlotte learnt 'by just

being there 'cos she absorbs everything...like a sponge really.' This notion mirrors the underpinning belief and practice of the current educational system, where children are characterised as empty vessels to be filled with knowledge and skills. Despite being a high achiever in all subject domains throughout the curriculum, Charlotte's favourite areas were non-assessed: art and games. These are also popular subject domains in her friendship community of practice.

For those stakeholders looking beyond academic performance, it is evident Charlotte possesses effective social skills and has a confident and optimistic approach to life. She has established and continues to maintain healthy microsystems with a multiplicity of parties, both in and outside the school environment. One can see that she is able to relate to anyone, regardless of gender, age and race. In terms of life skills, her ability to relate to a multiplicity of diverse parties is extremely powerful and will enable her to integrate more easily and confidently into society. Both Charlotte's carers and her teaching staff in Year 6 encourage her to take an active role in her learning and development. For example, Charlotte's father not only invited her to accompany them in the parents' evening session, but sought to empower her in the interaction by actively encouraging her participation in the conversation about her progress. He also invited Charlotte to join the research interview conducted by Helen regarding her learning.

Alongside this, Mrs Brookes, judging Charlotte to possess the necessary skills and knowledge to perform to a high standard, goes on to channel Charlotte's energies into attaining maximum marks on the SATs. For example, in Charlotte's targets for the autumn term Mrs Brookes writes 'In comprehension, continue to use evidence from the story to support your answers, it increases your mark considerably.' Here, the valued notion of active participation in learning is a shared practice of home and school and this serves to strengthen the home - school mesosystem link. Whilst on one level, Charlotte's carers do not play an active role in the school's extra curricula activities in terms of helping out and accompanying children on trips, they do engage on another level, in that they ensure she is prepared for any trips or special activities. They are aware of the day-to-day activities that make up her

life at school and show an interest in the wider school events. For example, at parents' evening, Charlotte's father knew that the school was celebrating 'European Week' and that all children were undertaking activities associated with the countries in Europe. Charlotte's success in both the social and academic arenas can perhaps be partially attributed to the overlapping values of home and school. Her mesosystem link between these communities of practice is strong and healthy.

**‘There is no point putting your hand up if she doesn’t pick you’:**

***introducing Isabel***

The most petite girl in Year 6, Isabel has long blonde hair reaching down to her lower back. Of fair complexion, with large green eyes and a button nose, she looks younger than her years. Wearing the requisite school uniform, always with the option of a charcoal grey skirt, worn in the cold weather with dark tights, Isabel is well presented at all times. She has been a pupil at Roseberry Hill since reception and over the years, has been joined by two sisters: Anna aged eight, is in Year 3 and Ella aged seven, is in Year 2. When in each others company, the girls ‘play games’ and ‘argue’. The Wilson family are and will continue to be members of the wider school community for several years to come. Isabel herself has been a member of this community for the majority of her educational career; previously she attended nursery closer to home. With siblings also attending Roseberry Hill, the home-school mesosystem link is strengthened.

Isabel lives two miles away from Roseberry Hill and makes the car journey to and from school with her sisters daily. Both Isabel’s parents work full-time, her mum works as a physiotherapist and her dad as a self-employed builder. Their long working hours impact on the time they can spend with Isabel and her sisters; indeed, in conversation with Helen, Isabel identified multiple family caregivers. Aunty Val, her dad’s sister, looks after Isabel and her sisters every Tuesday evening and some weekends. Sharing in this caregiver role, are her maternal grandparents. Living in a city not too far away, they look after Isabel and her sisters on occasional weekends. Together they shop, spend time in the local park and visit the cinema. Both her maternal and paternal grandparents spend time with the three girls in the summer holidays. The latter live some distance away and this accounts for their infrequent visits. When they are together, Isabel and her sisters are taken swimming and to the park. At home with her parents, Isabel is involved in household activities such as food shopping and tidying up. As a family they watch shared television programmes and go to the park. In discussion with Helen, it was evident that Isabel experienced positive proximal relations with family members. Because extended family members, specifically Aunty Val and her

maternal grandparents spend time with Isabel and her sisters regularly, they have become central figures in her life alongside those comprising her immediate family circle. In this sense, Isabel has developed a number of healthy microsystems with members of her family.

Outside the family circle, Isabel leads an active lifestyle. On Tuesdays she attends girl guides with her best friend Alice, a fellow pupil in class 6B. She accompanies Isabel home after school, and together they spend time playing and chatting before leaving to attend girl guides. On Wednesdays Isabel and Alice attend the after school computer club together. This is an opportunity for those pupils who either don't have access to a computer at home or for those who have minimal skills, to develop their confidence, knowledge and skills. Once the session is finished, the girls walk together to Alice's house where they spend time 'on the computer, playing games and chatting' before Isabel is picked up. On Thursdays, Alice participates in the school netball team, led by one of the teachers at Roseberry Hill. Each week when not playing against another school, they practice together as a team. The netball team comprises solely pupils from 6B, five girls and one boy. The fellow girl members of this netball team also feature heavily in Isabel's life at school; all but one are identified by Isabel as comprising her central friendship group in the school context. Again, Alice is a central character in both arenas. Here it can be seen, that one of the strongest microsystems which Isabel shares is with Alice her best friend. They spend much time together both inside and outside of school. As a common feature of Isabel's everyday life at home and at school, Alice serves as a link between these communities. At present, these communities constitute the two core arenas in Isabel's life.

Although several factors highlight that there is a home-school mesosystem link in place for Isabel, the quality of it is somewhat impoverished. There are two central factors which serve as positive indicators for a strong meso-link between these two communities: Isabel and her two sisters attend the same school and Alice, Isabel's best friend, is also at Roseberry Hill and in the same class. Despite these connections between the home and school domains the link arguably remains tenuous. Helen observed evidence of conflicting valued practices between the two

communities. For example, whilst the school actively encourages punctuality and high attendance, Isabel was frequently late arriving and also went on family holidays twice during term time. The first holiday meant that she joined her Year 6 class one week later than her fellow pupils. The second holiday was taken shortly after the SATs and saw her off school for just under three weeks. Because of time off for holidays and short bouts of illness, Isabel had 89% attendance throughout Year 6; this will have had implications for her coverage of the school curriculum, leaving her inevitably disadvantaged. Helen further noted that Isabel had gone on a family holiday at the start of the new academic year in Year 5 and had on occasion, been late arriving for school during that year. The reasons for this were unclear but, nevertheless, time off impeded Isabel's progress in school. In addition to this issue, Roseberry Hill actively invites parents and carers to be part of the school community. However, there was limited parental participation from Isabel's parents in extra curricular activities. For example, they didn't help out on class outings and were too busy to attend the parental research interviews. No doubt this minimal involvement is a consequence of their full-time working hours. Here, an exosystem factor is weakening the potential for a stronger home-school mesosystem link.

In the classroom, observation of Isabel's behaviour led Helen to believe that Isabel experiences difficulties complying with some of the valued practices of the class community. It was an explicit practice that whilst teaching staff addressed the class, the pupils didn't speak between themselves but listened. However, for Isabel this proved to be a very difficult rule to comply with. In literacy and science lessons, Isabel's chair was positioned in such a way that she was required to physically turn in her seat to observe the teacher and the whiteboard. However, she chose only to make this effort specifically when the teacher directed pupils' attention to the board or conducted an experiment at the front of the classroom. Thus, when the teacher generally addressed the class, it was often unclear if Isabel paid attention. Intermittent conversations with friends and peers on her table served to indicate that she didn't listen or focus, as did her continual messing with paraphernalia on her desktop. In 6B, there was a common lesson format across subject domains, with pupils required to undertake independent work after

the 'chalk and talk' introductory session delivered by Mrs Brookes. These times called for an independent approach to work and proved to be the most challenging for Isabel. Indeed, despite continual prompting from Helen and Mrs Brookes to focus, the talking did not cease. In some cases, it took centre stage with work grinding to a complete halt. Whilst Isabel is clearly able to relate socially to her class peers, her social circle often took precedence over her academic work. This remained a pertinent issue throughout Year 6 with ramifications for Isabel's performance.

Constant chatter meant that Isabel worked at a much slower pace than her peers. She rarely finished set class work in lesson time and this meant it spilt over into homework, which she has to complete on top of any already set. Despite this, Isabel expressed reservations over completing her work at home. Sharing her thoughts with Helen as they went through her books, she said 'I do horrible work at home, I do better work at school...I can't get comfortable at home.' In addition, her slow pace in class was reinforced by the fact that she was a slow writer. This is in part due to the comments made by her class teacher Mrs Brookes, who repeatedly drew attention to Isabel's handwriting and presentation. Not only was Isabel explicitly given a handwriting practice book, but her books were littered with comments such as: 'you must join up your letters for handwriting' (handwriting book, September 2001); 'much better, now work on even letters' (science book, November 2001); 'target handwriting' (literacy book, September, October, November, February and April 2001); 'watch presentation' (literacy book, January 2001). These comments were evident in her work in all subject domains and throughout the entirety of Year 6.

Isabel drew this to Helen's attention in one literacy lesson in April. Working in a small group, Helen requested that they all complete their comprehension exercise neatly. This invoked an emotional response from Isabel who remarked that Mrs Brookes always wrote something at the end of her work and that it annoyed her. Seeking to challenge Isabel's debilitating thoughts, Helen asked to see her book, consultation of which found that Isabel's presentation did indeed receive much criticism. Giving it back to Isabel and stating 'try your best that will be good enough

for me,' Isabel's sense of anxiety regarding her work presentation remained heightened. Here, the ongoing negative comments from Mrs Brookes had impacted upon Isabel's perceived self-efficacy to perform and write neatly; Helen's attempts to placate her were unsuccessful. Isabel had barely started her work when she asked to begin again as she had crossed through some wrong words. Helen reassured her it was fine and to continue, Isabel tried but became increasingly distressed, stating 'I keep writing the wrong words' as she made further errors. To alleviate her anxiety, Helen agreed she could start the work afresh but in doing so, Helen was conscious that she was reinforcing the notion that Isabel had difficulties with handwriting.

Reflecting on her relationship with Mrs Brookes towards the end of Year 6, Isabel relates to Helen: 'My relationship with Mrs Brookes is better than it used to be because I used to get really annoyed with her because she would keep putting 'watch your handwriting' but she's not written that recently so I'm not really annoyed with her anymore.' In another research session, Isabel stated 'I hated her because of the things of handwriting; I got fed up with it.' Interestingly, it is only when Isabel and Helen are removed from the class community and working in their shared research practices, that Isabel is able to articulate her feelings towards Mrs Brookes. The strength and duration of this issue shaped the developing relationship between Isabel and her class teacher; indeed, it actually served to dominate it for some time. Not identified as a 'high ability' learner, Isabel received limited one-to-one attention from Mrs Brookes. Thus, much of their contact was based on written comment and general class interactions rather than interpersonal proximal processes. Isabel's experiences of the teacher-pupil interactions in the wider classroom setting were that she 'listened' and Mrs Brookes spent her time 'shouting and teaching.' Isabel's insightful comments illuminate that the teacher-pupil microsystem was severely impoverished for much of the year, but had strengthened towards the end of the year, as Mrs Brookes' negative comments had ceased. In turn, Isabel's perceived self-efficacy to manage her work presentation had increased. Despite the evident problems experienced by Isabel in relation to her handwriting and presentation, the issue was not addressed by either her teacher or her mother at parents' evening in March.

Because Isabel fell in the middle ability grouping within the class, her primary relationships with teaching staff members in the school community were with classroom assistants. She was not identified as needing additional and targeted support in numeracy from Alison, but qualified to receive structured weekly support from Helen in literacy. In reflecting on her relationship with Helen, Isabel states 'my friendship with Helen is good.' Here, Isabel identifies a positive quality in her relationship with the classroom assistant, which existed alongside her turbulent relationship with her teacher. It is evident she experienced a positive microsystem with a member of teaching staff (probably much needed). Across all subject domains, Isabel did not have difficulty asking for assistance when she didn't understand a question or didn't know how to approach a task. She exhibited no desire for the time and attention of any particular member of staff. However, habitually overlooked by Mrs Brookes, Isabel's previous comments indicate that she was aware that it was unlikely she would receive attention from the teacher; rather, it would be Helen or Alison who would assist her. Here, Isabel demonstrates awareness that the poor relationship she has with Mrs Brookes shapes both her and the teacher's own behaviour in the classroom. This elucidates the impact of 'poor' and 'more effective' teaching staff-pupil microsystems upon Isabel's learning journey in Year 6.

Although Helen felt she had established an effective working relationship with Isabel, the conflicting behaviour of Mrs Brookes with the values of the literacy group and wider classroom community did pose a problem. In every session Helen urged the members of her group to put their hands up and participate in question and answer sessions in both the group and wider classroom setting. Explicit in her reasoning, she informed the group that if they didn't participate it told her that they were either: not interested, not listening or not understanding the information being communicated to them. In response, Isabel started to put her hand up immediately. However, one week Isabel stated to Helen 'She never picks anyone on this table, there is no point putting your hand up if she doesn't pick you.' Helen was increasingly aware that Mrs Brookes tended to pick those children of 'higher ability' to answer questions which inevitably impeded the participation of others in the class. Nonetheless, Helen encouraged Isabel to keep trying believing

she needed positive recognition from Mrs Brookes, but unaware at the time, of the depth of difficulties in their relationship. Towards the very end of the session, Isabel answered one question posed by the teacher, after which she smiled at Helen, acknowledging that her advice to keep trying had paid off. Despite Isabel's increasing effort to participate in whole class teaching sessions, the teacher's actions continued to reinforce current practices where high ability children were actively targeted to the detriment of all others.

When undertaking tasks which called for a collaborative approach, Isabel worked effectively with peers. Occasionally, problems arose if Isabel worked with friends in a small group setting. Her friendship group within the class tended to operate at a level perceived by Helen, as being more childish than could be expected for their age and in comparison with the rest of that year. Often squabbling over insignificant issues, they frequently fell out for short periods of time, refusing to speak to each other. Whilst this inevitably impacted negatively on the group's ability to work collaboratively, it did have positive affects for Isabel's independent work. Helen noted that Isabel only completed her academic work in the allotted time and to the standard required, if unable or unwilling to engage in social activities. To Helen's knowledge, such times would be: when she had fallen out with her friends, when she was ill and when she was determined to complete the task at hand. Here, Isabel's inhibited participation in her friendship community of practice enabled her to have greater level of membership in the academic community of practice.

Despite an impoverished microsystem with her class teacher Mrs Brookes, Isabel managed to perform successfully on the SATs, attaining levels in line with government expectations for her age group. She moved up from Year 5 having independently attained Level 4 in both English and maths. She performed at this level throughout Year 6. She achieved Level 4 in all three assessed subject domains in both practice SATs paper and the final exam. Here one can see that despite achieving higher than average in Year 5, Isabel's level of measured performance then hit a plateau; remaining unchanged despite a full academic year aimed at specifically enhancing children's performance on the SATs. Her progress

had been impeded, illuminating the central role of the teacher-pupil relationship upon children's learning. Although there were other members of teaching staff who worked with Isabel during her time in year, they worked on a part-time basis in the 6B classroom; in contrast, Isabel's relationship with her class teacher dominated her everyday life in this setting.

However, looking beyond the SATs results, one can thankfully see that Isabel's development did not grind to a halt. Her positive working relationships with both classroom assistants and her highly valued relationships with peers ameliorated the negative affects of the poor teacher-pupil proximal processes she endured for much of the year. Despite experiencing difficulties in the class community on a daily basis for much of the year, Isabel survived. She sought membership of alternative communities of practice in order to cope with her inhibited participation in the relationship with her class teacher. In these terms, she is both resourceful and resilient, highly desirable qualities of any successful member of society.

**'I get up at six, eat, go back to bed for a bit, get ready for school, starve all day till four': *Introducing Jaleela***

Were it not for her piercing green eyes, which upon contact ensure remembrance, Jaleela could easily be lost in the sea of green jumpers worn by pupils at Roseberry Hill. It is the start of the academic year; wearing the requisite school uniform with the option of trousers and a hijab, an Islamic headscarf covering the head and neck, Jaleela sits silently in class, observing all that goes on around her. Jaleela's father, Mr Ali, pointed out that such displays of behaviour were similar to his own. He describes his daughter as 'reserved,' revealing that such periods of observation allow you to contemplate where you stand in relation to others. Whilst many of the children in the class hang out in friendship groups, observations reveal that Jaleela doesn't belong to any one group in particular. Despite moving up with the same class since her arrival at the school in Year 4, she speaks minimally with peers and makes little eye contact with teaching staff. The latter, Helen believed, was a sign of shyness but it would later become apparent that given her cultural background, it was in fact, a sign of respect.

Jaleela lives with her parents, siblings and grandmother (her dad's mother) in a house approximately one mile from Roseberry Hill. Given the close proximity of her home, she walks to school each morning, attending mosque (held in the school's lunch hall) after school before making the journey home. Jaleela is one of five children. Also taught by Mrs Brookes, her older sister left Roseberry Hill last year and now attends the local high school, Greenwood. She has a younger brother and sister, both of whom attend Roseberry Hill and are in Year 3 and Year 1 respectively. Her youngest sister is two years of age and attends a local playgroup. Jaleela reports to have good relationships with all but her older sister, of which she says 'we don't get on, she's a bully.' At home, Jaleela speaks three languages; she talks with her mum in Urdu, her dad in English and her grandmother in Punjabi. Jaleela's family maintains a fundamental role in her day-to-day life and she talks readily about the activities she undertakes with each family member. However, outside this intimate tight-knit circle Jaleela reveals she does not participate in any other groups or activities except for after school mosque.

Whilst many of her class peers are members of local community groups such as Girl Guides or sport teams, and speak of friends they see on a regular basis in the evenings and at the weekends, Jaleela spends much time at or near home with her family. Together, they visit her aunty, uncles and cousins (again, on her dad's side) on a monthly basis. They all reside in the area the Ali family moved from three years prior. In light of this, one can see that Jaleela experiences positive proximal relations with each family member except currently, her elder sister; nonetheless, all play an integral role in her life. The fundamental role played by family in Jaleela's life is underpinned by Islamic teachings. Here, it is thought that the family is irreplaceable by any other social form or structure. Muslims believe that healthy families underpin the stability of any society or civilisation. In this sense, her relationships in the family sphere will be some of the strongest she ever experiences.

At the start of the academic year, Jaleela chose not to actively participate in 'chalk and talk' sessions; that is, she did not volunteer answers to questions posed. However, she was extremely well behaved, undertaking her work quietly and without fuss. To an outsider it may seem that Jaleela is adopting a passive stance in class, possibly because she is bored or disinterested. To an insider, it may be thought that Jaleela is engaging in her observational role, trying to identify both the explicit and implicit practices valued in the class community of practice. Because it is the start of the academic year, these are more than ever undergoing negotiation, but Jaleela is not playing an active role in shaping these practices. It may be postulated that she resorts to 'safe mode,' displaying behaviours which she recognises are valued in multiple communities of practice of which she has been and continues to be a legitimate member: previous classes at school, home life, the after school mosque. In this role she rarely asks for help outright, rather, she waits for Helen or Alison to approach and ask if she is okay before requesting assistance. Working with sixty new pupils across two classes, this took some time for the classroom assistants to realise.

Indeed, it became apparent early on, that many of the children in both Year 6 classes experienced some difficulty asking teaching staff explicitly for guidance.

Whilst this was addressed as a class issue in 6E, with Mrs Eastwood encouraging all pupils to raise their hands and ask for help when they needed, the issue remained unaddressed by Mrs Brookes in 6B, with only a small group of children requesting assistance during the autumn term. Indeed, it wasn't until midway through the second term that Jaleela starting putting her hand up to ask for assistance. At this point the nature of her relationships changed. Regardless of the activity being undertaken, she preferred initially to receive attention from a classroom assistant over that of Mrs Brookes. Early on in the academic year, Helen and Alison were allocated to work with a specific group in literacy and numeracy lessons; being a core member of both groups, Jaleela received increased time and attention from both classroom assistants. This repeated opportunity for small group work enabled Helen and Alison to develop effective working relationships with those pupils comprising their groups, including Jaleela. To any stakeholder, it perhaps seems inevitable that because she working with classroom assistants on a regular basis, Jaleela feels more comfortable in seeking help from them. An alternative viewpoint is that Jaleela is a full member in this smaller community of practice. Familiar with the practices valued in this setting, she feels safe and secure with some level of established trust. She has developed the confidence to talk to them with increasing ease and was familiar with the groups approach to tasks. From this, it can be seen that mere regular contact with teaching staff does not automatically guarantee the development of positive working relationships.

At the request of Mrs Brookes, Helen worked with the same group of four pupils during literacy lessons, as pointed out above, this group included Jaleela. Completed independently, Jaleela's comprehension work indicated limited understanding of passage content, with her sentence structure poor and incomplete. The other pupils comprising this group experienced similar problems. But for Jaleela these problems were exacerbated by the fact that English was not her first language. For example, during one comprehension exercise which focused on instructional writing entitled 'making pancakes,' Jaleela was unfamiliar with some of the terminology used in the passage. This included batter, spatula and tilt. She also experienced difficulty when asked to write down the explanation

for the word 'fasting.' Despite having a dictionary to hand to look up the definition, she sought guidance from Helen. In the passage she noted that it was described as 'people went without certain kinds of food for forty days.' In the dictionary, Jaleela read out that it said 'to go without food.' For Muslims, fasting involves giving up food and liquid during the hours of first light of dawn to sunset for the duration of one month, termed Ramadan. Aware that Jaleela as a Muslim, had experienced fasting, Helen thought it appropriate to encourage her to discuss her own experiences of fasting. Jaleela recalled them as 'I get up at six, eat, go back to bed for a bit, get ready for school, starve all day till four.' In asking her to recall her personal experiences of this time, Helen encouraged Jaleela to make the connections between her personal experience and the descriptions in the text and dictionary, that is, to go without food. Jaleela failed to recognise the link, instead using the dictionary definition alone. Helen asked Jaleela why she had chosen not to draw on her own experiences of fasting to inform her answer and she stated 'In the dictionary, it doesn't say that I go to school.' Perhaps because her definition was context bound, Jaleela lacked the ability to transfer her experiences across other domains. Her understanding was concrete and situation specific.

With repeated exposure to comprehension tasks, the target of the literacy group was to increase pupils' understanding and ensure they were able to demonstrate this clearly in their written answers. Helen made this group target explicit to the children when they first began to work together, integrating the use of personal targets gradually so that each pupil had a specific goal to work towards. Most of the time, Mrs Brookes would use a short chalk and talk session to introduce the literacy task, for example, a comprehension exercise. Leading on from this, Helen would encourage discussion of the questions and answers before written completion of the exercise. This allowed for the sharing of individual interpretations within a shared zone of proximal development, allowing all pupils to benefit from access to alternative viewpoints. Initially, it had been difficult to encourage pupils' participation in discussion of the task at hand, with short and closed answers a favourite for all, particularly Jaleela. Here, the explicit goal of the literacy group did not tie in with Jaleela's perceptions of the valued practices of the wider class community. Jaleela was eager to get on with the task and finish it as

quickly as possible, that was her understanding of 'good work'. She had gained this perception from her observations of teacher-pupil interactions in the classroom; those pupils who were able to finish set tasks during class time received praise from Mrs Brookes for their ability to focus. Unfortunately, when Jaleela worked quickly, her writing became untidy and she failed to write her answers out using full sentences.

Realising the gap between the valued practice of the literacy group and the class community of practice, Helen sought to actively make a link across the two social spaces. Aware of the integral role of the SATs in Year 6, and knowing they had a massive influence in shaping classroom practice, Helen pointed out to Jaleela that both untidy writing and failure to use complete sentences would lose her marks in her literacy tests. It was clear that Jaleela initially found the discussion work at the start of sessions frustrating as it was a hindrance to completing her work quickly. And her interactions in the literacy group impacted upon her levels of participation in the class community of practice. Indeed, like many other pupils in the class, she often ran out of class time and had to finish the comprehension exercise as homework. She was keen for Helen to give her the correct answers in sentence format, which she could write down verbatim. However once aware of the value of the tasks for her performance, she adjusted quickly. Jaleela became used to the format of the group discussion and learnt that her active participation was valued by the classroom assistant. Moreover, listening to others' perspectives meant greater detail could be integrated into her answers. Nonetheless, she was still in a rush to complete the exercise and she was continually reminded by both Helen and Mrs Brookes about the need for neatness. Indeed, the latter member of staff had littered Jaleela's books with comments about her presentation throughout the first school term: 'target handwriting' (literacy book, September and December 2001); 'Jaleela, please watch your presentation' (maths book, September 2001); 'try to get your letters even' (handwriting book, October 2001); 'presentation needs targeting' (literacy book, November 2001); 'you must target presentation. Use a ruler to draw boxes' (science book, November 2001). Despite being a valued practice in both the literacy group and wider class communities, Jaleela failed to assign a high value to neat presentation of work, particularly her writing. Rather, she ploughed

her energies into participating in the discussion in the literacy community of practice and finishing her work quickly to meet the class community of practice.

Jaleela's relationship with her class teacher, Mrs Brookes, was distant. Jaleela rarely had the opportunity to work with Mrs Brookes in a small group situation as the teacher tended to spend her time with the 'brighter' pupils. In addition, much of the assistance provided by Mrs Brookes in a whole class scenario took place at her desk at the front of the classroom, with pupils required to approach her specifically for help. Jaleela found this difficult to do, preferring to seek assistance from Helen or Alison. During lesson time, they walked around the classroom, assisting pupils as they remained sat at their desks, enabling them to receive help without drawing much attention. Implicit in these practices, are notions of power. Firstly, only those pupils who achieve are deemed worthy of being given the opportunity to form a more intimate relationship with their class teacher. Secondly, it is implied that the classroom assistants don't have the sufficient knowledge and skills to work with higher ability grouped children. Clearly, possessing the necessary qualifications and undergoing specific training, teachers do have a higher level of expertise than classroom assistants, but this is true regardless of the ability level of the child. Indeed referring back to Mrs Brookes' teaching philosophy, it can be seen she identifies with higher ability children more easily. This set of circumstances inevitably shaped Jaleela's experiences in the classroom, the central proximal relations for her were with the classroom assistants and not the class teacher.

As the year progressed, Jaleela did however find a way into the teacher's more intimate circle. By volunteering to clean, tidy up and distribute exercise books etc. Jaleela regularly received teacher praise in recognition of her positive actions. Her instigation of this role was publicly acknowledged by Mrs Brookes in class, with fellow pupils following suit, seeking similar commendation from the teacher. From this point forth, Jaleela maintained a primary role in the upkeep of the classroom. Having established a positive relationship with the teacher, Jaleela started to feel confident enough to seek help in lesson time from her class teacher, whilst also continuing to receive assistance from the classroom assistants. Helen observed this change occurred midway through the second term.

Whilst these changes in Jaleela's classroom behaviour indicated that she was more knowledgeable about the practices which dictated life in the Year 6 classroom, in unfamiliar terrain, she resorted back to the 'safe mode' evident at the start of Year 6: the faceless and voiceless Jaleela which aided her invisibility as a 6B pupil. Visits to the CCC saw her behave impeccably. Silent and attentive, she faced each new teacher as they addressed the class (6B were taught by three successive male teachers, all staff at the CCC). She chose not to participate in question and answer sessions and avoided eye contact when pupils were asked to volunteer to come to the front for demonstrations. Again, it was several lessons before Jaleela began to put her hand up in response to questions; hesitant during her first contributions, she was visibly embarrassed upon receipt of praise from the teachers. When the children were asked to undertake independent work at the computers and Jaleela experienced difficulties, she preferred to receive assistance from Helen over that of Mrs Brookes or the CCC staff. She only raised her hand to request help when Helen was close. Again, Jaleela is employing the same management strategy she utilised at the beginning of Year 6.

On those occasions when Mrs Brookes was away and cover was provided, all but a handful of the children, including Jaleela, refused to seek help from the cover teacher when struggling; this was true regardless of whether it was a teacher from elsewhere within the school or external supply. The new member of staff is unfamiliar with the valued practices of the class and this arguably destabilises the situation. After the introductory session at the board, many of the cover teachers spent the remainder of the lesson sat behind their desk, assisting the few children who went to them to seek guidance. In this scenario, they have an explicit role. The rest of the children needing help, including Jaleela, sat patiently awaiting their turn, as the classroom assistant worked their way steadily around the classroom. With both parties familiar with the class 6B practices, it is inevitably easier to work within these parameters than the adjusted practices introduced that day by the supply teacher. Moreover, many of the children have developed an effective working relationship with Helen and Alison. As one internal supply teacher explained to Helen 'As I do not know the class very well and they do not know me,

or respect me as a teacher, today will be more about managing them than teaching them.'

Throughout the year, it was evident that Jaleela experienced developing relationships with teaching staff in Year 6. Alongside this, changes were also apparent in her social relations with class peers. At the start of the year, observations revealed that Jaleela did not belong to any particular friendship group in the class; indeed, she spoke minimally with class members. Helen noted that Jaleela lacked confidence in relating to her class peers, although she was unaware of any incidents that had taken place previously to account for this. At the start of the term, Jaleela mentioned to Helen that she had no friends in the class, Helen had difficulty understanding this as Jaleela had moved up with the same class since her arrival at Roseberry Hill in Year 4. Aware of Jaleela's self debilitating thoughts which made the situation difficult to manage, Helen made a mental note to give her support in the initiation of friendships with members of her class.

The start of the second term saw class 6B start weekly classes at the CCC, which was a twenty minute walk away from Roseberry Hill. Jaleela assumed she has no one to walk with to the CCC and for the first four weeks asked to be Helen's 'partner.' Whilst Jaleela identified a way out of her debilitating thoughts, her solution was not in line with the practices of the class community; that is, children partnered children, not adult parties. In the following description of events, Helen's use of scaffolding to help Jaleela act in line with the practices of the community and manage friendship building is evident. Over the weeks, Helen gradually encouraged Jaleela to take small steps in initiating contact and developing relationships with peers. Upon Jaleela's initial request in the first week, Helen responded by saying 'Let's wait and see if everyone else has got a partner.' Here, Helen's intervention is a means to provide the necessary space to show Jaleela that this unmanageable situation is in fact manageable. As they waited, another girl in the class approached Jaleela and asked if she would be her partner. They walked behind Helen at the front of the line, who observed they talked all the way there and back from the CCC. The second week came and Jaleela repeated her request. Again, Helen said 'Let's wait and see if everyone else has got a partner.'

With no child remaining unpartnered, Helen paired Jaleela up with two other girls. Situated first in line, Helen observed yet again they immersed themselves in talk all the way there and back. Experiencing no problems two weeks running, it seemed to Helen that Jaleela was able to manage the play out of the situation effectively, but initiation seemed to be a problem. The third week saw Jaleela again repeat her request. This time, Helen was more explicit about her role, stating that she didn't have a partner as such because her role as classroom assistant was to support the class. Consequently, Jaleela found another girl to be partner to, situating herself again at the front of the line. By week four, Jaleela organised her own walking partner in advance but asked Helen to clarify with the intended walking partner that the arrangement was still in place as there had been a school holiday since the agreement. Helen reassured Jaleela that it would be fine and Jaleela walked alongside her partner with a third friend.

During the year, Jaleela was the target of two teasing incidents in 6B. Both occurred during the second term following children's return to school after the holiday break. The first took place during a science lesson one afternoon in mid January, where Helen found Jaleela in floods of tears. Taking her out of the situation and giving her a safe space to talk, she gave Jaleela one-to-one support. Weighing a bull dog clip as part of a group experiment, Jaleela explained that one boy had clipped it in a 'rude' place before throwing it at Jaleela and stating 'you've got germs.' As the children were asked to complete independent work on the experiment, the rest of the pupils on her table joined in with the teasing and as a consequence, Jaleela became extremely distressed. Feeling unable to manage the situation, she told Helen that she wanted to go home. Stating that her request would not be possible and that it was best to sort it out now, Jaleela replied 'it will be okay tomorrow because everyone will have forgotten.' Unable to go home or straight to the mosque, Jaleela asked to move to another table. Asking if there was anyone in particular that she would like to sit with, Helen was told 'I don't have any friends.' With the table reprimanded and spilt up, Jaleela was moved. She managed to settle down soon after and her perception of the situation was correct, the incident had blown over by the next day.

The second incident occurred at the end of February on the journey back to school following a lesson at the CCC. Observing that Jaleela looked upset, Helen asked her if anything was wrong. Jaleela assured Helen she was fine but asked if she could walk at the front of the line. During lunchtime, the situation escalated and was in the end sorted out by Ms Thompson, the Head teacher as Jaleela again feeling unable to manage the situation, was found crying and asked to go home. A couple of boys in the class had teased her saying she liked a boy in their class because she had stuck up for him. However, Jaleela stated that she had told them to shut up as she wanted to be able to concentrate on her work in the lesson. In both scenarios, Jaleela felt overwhelmed by the teasing instigated by boys in the class. Unable to ignore her peers' comments for any sustained period of time, she felt helpless. Crying, Jaleela asked to go to the safe haven of her home but was supported to work through the situation with the intervention of teaching staff.

As the year progressed, Jaleela's familiarity with the people and practices in Year 6 increased and in turn, her confidence grew. She could be seen regularly talking with fellow peers seated on her table and was one of a handful of children in 6B who could actually work with any other pupil in the class without incident. This is significant social progress. If one considers that Jaleela doesn't have much contact with others outside her family circle, it is unsurprising that she struggled initially to establish friendships in this arena. Academically, Jaleela was attaining a Level 3 at the end of Year 5; this is in line with government expectations for her age group. She went on to achieve Level 4 in all three subject domains: English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6. Again, attaining the government expectations for her year group, it can be deemed she experienced educational success. But, recognition of her test results alone fails to acknowledge the wider and more intricate picture. Clearly, there was a multiplicity of developmental issues for Jaleela in Year 6 and consideration of these reveal the true complexity of her learning journey.

**‘I hope I get a good job, if I don’t I will blame it all on you...  
only joking!’: *introducing Roberto***

Always found at the centre of a group, Roberto often took the role of class entertainer. With his animated expression, he enjoyed being in the limelight. For example, Roberto played the role of a ventriloquist in the end of the Year 6 school play, he dressed up as a rabbit in a school fundraising event and when attending a ‘living history day’ in Year 6, looked very much the part in his Victorian outfit. Roberto displayed a gift for storytelling and relating jokes and could often be seen making his peers laugh. With his olive skin, green eyes and wavy dark brown hair his looks reflected his Italian and Afro-Caribbean roots. Wearing the requisite school uniform: green jumper, white polo shirt and charcoal grey trousers, Roberto added his own twist. He wore a long silver wallet chain hanging from his waist which gave a skateboarding undertone to his attire, which was concealed when he went to assembly.

Roberto has been a pupil at Roseberry Hill since Year 1. Despite the change in his primary school at this time, the family has never moved from their family home. This is situated approximately two miles from Roseberry Hill and Roberto makes the journey to and from school each day in the car with his mother, Mrs Lazarus. His sister, Luciana is three years older and whilst now in Greenwood, was previously a member of Roseberry Hill. With two children at Roseberry Hill, the Lazarus family have been involved in the wider school community for many years. Indeed, Mrs Lazarus has an active role in the school community of practice and regularly offers her assistance towards school projects. For example, she helped out on one Year 6 trip and was involved in the school’s celebration of European Week, which saw her alongside Roberto, teach Italian to Year 1 pupils. Her active participation in the extra curricula activities of Roseberry Hill served to increase Mrs Lazarus’s familiarity with the school practices. In an interview with Helen, she was able to relate details that could only be ascertained from her involvement. For example, she stated, ‘this classroom has got a lot of girls and I think it is a positive thing because girls are usually quieter than boys.’ The regular participation of Mrs

Lazarus in the Roseberry Hill school community served to strengthen the meso system home-school link for her son.

Roberto lives at home with his parents and his sister. Mrs Lazarus is a freelance landscape architect and designer and works to fit around her home commitments. Mr Lazarus is a self-employed business man and is able to prioritise time with his family. Roberto spends time with both of his parents; with his mum he 'goes out shopping and does maths,' together with his dad, they go out shopping to the city and watch MTV. He also receives support from his dad with his literacy homework. With his sister, Roberto reports that he does 'not much.' He is bilingual and speaks both English and Italian, only the latter with his mother. Mrs Lazarus believes that the combination of these two cultures underpins Roberto's fundamental characteristics; she states 'he's very confident, he's never shy.' Roberto also has two step-siblings on his father's side. His stepbrother is twenty one years of age and his stepsister is older. With the former, who he sees on a monthly basis, Roberto enhances his skateboarding skills; his stepsister takes him 'to special places on her motorbike.' Whilst Roberto does see extended members of the family, many live in Italy and as such, he visits them three times a year during school holidays. Of his dad's family, he sees his uncle fortnightly and his nana yearly at Christmas. In these terms, Roberto primary proximal relationships are with those in his immediate family circle. Whilst he does not currently spent much time with his sister Luciana, Roberto does seem to have healthy microsystems with both his parents.

Socially, Roberto has a large network of friends. At home he plays with two friends who live on the same road; both are Year 7 pupils with one attending Roberto's prospective secondary school, Greenwood. They spend time together in the evenings after school and at weekends, playing football and basketball, practising skateboarding and going on the PlayStation 2 console. Roberto's principle friendship is with Jun, his best friend. Jun is a fellow class member of 6E who he sees on a regular basis outside of school. For example, they both attend scouts every Friday evening where they 'make fires and play a wide variety of games.' At one point in the year, Jun had a suspected serious illness and was off school for a

prolonged period of time. Roberto instigated daily contact with Jun, even when he was away in Italy. He acted as the bridge between the 6B class community and Jun: taking school work home for him alongside get well cards made by peers in class time and keeping his class peers informed of Jun's progress. Here, Roberto's actions are serving to facilitate Jun's sustained membership in the class community of practice. It is evident that the microsystem between Roberto and Jun is strong and healthy. With Jun, Roberto also hangs out with a group of four friends from 6B. Together, they play football and cricket and talk. This friendship group is also central to Roberto's life in school and is extended with the addition of three pupils, two of whom also attend scouts. The overlap between Roberto's home friends and school friends serves again to strengthen the mesosystem link between these two communities. Coupled with his mother's active participation in the school community, relationships were enhanced and practices were more familiar; Roberto's home-school link was in turn, reinforced.

In the classroom, Roberto developed positive working relationships with all three members of Year 6 staff. Whilst his relationship with Mrs Brookes, his class teacher, was formal with explicit boundaries, his relationships with Helen and Alison, the classroom assistants, were less distanced and allowed space for banter. Indeed, his handcrafted goodbye card to Helen, read 'I hope I get a good job, If I don't I will blame it all on you...only joking! When I am in Greenwood I will be thinking about you.' As members of both the 6B class community and the research group, the boundaries in the relationship between Roberto and Helen were intricate. Perhaps as a consequence of this, Helen noted that Roberto pushed the boundaries of their relationship each day. This behaviour was evident in a number of their interactions with Roberto continuing to push the limits until explicitly asked to 'stop' with Helen adding 'you're going too far.' At her request, he ceased to behave inappropriately. To an outsider Roberto's 'cheeky' behaviour towards Helen could be interpreted as rude but to insiders, including Helen, it was seen to be playful.

The complexity of the relationship between Roberto and Helen was further intensified by the behaviours of a handful of pupils in the class. Comments were

made that Helen fancied Roberto and that he fancied her; these comments impacted on the nature of their relationship. At first it was evident that both parties tried to ignore the comments, hoping the situation would resolve, however, it escalated. Two children in particular making quiet but disrespectful comments as they passed Helen: 'Roberto and Helen'; 'are you going to jump him?' In response to this difficult situation, Roberto became very sensitive towards Helen and refused her help, saying 'no, I'm fine' and covering his work. In turn, Helen, feeling stressed by this situation, found herself limiting her interactions with Roberto, increasingly finding it uncomfortable to spend time in 6B altogether.

With Mrs Brookes off school ill, Helen approached Mrs Eastwood, the other Year 6 teacher who stated that she found the children's behaviour 'disgusting.' She took up the issue with the Head teacher and Mrs Brookes on her return to school. In the meantime, Mrs Eastwood advised Helen to consider dropping Roberto as a focal research child. And more immediately, to refrain from awarding Roberto with a classroom assistant certificate that week and avoid giving him the term prize as she believed it would fuel the situation. As Helen listened to her advice, she thought how it stood in stark contrast with Mrs Eastwood's personal belief which she voiced regularly: 'you should never think twice about giving a child praise.' This is a powerful example of how factors operating external to the parties involved in a relationship, serve to shape the proximal processes that take place within it. In this scenario it affected the time Helen chose to spend with Roberto, the extent of help he asked for and accepted and the praise Helen was able to give him. Upon Mrs Brookes' return, she raised the issue, addressing the whole class at the start of the day. Alison was present and reported to Helen that Mrs Brookes talked about the seriousness of the problem and potential consequences of it. Without naming names, she advised the children to bring any issues to her directly. The situation gradually resolved with the children able to relate to her explicit instructions.

Roberto made the first steps towards restoring the relationship with his classroom assistant, asking Helen 'Is my work any good or should I throw it in the bin 'cos it's rubbish?' Helen looked at his work and gave him positive feedback. These initial

attempts to re-establish a positive working relationship were bolstered by the actions of Mrs Brookes, who asked Helen to work with Roberto in small group situations. In discussion of this situation with supervisors and family members, Helen was able to gain some sense of perspective. She reflected that perhaps the difficulties had arisen as a consequence of Roberto's participation in her research. Clearly, all the focal children involved in the research were 'special.' They received greater time and attention from Helen and were able to form a different type of relationship with her compared to those who related to her solely in her role as classroom assistant. With some children included in this special community, others were inevitably excluded and this may have caused some pupils to feel resentment, jealousy and rejection. These pupils were not given the opportunity to participate rather, Helen's actions had inhibited their participation altogether. Roberto, as the only boy in his class involved in the research was an easy target; here it is the situation rather than his personal qualities that made him vulnerable. Those pupils who originally instigated the rumours were boys who were frequently the centre of attention, both of teaching staff members and pupils. Here, Helen's actions challenged their position in the class community. For Helen, the difficulties arising from this situation made her more distanced in her interactions with all focal research children and she sought to establish explicit boundaries within the practices of the research group.

Whilst Roberto 'mixes very well' and is thus, one of more popular members of the class, the level of success he experiences in the academic field is variable. He performs consistently across most subject domains, although maths posed a particular problem. In discussion with Helen, Mrs Brookes stated 'Roberto I would say, is not confident in maths 'cos he has a problem... and he knows he's got a problem with maths and that actually stops him progressing perhaps as quickly as he would do.... because he thinks he's not going to succeed.' Here, we can see the impact of Roberto's own debilitating thoughts impacting on his ability to undertake work and successful perform in this area. His thoughts of failure were so severe, that Roberto took to copying others' work. Indeed, this was a strategy that he learnt and engaged in prior to entering Year 6. Noting that Roberto had a tendency to engage in this behaviour, the teaching staff took precautions in test

situations, positioning him so that he could not copy. Roberto's mother was aware of his difficulties in maths and identified that he panicked when he saw numbers. She tried to assist him, working with him in this area to improve his confidence and ability, but she reports that 'she got mad and he got mad.'

Unable to work effectively in this situation, Roberto began to benefit from weekly private tuition. Because it was evident that Roberto had established an effective working relationship with his tutor, his mother commented that 'Roberto has more trust in himself with her.' Here, Roberto's perceived self-efficacy to manage numerical tasks is starting to improve and despite originating in his tutor relationship, he is able to metacognitively transfer these into the classroom setting. In the classroom, Mrs Brookes also began to give Roberto greater attention and support, both one-to-one and in small group sessions after lunch in silent reading time. Notably this began after parents' evening in March, when Mrs Lazarus repeatedly remarked that Roberto's maths was a 'disaster,' 'he doesn't understand the fundamentals of maths, the simple things.' In voicing her concerns, Mrs Lazarus showed clear insight into Roberto's difficulties and this spurred Mrs Brookes into taking action. Again, the home-school mesosystem link for Roberto is shown to be strong. Although this additional help from both sources did go some way to improving his confidence, it remained a very difficult area for Roberto. Indeed, Mrs Brookes stated 'He has improved but he does if he's in a situation where he can copy, he will copy...he's still not got that confidence really.' Roberto's low perceived level of self-efficacy in maths affects his thoughts, his approach to how he is going to manage the situation and his execution of tasks undertaken.

In the Year 6 SATs Roberto worked independently and achieved Level 3 in maths, failing to attain the expected government target for his age group in this subject. But in going over his paper, Mrs Brookes noted that he only missed Level 4 by one mark, mentioning to Helen that 'He does panic a bit when he comes to a maths test.' Both Roberto and his mum were disappointed and upset by his results, but felt some sense of relief when Mrs Brookes explained that he missed Level 4 by one mark only. Nonetheless, Roberto's failure to reach the expected level will

have reinforced his debilitating thoughts. However as Mrs Brookes noted 'He wasn't even a Level 3 when he first came in...I mean his mental maths score in the SATs I think was about 15, he was getting 2's and 3's when he first came in, so he has progressed...but there's still that panic there when it comes to tests.' In this sense, Roberto really had made significant progress and as such, can be said to have experienced success in this area. Unfortunately this goes unrecognised in the current system where pupils must achieve at least a Level 4 to experience acknowledged success.

Whilst Roberto didn't receive assistance initially with his maths, he was allocated early on in the year to work as part of a small group with Helen in literacy. Despite his excellent vocabulary, use of intonation when reading and imaginative flair when composing stories, he struggled with aspects of basic grammar and his handwriting. Whilst Helen encouraged Roberto to write his answers to comprehension questions using full sentences and with greater detail, Mrs Brookes targeted his handwriting, littering his work with comments. A review of his books revealed: 'Target handwriting' (literacy book - sentence level work, September 2001); 'Please remember full stops and you must practice your handwriting' (literacy book - text level work, September 2001); 'Good try. Keep your handwriting the same size' (handwriting book, September 2001); '1pp better! Try for more even letters' (handwriting book, October 2001); 'Roberto – please try to make your letters even. Try to slant them the same way (handwriting books, February 2002). In the literacy group sessions, Roberto was reluctant to join in and contribute to discussion of comprehension texts as he was impatient to begin his work so that he could complete the task in lesson time. He worked with Helen for only four sessions before asking Mrs Brookes if he could be withdrawn from the group and work independently; he was permitted on the proviso that his work continued to improve. Here, we see that Roberto chose not to participate in this smaller community of practice, opting instead to be part of the wider class community where the majority of pupils undertook work independently, seeking assistance as and when it was required. His behaviour and his teacher's actions shaped his level of participation in both the smaller literacy group and the wider class.

A review of Roberto's SATs results alone indicate his academic performance is mixed. Upon leaving Year 5, Roberto was achieving Level 4 in English and Level 3 in maths. In the practice SATs papers undertaken at the start of January and the end of February, Roberto was away and as such did not sit all of his papers. In these terms, a review of his results is not particularly informative. Upon leaving Year 6, he attained Level 4 in both English and science and as noted previously, misses this grade by only one point in maths. Having not attained in line with government expectations for his age group in maths, he achieved success only in English and science. However, if consideration is given to his learning journey and his extensive progress in maths, one realises that this judgement is unnecessarily harsh; he has succeeded because he has improved. His performance across all other non-assessed subject domains was consistently high; he excelled in art and was a competent musician who composed his own songs. Unfortunately in the current educational climate, such artistic strengths do not have the same intrinsic value as performance in the three core subject domains.

Beyond academic performance, Roberto's major strengths lie in his ability to effectively relate and socialise with a wide variety of people. Highly gregarious, he established and maintained healthy microsystems with teaching staff and friends, the latter of which play an important role in both his home and school life. In the classroom, Mrs Brookes remarked that Roberto served as a good mediator. He was singled out as the one person in the class by his peers to regularly take on the role of referee in their football matches, with Mrs Brookes noting, 'they all see that he's fair...' In terms of social skills, Roberto demonstrates a mature outlook and this will stand him in good stead in life beyond school. He has an abundance of skills not recognised by the current education system which will enable him to participate successfully as a member of wider society.

## Storying 6E

Year 6 teacher Gillian Eastwood joined teaching at a later point in her working career. Previously she had gained experience working in school as a dinner lady, now referred to by the more politically correct term 'meal supervisor'. Like Sophie, Gillian had begun her primary teaching career at Roseberry Hill primary school. She had remained there for eight years; four years had been spent in Year 6, the remainder in Year 3. During the academic year spanning 2001/2002, Gillian had multiple roles and responsibilities: full-time Year 6 teacher, Head of KS2, Numeracy Link Co-ordinator and ICT Manager. She was also regularly appointed as mentor to newly qualified teachers. Gillian reported that in her eight years at Roseberry Hill, she had mentored six students from three different local universities. Despite the multifaceted nature of her position at Roseberry Hill, Gillian stated her teaching and management responsibilities were 'Never in conflict... 'cos teaching comes first whenever I am in school...children in the classroom really have to take priority.'

As a teacher, Gillian believed her role was to educate children, both academically and socially. Interestingly, she used the phrase 'to serve the children.' In explanation she stated '...if you say you're going to educate kids, you've got this thing that you've got something in you head and you're going to fill them with facts and different things, but you have got to find out what children need.' Here, Gillian is questioning that academic development echoes a simplistic transmission model of teaching and learning. Rather, she is suggesting that the process is more complex in that one needs to adopt a more holistic approach to the child in order to facilitate his/her growth. She asserted 'You have to look at individual needs and see what makes a child tick and what can make it move on.' In this sense, the process of development is recognised to be individual to the child. Gillian has a high level of self-efficacy in terms of her ability to form relationships with children, she believes she has 'always had an ability to understand and relate to kids'. She believes children are 'valuable' and in view of this states that in her capacity as class teacher, she does her '...very best for them educationally, socially and personally'. Thus, rather than focusing solely on academic attainment, it is

apparent that Gillian chooses to adopt a wider and more child centred approach to development.

Reflecting upon children's development, Gillian believed that positive behaviour management, a policy that was in place throughout Roseberry Hill, held much potential. She stated 'It changes children's opinions about themselves and if you can change children's feelings about themselves and make them feel good about themselves, I reckon they learn better.' Gillian strongly felt that this method, if carried out 'consistently and fairly' worked. She added '...once you have got children liking themselves and wanting to learn, the rest of it does become easier.' Here, children's beliefs about themselves and their capabilities are thought to underpin their potential capacity to learn. The key to arousing the desire to learn in children was, in Gillian's eyes, 'success with a challenge'. She highlighted that there were children in school who regularly experienced success, 'they are always at the top of the class, every class they go in.' These children, who Gillian stated 'already like learning or being good' are used to receiving praise and they like to be in receipt of more. To enable this, Gillian felt that as teacher 'you have got to do something different... like if you make mistakes, they love it. So you can make them deliberately, so their challenge is there.' Furthermore, she suggested 'the more able children will bring things out that challenge you within the lesson. They challenge themselves really 'cos they question you.'

For those children who 'haven't had success at school' Gillian's adopted a different approach. She readily accepted that some children did not experience success in the school domain. She stated there are 'children that each time they get their book back, think oh no, not again' and others who loose interest in you, in their work and in school, because they 'are always told off and always shouted at.' In these circumstances, Gillian believed that she had to 'awaken something in them and it might be by making them feel better about themselves, making them know that they can achieve and succeed, nothing breeds success like success.' To communicate these messages and ensure the children receive ongoing encouragement, she involved multiple parties, including Year 6 teaching staff and parents. Thus for Gillian, a child's level of self-esteem and their perceived self-

efficacy to perform underpinned his/her desire and ability to learn. Whilst Gillian reported that the identification of thirty children's individual needs was 'time-consuming' she felt it was nonetheless, 'achievable.'

Given the above insight into Gillian's beliefs, it is somewhat unsurprising that the formation of a positive working teacher-pupil relationship was viewed to be fundamental to facilitating the learning process. Gillian also believed that the establishment of a 'safe and secure' environment played a key role. Gillian felt strongly that children should be encouraged to tell a member of teaching staff if they didn't understand something that was covered in class in order to have the opportunity to discuss it further. When in discussion with a child, whether on a class, group or one-to-one level, Gillian believed that if the child experienced difficulty grasping an explanation, the fault lay with the teacher rather than the child. Because '...you can't get into a child's mind and see what they're seeing or...they can't get into your mind' the staff member is reliant on the child to verbalise any struggles. She explained, 'If you can make the environment safe and secure for them, so that they know they're not going to be ridiculed and so that they understand that.... I'll be pleased if they tell me they don't understand rather than upset if they keep it to themselves.' She added, if '...they know it's safe for them to tell me, all kids will ask. Even if they don't ask at the time, alright, there's a bit of privacy they'll come back and ask you, but eventually they'll ask you.' Gillian asserted, 'I would never let a child be ridiculed who's in my class, which they can be for saying something silly.' On the occasion that a pupil did give an incorrect answer, Gillian always tried to deconstruct the steps in his/her thinking to demonstrate that his/her answer was not silly. Moreover, she was keen to praise them for trying rather than sitting there in an unresponsive capacity.

Gillian's personal philosophy about children's learning and development served to shape her interactions with the children in her class and, in addition, underpinned her classroom practices and her use of teaching methods. Whilst some classroom practices were made explicit to the children, others remained implicit. Alongside her recurrent request that the children share with a teacher, any difficulties they experienced, she also insisted on children's engagement in classroom learning.

She stated, 'if you can't engage your children in whatever you are doing, you might as well give up... because if they are not engaged in it, they're not taking part, they're not learning.' However, she acknowledged that some children had learnt to display behaviours to look as though they were listening and engaged in the lesson. To identify these children, Gillian reviewed their work and used questioning and discussion in an attempt to find out their level of understanding. She stated, 'Kids have learnt to sit ...as if they're engaged and quite happy and you think aren't they good. And they give you a book and you can mark the book and the book can have all the right answers in, tick, tick, tick. And then, when you question them they can't do it 'cos they've copied off other people.' In an attempt to ensure children were engaged during lesson time, Gillian also asked Helen and Alison to check children were listening and that they remained 'on task.' Together, the staff working in class 6E had identified those children who tended to lose interest and become distracted during teacher led introductions and individual class work. It was these children that were primarily targeted by the classroom assistants.

Albeit implicit, another classroom practice in place in class 6E pertained to pupils seating arrangements. Throughout all lessons, the children were seated in mixed ability groups. Gillian believed that streamed group seating was 'not conducive to learning.' In streamed ability groupings, she asserted that children 'do not have a model to aspire to because they work at the level of a given group. The children do not think they can go beyond the group's boundaries.' She stated, the 'can do' group thus 'becomes the voice of the class in the room and the others learn to be quiet.' Those children located in the lower streamed groups become 'disenchanted' by education because '...they know they can't achieve as they have no goals.'

Gillian believed that children learn in different ways and as such, utilised a multi-sensory approach to her teaching. In practice, Helen observed she principally employed instructional methods which required children to listen, watch and discuss. Although staff members typically took the teaching role, Gillian also on occasion, asked for pupils to instruct their peers. For example, she stated an

effective method of teaching was to 'get another child to come and explain what you're saying... you learn from that...' In application of this method, Gillian mentioned an activity in a recent numeracy lesson which looked at prime numbers. She elaborated: 'I said every child in the class should know what a prime number was. And one child said, well I know it's a number that can divide by itself and one...but I have no idea what that means.' Because the pupil was able to repeat the phrase verbatim, Gillian had assumed that the child had understood her explanation. The pupil's revelation made Gillian prompt the class further, she added 'you've got to challenge that, well explain to me what it means.' In response another pupil came to the board and 'just did the factors and gave the definition – if a number has only got two factors in it, it is a prime number.' Having never thought of defining a prime number in this way, this became a learning moment not only for the pupil's peers but also his teacher. Collaborative interaction was also utilised increasingly in lesson time. Gillian incorporated the teaching strategy 'talking in pairs' whereby the children were given a sample of work to complete and then required to 'talk to the other person and explain it, take turns.' In utilising these interactive methods, Gillian encouraged the children to adopt an active role in their learning.

In discussion with Helen, Gillian mentioned the value of incorporating reflection as a means to improve her day-to-day working practice. 'I do spend a lot of time reflecting to change the strategies if something hasn't worked.' She stated the idea of reflection was to 'look at what you are doing yourself and reflect upon it... how could you change it, how could you make it better, how did it work... if it worked how could you use that in some of your other teaching.' As she believed challenge to be implicit to the learning process, it can be suggested the belief that 'I am never satisfied really' fuels an ongoing challenge within herself. There were multiple areas which Gillian felt provided an opportunity for reflexive practice, these included: the use of her weekly evaluation file, her ongoing role as a mentor, attending courses and observing fellow teachers. Moreover, she stated 'just doing this, the fact that you can talk about it helps develop strategies.' Gillian noted 'if you don't give... children, adults... opportunity to show you things and see things in

a different manner... then you don't learn yourself do you?' She added '...I'm learning all the time...and if I wasn't learning, I'd give up doing it I think.'

Throughout the academic year, Gillian experienced ongoing tensions with her teaching colleague, Sophie Brookes. This was both reported in conversation with the teaching assistants and observed on a daily basis. Because of Sophie's situation, Gillian's workload increased and she consequently had less time to prepare materials for her own class. Here, the micro politics of her relationship with a teaching colleague spilled over into the management of her class. Gillian reported to the classroom assistants that she was frustrated with the situation and felt her support and sustained efforts went unacknowledged by Sophie and the Head teacher. This inevitably caused friction in her relationship with Sophie. However, Gillian believed that this situation would only have an affect on the children in both classes if the teachers let it; she felt that if managed appropriately, the children would remain oblivious to it. Gillian was also coping with the long-term health problem of a family member, who at present was in remission. Although the intensity of the situation decreased somewhat when Sophie arranged full-time care for her family member, another issue came to the fore. Gillian and Sophie continued to work together amicably on the surface until the end of the academic year, at which point Sophie arranged a transfer to Year 4.

I now go on to introduce to you, the four children in 6B who took part in the research: Beth, Daniel, Leanne and Tariq.

**'He makes my teeth sweat and my heart beat like a jack hammer!':**

***introducing Beth***

With large sparkly blue eyes which lit up her face, Beth was perceived by the teaching staff in 6E, as one of the most genuine children in the class. Bleached by the sun's rays in the height of summer, her long, straight, light brown hair reached down to her shoulders. With highly expressive facial features, Beth's face often indicated how she truly felt. Indeed, in conversation with her parents, Mrs Eastwood commented that she knew when a question was coming merely by the look on her face! Despite always being dressed in a clean and pressed school uniform, with the option of a grey charcoal skirt all year round, Beth never managed to look particularly neat. At no time seen wearing tights, even in the very cold climate of winter, Beth preferred coloured socks. As her outdoor coat, she wore a thin, light green sweater jacket, but always active, she managed to stay warm. Regularly red in the face and exhausted after break and lunch time, she would join her class peers playing football, where she 'liked to be in the thick of the action.' Even on those occasions when football wasn't permitted, Beth could still be seen running round the playground.

Living just one mile from Roseberry Hill, Beth walked the journey to and from school each day. One of four children, she is joined at Roseberry Hill by her younger brother, Jack, who, aged five was in Year 1. Her two elder brothers, Chris, 15 and Mark, 13, attend the local high school, Greenwood. They too, had been pupils at Roseberry Hill for the duration of their primary school career and moreover, were both taught by Mrs Eastwood during their time there. Indeed, Beth often commented on this fact in conversation with Helen and when drawing up her ecomap, highlighted that she often spoke of her brothers in day-to-day conversation with Mrs Eastwood. With all four children gaining experience of Roseberry Hill, the Redpath family had developed strong and positive relationships with many of the school's teaching staff; Mrs Eastwood a firm favourite.

In an interview with Helen, Beth's mother, Mrs Redpath, noted that as a school, Roseberry Hill is 'very open to you coming in.' She believed that Mrs Eastwood

was very approachable and as a consequence, felt able to discuss any emerging problems with her regarding her children's experiences at school; she stated that Gillian had 'time to sit and listen to what you've got to say.' Interestingly, Mrs Redpath's relationship with Beth's teacher the previous year, Mr Tate, had not been so conducive to discussing issues, of which she stated 'you didn't feel as though he gave you the time.' Sitting in on Beth's parents' evening, it was evident to Helen that the positive attitude towards Mrs Eastwood was reciprocated, with Mrs Eastwood also very fond of the Redpath family. Indeed, in discussion with Helen, Mrs Eastwood felt that because she had previously taught Beth's brothers, she had over time, built up a good relationship with Mr and Mrs Redpath, particularly the latter. The relationship they had developed over the years meant that the nature of the meeting was more informal and discussion spanned all family members, not just Beth, with her mum stating jokingly 'right, enough about her.' With clear positive parent-Year 6 teacher relations in place, a rich home-school mesosystem link is suggested. Constituting two core communities in Beth's life, this relationship plays a crucial role and if strong and healthy, can serve to facilitate Beth's ongoing learning and development. Indeed, additional factors operating within Beth's home and school life served to strengthen this preliminary impression of the home-school link.

Working part-time immediately after school at a local playgroup, Mrs Redpath was the primary caregiver in the family. Her working hours enabled her to take a highly participative role in the school community and she often helped out with school trips and activities. Extremely creative, she had a principle role in decorating the stage and school hall for the end of Year 6 play, which saw both classes work together to enact a traditional style music hall. Rather than one or a handful of children taking leading roles, this venture enabled all children to participate more fully and involved a mixture of popular song, comedy and speciality acts (magic, ventriloquism, juggling and balloon modelling etc.). Joining Roseberry Hill as a classroom assistant in the final school term of the 2001/2002 academic year, Mrs Redpath worked in 6B several afternoons a week. In her role, she assisted children in more creative subject domains and helped them learn their lines and practice their acts for the final school and family play performances. Employed to

work specifically in 6B, Mrs Redpath replaced Helen who, in her role as support worker for a child in 6E, was allocated to work a greater proportion of her hours in this classroom. Again, one can see that Beth is benefiting from a very positive and rich home-school mesosystem link. Members of both communities, each playing a core role in her life, are known to each other and have 'excellent communication.' Regularly involved in the wider school community, both as a parent and worker, Mrs Redpath is in a fruitful position to recognise both the implicit and explicit values of the school.

Beth's dad, Mr Redpath, worked full-time as a 'mortgage person' with Beth stating to Helen that he was 'the boss.' He predominantly worked Monday to Friday, but occasionally had to work Saturdays. Despite his long working hours, he always attended parents' evening alongside Mrs Redpath. With skills in different areas, Mr and Mrs Redpath were able to assist their children when undertaking tasks across multiple subject domains, as the latter stated 'between us, we cover everything.' Labelled as the 'academic' by Mrs Redpath, her husband assisted Beth with 'any problems with homework' whilst she helped with 'arty things.' If experiencing problems with her homework, Beth could also turn to her older brother, Mark, for assistance. With this network of support in place, Mrs Redpath reported that Beth undertook most homework tasks quite independently. Without prompting, Beth and her elder brothers each got out and started their homework as soon as they got in from school. Of their approach to school work, Mrs Redpath stated 'That's ideal...that's how it should be, isn't it?' In painting a picture of the family's interactions around school work, one can see evidence of Beth's healthy microsystems with her parents and siblings. Implicit in their interactions, is a mutual underpinning belief of the value of school. All children in the family exhibit a positive attitude and approach to school work which is commended by Mrs Redpath as their mother. This underpinning value mirrors that embodied at Roseberry Hill, where the child's education is the primary explicit practice of the school.

In her immediate family circle, Beth, or Elizabeth as she is known to her parents and siblings, reported that she spent quality time with everyone. With her mum

she learns how to make clothes and sew and goes shopping. Together with her dad, Beth watches football, goes shopping and takes the family dog, Bramble, for walks. With both her older brothers she plays in the garden and has a go on the PlayStation 2 console; whilst with Jack, they play together with his Action Man. Collectively, as a family, they watch many television programmes: 'The Simpsons, Scrap Heap Challenge,' 'a lot of the history programmes' and the 'discovery channel.' Mrs Redpath states, '...they enjoy watching them so I think, used in the right way, you can pick a lot up.' Here, television programmes are perceived to be an educational tool. Provoking interest, sustained attention, family discussion and elaboration, Beth's knowledge and understanding is extended through her proximal processes whilst watching the television programmes and in her interactions with family members thereafter. Visits to maternal and paternal grandparents also form part of Beth's weekly routine. Beth sees her mum's parents every Thursday and her dad's mum, every Sunday. In addition, she catches up on extended members of the family (aunties, uncles and cousins) on a fortnightly basis and during the summer holidays.

Outside the family circle, Beth leads an extremely active lifestyle; she is busy nearly every day of the week, including evenings after school. On Mondays she attends pop lacrosse, where she has developed friendships with four girls who don't attend Roseberry Hill. On Tuesdays, Beth attends girl guides, where she is accompanied by five fellow pupils in 6E, four of whom she 'hangs out' with in school. On Wednesdays, she has a day off before playing lacrosse on Thursday. Beth is a member of a local lacrosse team and practices on Thursdays in preparation for matches held on Saturdays. On Fridays, she is back playing pop lacrosse, this time accompanied by a friend in 6E. If not going to pop lacrosse, she attends a local drama club held in a nearby church. This is for those aged eight to twenty five and again, features a friend from 6E, who she sees during the school holidays for sleepovers and swimming. On Sunday evenings Beth goes to the local youth club, which is accessible to those aged eleven to seventeen. Busy participating in a multiplicity of social arenas, Beth does not typically see peers from 6E unless they constitute members of the groups or clubs she is part of.

Although no one friend in particular features dominantly across these arenas, it is clear that Beth is highly sociable and enjoys the company of others.

Indeed, in the classroom a similar picture emerges. Possessing effective social skills, Beth is able to relate to the majority of pupils comprising 6E. However, in observing her interactions with class peers, Helen noted that Beth did not belong to any one particular friendship group. Moreover, in conversation with Helen, Mrs Eastwood noted that Beth was excluded from the middle class group of girls in the class which she referred to as 'the clique.' In previous years, Mrs Redpath notes that Beth had been on the periphery of this group of girls, which sometimes accepted her as a member and at other times didn't. Here we see that despite Beth's desire to be an ongoing member of this community, the behaviour of other members serves to limit and in some cases, prohibits altogether, her participation. No longer a member of the class 'clique' or community of practice, Beth, seeking female friendship, chose the company of three or four peers, one of whom was Leanne. Although in drawing up her ecomap Beth identified herself as 'hanging out' with these girls in school, she could be found more frequently, playing football with the boys. Whilst not identifying any boys who she spent time with herself, Mrs Eastwood felt that Beth's friendship group consisted primarily of boys. She mentioned to Helen that Beth preferred the company of boys and was used to their company because of the time she spent with her brothers at home. Whilst this was clearly one feasible explanation to Beth's preference for the company of boys, her mum's comments in an interview revealed an additional reason.

Mrs Redpath reported that class friendships amongst the girls had been difficult to sustain for the entirety of Beth's time at Roseberry Hill. She stated 'I think it's a horrible class of girls...they have been trouble all the way through school, them all falling out...it's just tales, she's said this and she's not friends with me now...' Whilst Helen, in conversation with other parents, had become aware of this ongoing issue, her observations of Beth led her to believe that Beth was distanced from any disagreements or squabbling that took place in class 6E as they most typically involved those in the class 'clique.' By choosing not to participate in this community of practice, Beth managed to avoid situations which she previously got

very upset over. Indeed, Mrs Redpath states 'Really, I've encouraged her to stay out of it...that sort of friendship...isn't worth having.' In turn, she has supported Beth to 'make friends outside the group.' This is not only evident in Beth's life in the classroom but also her enthusiasm to participate in activities outside school. Although some of the sport activities and groups Beth attends throughout the week occasionally comprise fellow pupils from 6E, many involve children not associated with Roseberry Hill. In the latter, she is free to make relationships with peers without the underpinning politics of friendships within the 6E classroom. This complex situation reveals that both Beth's actions and those of others can serve to shape the level of participation she has in communities of practice which comprise her school and social life.

At school, Beth settled into 6E quickly, forming positive working relationships with all three members of teaching staff. Having attained Level 3 in both English and maths upon entry to Year 6, Beth was achieving in line with the government expectations for her age group. As such, she did not warrant additional support from either classroom assistant in the form of small group work in literacy or maths. Indeed, she missed one literacy lesson every week to attend an Indian music session, of which she was one of a small, privileged group. However, both Helen and Alison did assist Beth with any difficulties she experienced in lessons. Interestingly, as Beth often sought friendly contact with them, as much of their one-to-one time with Beth was spent chatting and laughing as it was helping. In many lessons at the CCC, Beth often called for Helen's presence, not for help but to show her a new aspect of the computer programme she had uncovered by experimentation. Additionally, Beth liked to show Helen her work several times in every lesson at the CCC to reveal how she had integrated her new found knowledge and skills into the work being undertaken; Beth like many of her class peers was quick to make progress. Beth's special relationship in 6E was with her class teacher, Mrs Eastwood, who felt they had a 'very good relationship.' Indeed, she was often observed giving Beth a cuddle at the front of the class, predominantly upon Beth's explicit request. Mrs Eastwood's obvious fondness for Beth was apparent in conversation with Helen, where she simply stated that Beth was 'lovely' and she believed that she would be 'a star in the future.' Additionally,

in conversation with Mr and Mrs Redpath, she mentioned that Beth 'is a pleasure to have in the class.' Perhaps Beth's positive microsystems with female teaching staff, particularly her class teacher, went some way to compensating for her constrained relations with a number of fellow girl pupils in the class.

Academically, Beth's perceived self-efficacy to achieve increased considerably throughout Year 6. This is particularly evident in terms of the assessed subject domains: maths, English and science. In the second parents' evening, Mr and Mrs Redpath revealed they had been 'panicking a little' when Beth entered Year 6 as they thought she would find the work difficult and were concerned that she would struggle. In Year 5, Mrs Redpath highlighted that numeracy had been a particular concern for Beth, who used to say 'I'm no good at maths.' However, during the course of the first and second terms in Year 6, Beth's sustained motivation and effort meant she made considerable progress in maths, alongside that in literacy and science. Indeed, Mrs Eastwood confirmed this, singling her performance out in the second parents' evening and commenting to her parents that of all the children in the class, Beth had really come on. A key factor in her progress was her increased levels of confidence. Whilst at the start of the year Beth was hesitant to seek assistance, with a little encouragement, she soon felt comfortable to ask questions to clarify and develop her understanding of concepts. Such was her readiness to seek help that Mrs Eastwood stated she was at the 'forefront of the class.' Mrs Redpath believed Beth's change in behaviour was down to her increased confidence in the class teacher: 'she's more confident in the teacher, of not being...not belittled, but ...not being put down in a way, you know, if you don't understand it.' Here, it is clear that the microsystem which Beth and Mrs Eastwood share, serves to facilitate Beth's learning and development. A sense of trust and security has been built up which allowed Beth to explore and elaborate her understanding of work covered in lesson time. Although enthusiastic about learning and always keen to participate and develop her knowledge, skills and understanding, academically, Mrs Eastwood believed that Beth was a slow learner compared with her peers. However, either unaware of this or indeed, unconcerned, Beth was content to work at her own speed and level.

In Beth's home-school agreement book, a tool designed to strengthen the mesosystem link, Mrs Redpath wrote 'Beth is very keen to do well this year - especially in her SATs - which she worries about' (11/01/02). The end of year national curriculum tests were a clear concern for Beth throughout the academic year, who in the same book had written 'I need to get more confidence in time test and math and science, especially and comprehension and handwriting' (30/10/01) and 'I need to improve my maths and I need to get quicker and comprehension' (11/01/02). Here, the focus is on improvement in assessed subject domains, with not only an increase in knowledge of the areas but also in the time it takes to complete tasks. Beth's anxiety over the SATs was further highlighted by Mrs Redpath, who revealed that her daughter felt very nervous when undertaking tests. In the practice SATs papers held in January, Beth managed her state of anxiety and attained Level 4 in all subject domains. But on the morning pupils were due to sit the final practice SATs in April, Beth went home ill. Mrs Eastwood told Helen she was sure it was due to the tests she was due to sit, adding 'which is what she really needed practice with.' In the actual SATs, held during the month of May, Beth fell ill with tonsillitis. In discussion with her mum the first morning of the tests, Mrs Eastwood stated 'I'm not upset with Beth because she's not come in for the SATs but because her results will devastate her as she has worked so hard.'

Beth was off for both science and maths papers, attending school to complete only her English assessment fully. Attaining a Level 4 in only English, Beth's test results were incomplete. Asking what would happen in terms of sending her results to Greenwood, Beth's forthcoming secondary school, Mrs Eastwood reassured her. She stated that her result in English would be accompanied by teacher assessment, which denoted Beth capable of attaining Level 4's in all three subject domains. Mrs Redpath believed 'assessment throughout the year is a lot more accurate...a lot more accurate.' She held a very negative view of the SATs and thought they held very little value, particularly at such a young age. Mrs Redpath pointed out 'it's only as good as you are on the day...it's only have you revised the right things for what's on the paper.' Indeed, in conversation with Helen, Mrs Redpath poignantly noted, that 'people can be clever in different areas... it's not all academic...you can be brilliant with your hands...it's just that if

your brilliant on paper people think that you are intelligent.’ This illuminates the impact of the macrosystem upon Beth’s development. She lives in a culture which values academic rather than more creative endeavours, and this is mirrored in the practices of her school, Roseberry Hill. Here, tests are at the forefront of her experiences as a Year 6 pupil, despite the fact that she herself indicates a preference for more creative activities and demonstrates particular enthusiasm for art. In the current climate, such subjects hold little value in both wider society and the more immediate school community; as Mrs Redpath asserts ‘if you’re arty...there’s nothing that you could show...there’s nothing that you could shine in.’

Perhaps feeling unable to manage her anxiety levels as a result of the end of year tests, Beth fell ill. In some sense this may have served to benefit her as in reference to her teacher’s assessment, she attained in line with the expected level for her age group. Indeed, her previous independent performance on the practice SATs indicated, that this was the level that she was consistently working at for most of the year. Beyond these results, Beth’s learning journey in Year 6 is intricate. Battling with decisions surrounding friendships, she established and maintained a number of new relationships in the class, both with peers and teaching staff. In particular, her highly effective working relationship with her class teacher served to facilitate her learning and development, with Mrs Eastwood noting, ‘I have given her confidence in herself no matter what others say.’ During the final school term, Beth also revealed to Helen that she liked one of the boys in the class, stating ‘he makes my teeth sweat and my heart beat like a jack hammer!’ Beth, who was typically quiet but outspoken in company she felt comfortable in, had fallen for the most confident and vocal boy in the class. Unaware of his new admirer, Beth was able to continue playing football in his company but when he spoke to her in passing, her face flushed and she was clearly embarrassed. Preferring to admire him from afar, he became Beth’s primary topic of conversation with the select few who knew, Helen included.

Beth’s participation in an array of social activities during the week provided her with the opportunity to create friendships with those outside of school. In this sense, she formed a multiplicity of healthy microsystems which would serve to impact

positively on her ongoing development. In supporting her interactions with multiple parties both inside and outside the school domain, Mrs Redpath perhaps believed she was enabling Beth's learning. In conversation with Helen, she highlighted that learning was a process which occurred best through interaction with others, 'because you're gonna get sometimes different slants...and that widens your knowledge....you don't just see it from one angle, you start to see it from lots of angles and your knowledge widens.' Beth has gained experience of working with many different groups of people, for example, lacrosse and football teams, drama club and girl guides. She has engaged in these activities with enthusiasm and the social skills she has developed will be a valuable asset during her journey through secondary school and beyond.

**'Fancy going from not really liking yourself to the Romeo of the class':  
*introducing Daniel***

At first glance, Daniel looked smart dressed in his school uniform. Upon closer observation, Helen could see that his green sweatshirt sleeves were slightly too short and his shoes faded from the original jet black colour. The hems of his charcoal grey trousers had been let down and were frayed. Whilst others in his class would get new items of clothing throughout the school year, Daniel's lasted the duration. However, attention wouldn't be drawn to this as Daniel's mum, Mrs Richardson, ensured that his blonde hair was always cut short and his clothes clean and ironed. A well-preserved uniform was no easy feat given Daniel's daily participation in class football games! Despite returning home with his uniform inevitably more bedraggled than when he arrived at school that morning, Daniel remained well-turned out throughout the week.

Daniel joined Roseberry Hill in Year 3. Although the school serves primarily those pupils living within the housing estate in which it is situated, Daniel is one of a handful of pupils who lives further afield within the city boundaries. His family home is located approximately five miles away, on a council estate in a socially disadvantaged area. Because Daniel's journey to school entailed a greater distance than the majority of pupils attending Roseberry Hill, his working day was inevitably longer; awakening earlier and returning home later. Throughout the school week, Daniel lives with his elder twin sisters, aged fifteen and his mum, Mrs Richardson. Although she is not in employment, she is kept busy at home with the day-to-day care of her children. The family are reliant on government benefits and as such, Daniel receives financial assistance for his life at school in the form of subsidized school meals and funding for school trips. After divorcing Daniel's dad, Mrs Richardson remarried, but she does not live with her second husband, Daniel's stepdad. Mrs Richardson did not mention whether his stepdad continued to feature in Daniel's life and Daniel himself did not mention him in conversation at school, nor when putting together his ecomap with Helen. Daniel's biological dad, Mr Jones, works as a mechanic. Daniel stays with him on a regular basis each weekend; his sisters preferring to stay at home with their mum, with Mrs

Richardson stating 'You know how girls are at fifteen...it's not cool.' Both his sisters attend a local 'special' high school, which caters for children with special educational needs.

Having spent much of their family life together living on this council estate, Daniel and his family are familiar with the neighbourhood. Following the death of Daniel's granddad three years ago, the family had moved from this same council estate, uprooting to live with his grandma (his mum's parents). Although his grandparent's home had been some distance away from Roseberry Hill, some four miles, it was during this spell at his grandmothers that Daniel, aged seven, joined Roseberry Hill as a pupil in Year 3. Prior to this point, his school career was spent at a mixed infant community school close to his home on the council estate; a school which subsequently became part of an Education Action Zone. Mrs Richardson did not detail when they left Daniel's grandmother's home and returned to settle at the aforementioned council estate, but it was at some point after Year 3 but prior to Year 6. Despite the distance, it was decided that Daniel would continue at Roseberry Hill until the end of his primary education, upon which he would take up a place at a local secondary school, closer to home.

Due to the location of his family home, Daniel has always lived in geographical isolation from the Roseberry Hill school community. His mum did not drive and he was dropped off and picked up daily by his dad or a family friend. Neither party was part of the parent/carer community that could be seen chatting in the playground morning or afternoon, waiting for the sound of the school bell; rather, each waited by his vehicle. Moreover, because many Roseberry Hill pupils lived within a mile of the school, Daniel rarely saw class members outside the school context. In these terms, Daniel's friendships were highly compartmentalized; he had 'school' friends and 'home' friends. At the start of Year 6, Daniel had a small number of friends within the class and in discussion with Helen, identified one pupil, Azhar, as his best friend. However, shortly before Christmas, Azhar went to Pakistan with his family for several months. With the loss of his primary microsystem both within the class and the wider school communities, Daniel was placed in a situation which compelled him to make an effort to establish a new

circle of friends. What started out as a dire situation proved to be of great benefit to Daniel and he reaped the fruits of his endeavours. Over the course of Year 6, his friendship group grew dramatically in size, with Daniel developing multiple relationships with fellow class members. Despite this, his school peer group remained isolated from his home life as he rarely saw them on a social basis. In conversation, Daniel mentioned he had two 'home' friends with whom he spent time with individually, after school and at the weekends. One lived in close proximity to his family home and the other lived close to his dad's brother. Whilst interviewing Mr Jones and Mrs Richardson, it was apparent both parents knew of Daniel's 'home' friends; however, they knew very little about those Daniel chose to spend his time with in school. In this sense, Daniel's relationships were compartmentalised, with home and school existing as separate but integral communities to which he belonged. As isolated spheres of his life, Daniel's compartmentalised 'home' and 'school' friendships serve as a possible early indicator of a poor mesosystem link between these two core communities in his life.

Additional factors are further indicative of an impoverished home-school mesosystem link in Daniel's life. Firstly, throughout Year 6, Daniel's parents Mrs Richardson and Mr Jones had limited participation in the wider school community. Although divorced, they both attended school for parents' evening appointments and the end of year play. However, like many carers they did not offer to assist with any school trips or activities. No doubt the latter was a difficulty because of Mr Jones' working hours and Mrs Richardson's ongoing care of Daniel's twin sisters. Here, one can see that factors operating in Daniel's exosystem served to shape the nature of his parents' involvement in the school community, limiting the strength of the mesosystem home-school link. Moreover, perhaps his parents' limited participation in school is unsurprising when we consider that on the occasion they went into school to specifically discuss difficulties Daniel was experiencing in Year 5; little was done to address their concerns. Daniel's experiences in Year 5 constitute the second and perhaps most significant factor impacting on the nature of the relationship between home and school. In an interview with Helen, Mrs Richardson commented that the communication between

school and home, in her opinion, had been good until Year 5, when it went 'straight through the floor.' Although his parents went into school to talk with his class teacher, Mr Tate, his parents stated that it didn't get '...followed up on...it just got left.' Here, Daniel's parents' attempt to liaise with the school failed, as Mrs Richardson felt unheard and clearly remained angry about this situation. Inevitably this will have impacted upon her relationship building with staff in Year 6, where Mrs Eastwood believed that 'Daniel's parents were intimidated by the educational system.' In Year 5, Mrs Richardson was experiencing some ill health problems and as Daniel's primary caregiver, this '...put things behind with seeing people...teachers.' She explained that whilst in Year 5, Daniel had temper tantrums at home, stating '...I could see that we were looking at a child that was very...angry.' With regard to the interactions in the classroom, his mum said that Daniel was not listened to, adding 'he even went as far to say I'm not being explained to...or I put my hand up and I've never been asked.' In this latter scenario, it would seem that despite Daniel's attempts to take part, the actions and behaviour of the teaching staff in Year 5 actually prohibited him from participating in the class community of practice; he was, inherently, denied full membership.

Mrs Richardson's reported perception of these difficulties were confirmed by Daniel, who in conversation with Helen, told her that he didn't get on with either his class teacher, Mr Tate or the Year 5 classroom assistant, Mrs Bryce. The latter of whom, he reported was 'very strict' and spent most of her time shouting. His poor relationship with both parties affected his opportunity to participate in the class community and this impacted negatively on his learning development. Unable to establish a shared zone of proximal development with either staff member, he was reliant upon himself and his peers to survive classroom life. Whilst not a full participant of the wider 5T class community, Daniel was a member of another community of practice which emerged within this class (perhaps because of their mutually denied access of the wider class community). This smaller community of practice became his immediate friendship group and comprised fellow boys in 5T who struggled to cope with the demands of the practices in the classroom. Often grouped together, they experienced difficulties with undertaking work independently and concentrating for any length of time; as a consequence, they

were frequently admonished. In light of this, one can see that Daniel's life in Year 5 was dominated by negative experiences which served to stifle his development. Moreover, these negative experiences impeded his ongoing learning journey, where in Year 6, members of staff had to work hard to re-establish secure and trusting relationships with both Daniel and his parents. In discussion with Helen, Mrs Eastwood explained 'Daniel comes with problems, but once he gets to know you he's very good.' In working with him, Mrs Eastwood felt it was important 'to build up trust with him, he needs to be able to trust adults to have a good relationship'.

Moving up into Year 6, Daniel's independent assessed work in both English and maths indicated a failure to achieve the expected levels of attainment set by central government for his age group. Recorded as 'n/a' by both Mr Tate and Mrs Eastwood, Helen was able to ascertain that Daniel was working at either Level 1 or 2. Neither is recognised as valued levels of attainment in Year 6. Beyond these results, Mrs Eastwood did not indicate that she received any additional background information pertaining to Daniel's situation. This focus on measurable performance mirrors the simplistic notions of educational attainment which dictate educational practices today and demonstrates the powerful influence of factors working in the exosystem upon Daniel's experiences in the classroom. In focusing on the immediate picture, that is, measured results, stakeholders negate the embedded complexity of the learning process. Measured educational attainment constitutes only one piece of Daniel's jigsaw, but this viewpoint can only be recognised if a wider remit is taken in both educational practice and wider policy.

Within class 6E, Daniel was one of the youngest, his birthday falling late in July. With thirty three authorised absences throughout the year, Daniel achieved 91% attendance. Throughout Year 6 Daniel struggled with the majority of work covered, particularly that which called for an independent approach to work. In terms of the teaching methods incorporated by his teacher Mrs. Eastwood, this meant he experienced particular difficulties in literacy and numeracy. Within these subject domains, it was common for pupils to be left to get on with independent work once the teacher had explained the topic of the lesson and had gone through several

examples at the board. Working with both classes for literacy, Helen observed that Daniel typically appeared attentive for the first ten minutes of teacher led instructions, after which time he began to swing on his chair, mess with the contents of the pen pot on his table or look around the room hoping to make eye contact with a friend. When Daniel was required to complete a comprehension task independently, he would most commonly be unfocused and easily distracted by fellow pupils within his allocated literacy group. He would be prompted several times to get 'back on task.' Indeed, this same behaviour is evident in Daniel's Year 5 report, consultation of which, finds it littered with comments stating that he finds it difficult to settle down to work and is easily distracted by others. To an outsider, it may seem that Daniel experiences difficulties focusing because he is disinterested in his school work but, as a member of the class community of practice, Helen was able to observe that much of his problem stemmed from the difficulties he experienced approaching tasks independently. Daniel required continual support to undertake activities and was encouraged to seek it out as an explicit practice in 6E. It was evident early on that many pupils experienced difficulties asking for help and Mrs Eastwood addressed this as a class issue, making it clear that she expected all pupils to seek help as and when they needed it.

This was a crucial moment in Daniel's learning journey. In actively seeking support from both teaching staff and peers, Daniel made steps towards creating a shared zone of proximal development with more able others. These 'safe' spaces allowed him to move beyond that which he could achieve independently. This is demonstrative of the immense potential of relationships in children's learning and development. The value of collaborative work was further recognised by Mrs Eastwood, who sought to incorporate small group or pair work in lesson time. For example, in numeracy lessons children were put in mixed or similar ability groups, taking it in turns to work out the solution to a problem and explain to their peers, the steps they had taken to ascertain the answer. When allowed the opportunity and space to participate, Daniel was enthusiastic to engage in the learning process. However, in her role as classroom assistant, Helen observed that the particular groupings or pairings Daniel worked in were critical; they served to either inhibit or enable his understanding and in turn, his progress.

Daniel's request for support was heard and acted upon by the teaching staff working in 6E. Alongside the provision of one-to-one assistance in lessons, Daniel was in November 2001, assigned to undergo assessment by a primary learning support teacher working in conjunction with Roseberry Hill. Mrs Eastwood suspected that Daniel's slow progress was because he had special needs, stating to Helen 'he has problems processing and transferring, for example, he has difficulty following instructions.' However following assessment by this outside party, he was found not to have special needs but his performance did warrant additional support. Based on this report, together with Mrs Eastwood's assessment, a School Action Plus Individual Learning Plan (ILP) was prepared for Daniel by his teacher. Within his ILP for the autumn term, Mrs Eastwood noted the primary focus was 'to raise his self esteem and boost his confidence across all areas, but particularly in mathematics.' This goal was set in response to a discussion that she had with Daniel and his parents, where 'it was made clear that his self-esteem is low and he feels that he is "no good" at anything (apart from art – particularly drawing). He lacks confidence in most areas but mathematics causes particular concern and when this area is discussed he becomes withdrawn and upset.' Here, it is clear that Daniel's self-debilitating thoughts have huge ramifications for his level of participation in classroom learning; negatively impacting on his emotional state, he withdraws from the situation, unable to manage his prospective inability to perform. No longer engaged, Daniel now experiences poor levels of motivation, struggling to persevere in the face of his catastrophic thoughts. This sense of disablement results in his non-participation in the class community of practice, where he moves from membership to non-membership.

To address Daniel's low self-efficacy and his difficulty in managing anxiety provoking situations, his ILP set out an action plan. It was outlined that Daniel would receive extra support drawing on a number of strategies. These included one-to-one support in class, differentiated class work according to his level and extra numeracy sessions twice a week, working in a small group with Helen. Mrs. Eastwood also proposed several methods which would serve to increase Daniel's self esteem and enable him to experience an increasingly positive attitude towards

his work. These included setting Daniel attainable targets throughout all curriculum areas which would also aim to extend his knowledge and skills, and the use of verbal praise and stickers alongside the school's positive behaviour scheme. The external primary learning support teacher was adamant that Daniel 'would benefit from access to plenty of maths equipment during his numeracy sessions – number cards, counters, number squares, number lines, etc.' However, Daniel's class teacher, Mrs Eastwood, felt this was an unrealistic approach as the use of such equipment was not a feature of numeracy classes in the 6E community of practice. As such, she felt Daniel would feel embarrassed to use such equipment in front of class peers because it was deemed an unaccepted method of learning in this community. This difference of opinion between insider and outsider highlighted the implicit practices of this community. Despite having the equipment stored and labelled at the back of the classroom, it was never articulated by Mrs Eastwood that it couldn't be used by pupils.

Although this maths equipment wasn't used in class sessions, it did become a regular feature of the extra numeracy sessions Daniel took part in. With Helen leading the session, Daniel worked alongside a fellow class peer, Saleema, who also experienced difficulties in maths. The use of maths equipment served to help make abstract questions concrete. For example, the group utilised pebbles, grapes or pieces of chocolate to explore questions relating to division, multiplication and fractions. Here, within the context of these sessions, another community of practice had been established where practices dictated that it was acceptable for Daniel to learn drawing on maths equipment for support. Working together on a regular basis, Daniel and Saleema began to develop an effective working relationship. Without prompting from Helen, they continued to work together outside the sessions going over numeracy areas. For example, they made time in the classroom to help each other learn their multiplication tables and they also wrote out questions and marked each other's efforts. Such tasks encouraged both pupils to work together co-operatively to develop their skills and knowledge to achieve a mutual aim. Explaining that sessions would be tailored to meet their needs, Helen asked both pupils to voice any topics they wanted to cover; thus encouraging them to be active participants in the creation of their

teaching-learning practices from the outset. Through the provision of scaffolding given by both Helen and Saleema, Daniel increased his knowledge and understanding of numeracy topics.

During the time spent together in the extra numeracy sessions, Helen felt that she developed an effective working relationship with Daniel. He became increasingly enthusiastic to participate in the sessions and in January 2002 commented 'I wish we could do this everyday.' He explained that he had started to work faster in his mental mathematic tasks in class and was getting an increasing number of sums correct. He gained in confidence during the sessions and became an active participant throughout, feeling comfortable to query any topics he felt unsure of. With reassurance, he learnt it was okay to say 'I don't know' to questions posed, where he previously would have said anything that came into his head. Within a safe and supportive atmosphere, where Daniel would not be teased for 'getting it wrong,' he began to try answering questions even when he felt uncertain. Daniel's independent problem solving abilities were extended utilising structured support; discussing his understanding of questions and identifying the approach that he would take to calculate the answer (addition, subtraction, division or multiplication). Working within a shared zone of proximal development, Helen aided Daniel in the deconstruction of tasks. She demonstrated her approach to questions, breaking them down into manageable steps and then scaffolding him as they worked through mathematical questions together, utilising leading questions. She assisted Daniel in deciding upon which mathematical operation to take (addition, subtraction, division or multiplication) and asked him to work with progressively less assistance thereafter, until his understanding increased and he was able to work through questions independently.

Shortly before the Christmas holidays a situation arose in the classroom where Daniel wasn't permitted to withdraw from the community, despite the emergence of his debilitating thoughts in a numeracy lesson. With Helen sat alongside him in a whole class teaching situation, Mrs Eastwood asked Daniel, who was sitting still and listening, to answer a question. Although well within his capabilities, Daniel panicked and gave an incorrect answer. Asked to check his working out, he

became agitated and distressed. Mrs Eastwood asked him to use his fingers to count aloud, a unaccepted practice in class 6E at that time. Hesitant to use this method, Daniel blurted another incorrect answer. Helen intervened, giving him reassurance and asking him to pause and recount slowly. At this point, Daniel broke down, sobbing, saying that he couldn't do it. To ascertain the correct answer, Mrs Eastwood instructed the class to collectively count down using their fingers; and in the process, made the method acceptable for that particular moment in time. Mrs Eastwood felt this incident was a significant turning point for Daniel, as he acknowledged his difficulties in numeracy, both to himself and his class peers. As she stated, 'he realised he needed support' and at this point '....he let the rest of the class know I've got problems.' This is a powerful example of how Daniel's low self-efficacy governed his learning performance on this task. Mrs Eastwood explained 'Daniel had no strategy for learning and he thought there was something wrong with him and that's why he couldn't learn.' On the table, his peers responded to the situation by giving reassurance, stating they too experienced difficulties sometimes. Mrs Eastwood also took time out after the lesson to give Daniel one-to-one support.

Returning after the Christmas holiday, Daniel's management of difficult situations changed. With a noted improvement in his proximal relations with both teaching staff and peers, Daniel's strategy now was to ask for support on a regular basis, seeking confirmation that his work was 'right.' Although his debilitating thoughts no longer invoked a state of panic, Daniel's self-efficacy was low and he continually sought reassurance and asked: 'Is this right?' 'Is this okay?' As noted by Mrs Eastwood, he needed 'positive praise all the time' and 'success'. With time and positive feedback, he gradually began to gain in self-confidence and adopt more of an independent approach to his work activities. His active involvement in his learning permeated throughout all subject domains, with Mrs Clegg, Roseberry Hill's special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) with whom he worked with on a weekly basis, commenting on the massive change in him.

His determination to experience success in numeracy saw him continue with work covered in the extra numeracy session with Helen, at home with his mum.

Comments made by Daniel's parents in an interview with Helen, revealed they felt helpless in providing support in this subject domain. His dad stated 'Maths progresses all the time... when we were at school it was so different to how it is now. So when the kids come home with the homework, we can't help them.' His mum added 'I mean half the things that have been sent home, I have never heard of, or you know I've never done.' Despite this, Daniel instigated support from his mum to learn his timetables. Helen had broken this task down into manageable chunks. Providing him with the tools in the form of flashcards (see below) she asked him to learn one times table a week, starting with the easier ones (2×, 3×, 5×, 10×, 11×) and moving on to the more difficult (4×, 6×, 7×, 8×, 9×, 12×). With the aid of these resources, Daniel and his mum created a shared zone of proximal development, shaping and increasing each others knowledge and confidence.

Within his ILP for the following term, Mrs Eastwood noted 'It is pleasing to note that Daniel is more confident and willing to undertake tasks across the curriculum. He is certainly more positive in his attitude to mathematics and it appears to be less of a threat to him. He is keen to improve his own skills and he is coping very well with the introduction of new topics in mathematics for the Year 6 curriculum.' However, she also noted that Daniel continued to experience some difficulties within some aspects of numeracy. For example, Daniel was unfamiliar with the varying terminology that could be used to infer addition, subtraction, division or multiplication. Clearly this provided a barrier to his understanding and hindered any possibility of working out the answer to questions posed. It was assumed all Year 6 pupils would have such knowledge because it had been covered earlier in the curriculum. Although Helen integrated the use of such terminology in the extra numeracy sessions, Daniel still struggled, preferring to use basic terms that he was familiar with. He frequently needed clarification for the meaning of 'product' and 'minus.' Daniel worked extremely hard to develop his knowledge and skills throughout all areas of numeracy. Within and outside the class community of practice, there was much emphasis on successful performance in numeracy as it was a core curriculum subject domain and would as such, be part of the SATs.

Recognising the value of achieving in numeracy and acting accordingly, Daniel was increasingly working towards full membership of the class community.

Moving away from the subjects Daniel struggled with and towards the area of the curriculum that he enjoyed most, art. Although Daniel initially struggled to work independently within the subject domains of literacy and numeracy, he excelled in art. Here, pupils were required to work without assistance once the teacher had introduced the topic area. Daniel found it easy to work independently with the freedom to be creative. His Year 6 report stated that Daniel 'shows imaginative flair and close attention to detail when drawing and painting.' (Mrs Eastwood, June 2002). It is unfortunate that because art did not form part of the end of year SATs, the value of success in this area was not the same as that attached to the three core subject domains of maths, literacy and science. Indeed, within Western culture, art is not perceived to be of particular value to life beyond school, unlike skills in English and maths, which are viewed to be integral.

Daniel also favoured lessons where he had the opportunity to work on computers. At school, this took the form of three separate weekly sessions: ICT time with Helen and Alison in the school's computer suite, visits to the CCC and an after school computer club for those with little or no experience of computers. For the most part of the school year, Daniel did not have access to a computer at home; indeed, he was the only child in the class of thirty experiencing this situation. Because of this, Daniel worked at a much slower pace in comparison with class peers during ICT lessons at school; however, he appeared unaware of this. He did not have the confidence to 'experiment' on the computers and was apprehensive to try something out; consequently, he spent the majority of his time at the start of the year waiting for assistance. However, Daniel remained unperturbed, he thoroughly enjoyed learning how to use the computers and as his confidence grew, he began to work with greater independence. Perhaps Daniel remained motivated more easily with this subject domain despite the evident obstacles, because everyone in the class was learning new knowledge and skills, and in these terms, they shared a similar position. Excitedly, during the final school term, Daniel told Helen that they now had a computer at home. He discussed with her how he had used the

knowledge he had learnt in school computer lessons, at home to produce a power point presentation, sharing with his mum, his new found skills. On a macro level, computer technologies are continually evolving and play a major feature of everyday life in wider society. In these terms, there is a need to be literate in this area in order to be a successful citizen of society.

Other lessons, such as those evolving round design and technology (D&T) and music etc. adopted a more class centred approach. These encouraged group collaboration and discussion and emphasised teamwork. For example, in D&T children were split into groups and asked to collaborate to formulate ideas to design a hat and a small model of a deck chair. The group would decide upon one design and delegate tasks amongst themselves to produce the final piece of work. Daniel performed well in such tasks and worked co-operatively with others in his group. It may be suggested the class teacher's approach to these subjects reflect Vygotskian notions of learning, whereby learning and development are the result of the meanings the child negotiates through his/her relationships and experiences. In these subject domains, Daniel is not reliant solely upon himself, but functions as a member of a group and perhaps this takes away some of the pressure and serves to alleviate the high levels of anxiety he experiences about his individual performance. Co-operative skills developed in these areas are invaluable in terms of life skills beyond school. However, they are not a feature of the assessed core curriculum. It is interesting to note that Daniel seemed to be more confident and achieved greater success in those subject domains which allowed him increasing membership of the class community. In assessed subject domains, Daniel's participation in the class community became a problem and was hindered by his own behaviour and that of others.

In science lessons, 6E pupils were required to copy the contents of a worksheet into their exercise book and observe an experiment at the front of the class led by the class teacher. This method does not call for the active participation on the part of pupils but, rather, treats them as passive vessels to be filled with knowledge and skills. In this scenario, Daniel conformed to the expected pattern of behaviour, that is, he worked quietly and completed the work set by the class teacher. In common

with other pupils, Daniel engaged superficially with the content of the lessons without achieving a deeper level of understanding. Here, Daniel has learnt to adopt the practices of the wider 6E community; all pupils were expected to sit quietly whilst the teacher addressed the class and to raise their hand to answer any questions.

As the year passed, Helen observed that Daniel developed effective working relationships with Mrs Eastwood, his class teacher, and both classroom assistants, Alison and herself. Mrs. Eastwood recognised the importance of Daniel's proximal relationship with Helen and asked her to be in her class for the duration of the SATs. She felt Helen had built up a good relationship with Daniel and that he was more likely to ask for questions to be read aloud if Helen was available in the classroom. Mrs. Eastwood was aware that Daniel might choose not to use this facility available to him. She thought his understanding of test questions and his competence could be extended by questions being read aloud to him, thus hoping he would get further on in the paper and produce work of a higher quality.

As Daniel's time in Year 6 progressed, he became increasingly engaged with his work and began to take more of a participatory role, particularly in literacy and numeracy lessons. At the start of the year Daniel sat in class passively, he then began to whisper answers to questions posed by the teacher to the pupil sat next to him. As his confidence grew, he began to raise his hand and volunteer answers in front of the class, he was less apprehensive to contribute during class discussions and he settled down to work quickly. He no longer sat in class and struggled, but began to ask for assistance in lessons rather than wait for someone to approach him. Daniel engaged increasingly as a full participant in the wider 6E community of practice. With an increase in his confidence and perceived self-efficacy to manage work tasks, Daniel experienced increasing success and he became more visible as a member of the wider 6E class community.

In the build up to the SATs to be taken in May, 6E pupils completed two practice sets of papers, one at the start of January and one at the end of March. Unfortunately, Daniel failed to attain a level in both his practice maths SATs

papers, as again, Levels 1 and 2 are not formally recognised within government guidelines and any pupil must attain a Level 3 to gain recognition of competency. However, Daniel did attain a Level 3 in both his practice literacy and science SAT papers. When the month of May approached and the final SATs drew nearer, the apprehension in the class was high. Failing to achieve Level 3 in the practice maths papers, Daniel understandably was increasingly anxious; he was well aware that most people were expected to achieve a Level 4 across their subjects as that was considered the average. Mrs Eastwood had made this explicit and explained it was the Government who had set this standard. Whilst she felt that Mrs Richardson's over expectations of Daniel's ability did not serve to help him, Helen observed that neither did her's. As a teacher, Mrs Eastwood was under pressure to attain high SATs results and therefore attaining a Level 4 was an explicit class community of practice expectation. Not working at the desired level of performance, Daniel perhaps felt under pressure, thick, upset, angry and isolated. Understandably he did not feel confident and this will have inevitably affected his performance. In the end, he left Year 6 having attained a Level 3 in his maths and literacy papers and a Level 4 in his science, exceeding his teacher's assessment. Whilst not in line with government expectations for both numeracy and literacy, Daniel had made significant progress and in these terms, he undoubtedly experienced success. As pointed out by Mrs Eastwood, 'Daniel had gained in confidence over the school year...he has missed out on a lot but come on tremendously.'

It is not sufficient to look solely at Daniel's attainment on his SATs papers, as they fail to recognise the journey he has been on – emotionally, socially and developmentally. For those who look beyond the superficiality of his measured results, one can see that Daniel's story in Year 6 is one of dramatic transformation. Entering class 6E, Daniel had very few relationships with peers. As the year progressed he became a core member of what his teacher termed 'the incrowd,' developing relationships with many class members. Daniel became a popular, sporting hero and was frequently picked as one team captain in lunchtime class matches. Beginning to receive attention from several girls in his class, Mrs Eastwood commented to Helen 'Fancy going to not really liking yourself, to the

Romeo of the class.’ Perhaps for this many reasons, Daniel told Mrs Eastwood that he had enjoyed Year 6 and that it had been his best year at school!

Despite the development of positive working microsystems with teaching staff in Year 6, Daniel’s impoverished mesosystem home-school link pervaded his last few months at school. Daniel’s life at school was very separate from the one he led at home and this was reinforced by a series of events towards the end of the year. Once Daniel had completed the Year 6 SATs, Helen observed, rather sadly, that he began to lose interest again in his school work. He lacked focus in lessons and became easily distracted by others. Alongside some of his class peers, Daniel also had several altercations with pupils in 6B. The majority of Year 6 pupils were going to attend the nearby secondary school Greenwood, and both classes spent time completing preparation work that this school had sent as a means to aid transition. Daniel did not acquire a place at this secondary school as his home didn’t fall in catchment area. As such, he would attend a school that was in closer proximity to his home where he would know only one fellow pupil upon joining the school. It may be suggested he again began to feel excluded from the 6E community of practice. The work he was asked to do had no bearing on his life in his proposed secondary school and the peers who surrounded him and would have no role in his life beyond Roseberry Hill. The majority of his peers were moving on together and he increasingly became a peripheral participant of his social group.

Throughout the year, Mrs Eastwood had sought to establish positive relationships with Daniel’s parents and felt her communication with them was ‘fairly good. However, in conversation with Helen, she commented that she didn’t think that his mum was particularly supportive of Daniel’s learning journey. She claimed that Mrs Richardson just knew the ‘right’ things to say but, at home, all she did was shout at Daniel. With these underpinning beliefs, Mrs Eastwood’s relationship with Mrs Richardson could at best, be described as tenuous. Working together outwardly for the benefit of Daniel’s development is clearly not the same as a genuinely collaborative approach with the active participation of both family and teaching staff team. With few and impoverished connections in operation between

Daniel's home and school, his experiences and development were no longer predominantly positive.

**'I find myself quite bubbly and loud (in the appropriate times not in work times): *introducing Leanne***

One of only two British Black African children in all of Year 6, Leanne's face was regularly lit up with a huge smile. Bursting into the classroom each morning like a ray of sunshine, she greeted Helen and Alison individually, singing her greetings 'Morning Helen,' 'Hello Alison, how are you?' Leanne's facial expressions and her babyish voice belied her physical stature and her general behaviour. Dressed in an invariably clean and ironed school uniform, always with the option of trousers, Leanne sat happily amongst the sea of green jumpers in 6E. Upon closer inspection, Helen could see the frayed cuffs of her jumper and the worn condition of her coat. One of the taller girls in the class, the poor condition of her uniform would become more evident as the year progressed and Leanne continued to grow. Returning to school following the Christmas holidays, Helen regularly overheard her complain that her jumper was too small; reinforced by her own observations that Leanne's jumper sleeves reached only three quarters of the way down her arm. At one point during the summer term, Leanne continued wearing her school shoes despite having a large hole in the front of her left shoe; these were replaced during the forthcoming half term holiday.

Leanne has been a member of the Roseberry Hill wider school community for some time, joining in nursery. Only a short walks distance from school, she lives with her mother, Mrs Taylor and two elder brothers. One is in his late teens, the other in his early twenties, both attend college. Her mother works full-time in an administrative position and as the sole breadwinner, her income is spread thinly across the needs of her immediate family members. This was evident not only in Leanne's appearance, but also the problems her mother had funding school trips and activities. Late returning her permission slip to go on one school trip, Leanne explained to her class teacher Mrs Eastwood, that her mum didn't have enough money to pay the requested contribution towards the trip. As part of the learning journey for their pupils, Roseberry Hill is keen for pupils to partake in extra curricula trips. However, the cost of these can mount up, particularly in Year 6, when many of these trips take place in close proximity once the SATs have been completed.

For example, in the second half of the month of May, Year 6 pupils went on two trips: walking in The Longdendale Valley in Tintwistle as part of their rivers topic (a donation of £4.00 towards transport was requested) and attending a living history day as part of their Victorian topic (contribution of £6.00 towards transport and admission requested). In addition to these initial outlays, parents were also required to supply packed lunch for their child on both occasions. Unable to meet the costs of either trip, Mrs Eastwood arranged for the school to cover the cost of Leanne's contribution, ensuring that she did not miss out on the experience of the visits. Mrs Taylor provided her with a packed lunch. Leanne was explicitly told by Mrs Eastwood not to say anything to other pupils as they wouldn't think it was fair. Here, the values and practices of the school positively shape Leanne's learning experiences, elucidating the impact of the home-school mesosystem link. In an interview with Helen, Mrs Taylor also explained the impact of her financial constraints upon Leanne's participation in activities outside the school domain. Despite her daughter's keen interest in being involved in outside communities, Leanne was required to make a decision regarding which one activity she would most like to be involved in, 'so she dropped the dancing at Christmas and joined Guides in January.' Here, factors operating in Leanne's exosystem (that is, the family income), are impacting upon the experiences offered to her both inside and outside the school setting.

Alongside participating in social groups on a weekly basis (Girl Guides or modern dance), Leanne was involved in learning to play musical instruments. At home, she received short weekly piano lessons, lasting thirty minutes. And at school, she started the year continuing with weekly violin lessons. However these stopped after the first school term with Leanne stating 'I quit...I didn't like Mr Brown (the school music tutor)...but I am going to take it up in Greenwood.' Here, we can see the importance of a healthy teacher-pupil relationship in sustaining engagement in the learning process. At home, friendships with peers were not a large feature of Leanne's life. She occasionally played outside with three peers from class 6E. However, living very close to a busy dual carriageway, her mum was not keen on her playing outside or crossing the road to get to a friend's house. As a consequence, Leanne spent a considerable amount of time at home with her

immediate family. Leanne reports that she goes out with her mum 'a lot.' She takes her out at the weekend 'to the shops and the cinema' and also supports her with her homework. Leanne states 'She likes to help me and gives me tests.' In discussion with Helen, it was evident that Leanne's relationship with her mum was healthy and one of the strongest microsystems she experienced. At home, Leanne also spent time with her two elder brothers who she states, 'look after me and sometimes buy me stuff...like sweets.' Occasionally, she also sees her uncle and cousins, with whom she 'just plays and talks.' Although her mother is one of eight, the extended family live further afield and there is minimal contact. In drawing up her ecomap with Helen, Leanne did not mention her father. But when prompted, Leanne initially hesitant said, 'I don't really see him much...he doesn't work in England, he works in other countries...I think he works on a ship.' Here, we can see that Leanne is effectively estranged from her father; there is no microsystem between them.

Because of Mrs Taylor's working hours, she was unable to accompany Leanne on her journey to or from school; rather, this duty fell to Anna, the childminder. Anna had been a feature of Leanne's life for the most part of her educational career at Roseberry Hill, with Leanne being dropped off at her house at eight in the morning and picked up again at five in the evening. In discussion with Helen, it was clear that Leanne was fond of Anna and that over the years they had formed a close bond. Presently the eldest in a group of six pupils, all of whom attend Roseberry Hill, Leanne's relationship with Anna was coming to an imminent end. Nonetheless, throughout Year 6 they continued to have a healthy microsystem.

In the classroom, Leanne demonstrated all the qualities of a model pupil: she was highly motivated, had excellent focus, possessed effective listening skills, was enthusiastic to participate in question and answer sessions and class discussions, and was able to work successfully both independently and collaboratively. Leanne was one of the more able pupils in the class and as such, was not assigned to work individually or in small group situations with the class teacher or either of the classroom assistants. Moreover, despite Leanne's enthusiasm to verbally participate in class lessons, her contributions were kept to a minimum by the

teacher. Indeed, in one literacy lesson, Leanne had unusually been selected to answer several questions by Mrs Eastwood, who on the third exchange explicitly asked Leanne to put her hand down and give others a chance to answer. Across all subject domains, the teacher's behaviour served to limit Leanne's participation. This was not only noted by Helen, but also Alison, who suggests that 'because she (Leanne) is quieter and better behaved and doesn't need to be engaged as much as the others, she (Mrs Eastwood) doesn't choose her as much.' However, this set of circumstances did not seem to deter Leanne, she remained in a positive mindset.

Mrs Eastwood noted that 'she pleases herself and sets her own targets...and always strives to do her utmost.' Indeed, Helen observed that Leanne was able to assess the strengths and limitations of her own work. For example, one morning Leanne approached Helen and asked her if she would mark some maths work that she had completed at home. In the discussion which followed, Leanne explained that she had instigated the work herself in recognition of her need to work on her weakest areas in maths. Here, Leanne demonstrates metacognitive awareness of her knowledge, skills and understanding and is able to identify her weaker areas. In making a plan and executing it, she draws on a strategy which she knows works successfully for her. In this scenario, Leanne sought recognition of the work she had done and constructive feedback on her performance. As pointed out by Mrs Eastwood, 'She is always prepared to listen to advice and to act upon it as a means of improving the standards of her work' (11/01/2002). This was written in Leanne's home-school agreement book, a tool designed to strengthen the mesosystem link between the home and school communities. On another occasion in the classroom setting, Leanne was undertaking the second SATs maths paper. One question required pupils to specify where a given pattern was on a cube net. Using the picture of the whole cube as a template, Leanne made up the net of the cube, utilising the tracing paper distributed for another question. This transfer of skills enabled her to successfully ascertain the correct answer. Her regular use of metacognitive skills empowered her as an independent learner. Indeed, Leanne was the sole pupil Helen observed throughout class 6E to regularly

use metacognitive skills. Her ability and use of these skills made her less reliant on her relationships with the teaching staff in Year 6.

Nonetheless, Leanne developed effective working microsystems with all three members of Year 6 teaching staff. Her relationship with the class teacher was founded predominantly on written interaction where she received much praise for well executed work. Reference to all her exercise books finds them littered with positive comments and praise stickers: 'Beautiful work'; 'You are working very hard, Leanne'; 'Brilliant answer'; 'I am very pleased with your work Leanne; 'Excellent'; 'Well done.' Her relationships with both classroom assistants were based more on verbal interactions, strengthened by her proximity to them in the classroom setting.

Socially, Leanne notes that she didn't have a best friend. Moreover, observations revealed that she didn't belong to any particular friendship group in the class, with Mrs Eastwood noting that she was on 'the periphery of the in-crowd.' In discussion with Helen, Leanne mentioned that at break and lunch times she usually talks and plays in a group of six girls from the class. As a group, they sometimes joined the boys to play football. However at times, she would wander off, preoccupied with her own thoughts and could, on occasion, be seen talking to herself. Although she was one of few happy to converse with all class peers, Leanne chose to distance herself from squabbles between the girls in her class. These occurred increasingly throughout the academic year. Her mother, Mrs Taylor, reported that class friendships had been difficult to sustain for long periods of time since Year 4. Arguments arose regularly and although there had been some parental interference, Leanne had specifically asked her mother not to go in as it made matters worse. In light of this, one can see that Leanne managed this highly emotive situation by choosing to withdraw, opting herself out of participating in this community of practice.

Strong friendship microsystems were thus few and far between for Leanne until the arrival of Jane at the end of February 2002. Initially Jane joined 6E for the morning sessions only and became a full-time class member mid June. Leanne developed

a close relationship with Jane, demonstrating that she had the necessary skills to relate to those her own age. Leanne's friendship with Jane revealed another side to her persona. Mrs Eastwood noted that the friendship enabled her to become 'relaxed' for the first time. Adding that Leanne likes silliness and previously the class have not allowed this behaviour but 'Jane says it's okay.' Observing her behaviour in the classroom, her class teacher believed that Leanne engaged in silly rather than naughty or disruptive behaviour, stating that it was a good as there were times when you should be silly. Interestingly, whilst Mrs Eastwood felt the change in Leanne's behaviour stemmed predominantly from her relationship with Jane, Helen believed that it emerged as a result of the completion of the SATs. Once these had finished and class activities became more unstructured, Leanne began to chatter more in lesson time and overtly lost interest. Both teaching staff and her mother recognised that she was bored and ready to move on. For Leanne, the explicit goal of Year 6 was to attain on the SATs, this was evident in the beliefs and practices of her mum, the teaching staff, her peers and the government. Working in line with this overarching goal, Leanne completed this task mid May and henceforth, her behaviour changed because the goals of the class community were no longer clear. In fact, it was evident to Helen throughout Year 6, that Leanne was aware of many of the explicit and implicit valued practices in the class and school communities; insight which permitted her increasing levels of participation as a member. Her awareness of these valued practices is also evident in the transition work she fulfilled for secondary school. All prospective Greenwood pupils were asked to complete a form entitled 'Stepping up to Year 7.' In describing herself, Leanne stated 'I find myself quite bubbly and loud (in the appropriate times not in work times) and I'm quite chatty but not all the time, I behave myself (regularly).' Here, Leanne is articulating her awareness of boundaries to acceptable and non-acceptable behaviour. Indeed, in discussion with Helen, Mrs Eastwood also recognised that Leanne was 'aware of the boundaries.'

Throughout Year 6, Leanne was driven to attain high marks in her end of Year SATs and she did just that. She moved up from Year 5 having attained Level 4 in both English and maths, working independently. Here, she is already attaining

above the government expectations for her age group. With consistent hard work in Year 6, she eventually attained Level 5 in both English and science and missed this level by one point in maths. In conversation with her peers, she informed them that she had attained Level 5 in all three subject domains; indeed, this reflected the teacher's assessment of the capabilities. Rather than the central role of effective working relationships with teaching staff and peers, it is Leanne's microsystem with her mum that has been integral to her development. With a high level of perceived self-efficacy to manage her educational attainment, strength, determination and focus has brought Leanne success. Giving consideration to both Leanne's Year 6 learning journey and the fact that both her brothers were in full-time education, it is evident that academic achievement is highly valued in her family. In these terms, Leanne has performed in line with the valued practices of both her home and school communities. Leanne has an abundance of qualities which will allow her to flourish as a successful member of society.

### **‘He craves attention’: *introducing Tariq***

Described by his mum, Mrs Khan, as taller than average and of muscular build, Tariq looked one of the oldest pupils in 6E. He had large brown eyes and shiny, jet black straight hair, which perpetually grew at odd angles and was thus cut short. One of two children, Tariq lived with his mum and dad in a house located close to Roseberry Hill. His home was also situated close to his forthcoming secondary school, Greenwood, which he would join the following academic year. His older sister, Zahra, already attended this school and was fifteen years of age. In the immediate family setting they spoke Urdu and English and with Tariq’s grandma they additionally spoke Punjabi. Hence, English was not Tariq’s first language and this would inevitably have ramifications for his use of it within in the school context.

After attending a private nursery full-time from age three, Tariq joined Roseberry Hill in Nursery aged four. As a family, the Khans have thus been part of the Roseberry Hill school community for the entirety of Tariq’s primary school career. He started his education so young because both his parents were working. Although Mrs Khan had been the primary caregiver for Zahra, her working hours had prohibited her from continuing this role with Tariq when he was younger. With his dad taking the lead role in his development, Mrs Khan felt strongly that Tariq had ‘missed out’ on the early foundations of a mother-son relationship and this served to impact on his life today. She stated in an interview ‘I used to leave home before he was taken to nursery.... I used to feel bad, really guilty about it and I used to say I should be there. Whereas Zahra, I used to be with her, I used to care, get her ready, put her clothes on.... With Tariq it didn’t happen at all, I hardly took him to school... I had to leave early for work... but I used to sort of rush to school at half past three... to actually go and meet him... But then he was tired, I was tired... (and because of this) the foundation isn’t there.’ Here, one can see the impact of factors working within the exosystem on Tariq’s development. His parents’ working commitments restricted the time they could spend together with Tariq and led to his dad taking the role of primary caregiver. Throughout the interview with Mrs Khan, she continually referred to this time and saw it as the underpinning reasons for Tariq’s present difficulties with school work.

Tariq's immediate family circle was close knit and this reflected the central role of family in the Muslim culture. Both Tariq and his parents report that they engaged in lots of shared activities. With his mum, Tariq cooked, shopped and helped with the cleaning. Together with his dad, they gardened, cleaned the car and fixed items such as the garden fence and Tariq's bike. Tariq received help from both his parents and his sister with his school work. Assistance with homework activities was shared, with his mum supporting him in English and his dad in maths and science. During Year 6, both of Tariq's parents experienced health problems and at these times, his sister helped him out with his homework. Although reporting that she 'bosses him around,' Tariq conceded that they did spend time together, cooking and surfing the internet. One can see that Tariq experienced positive proximal relations within his immediate family sphere.

Together, they visited extended members of their family on a fortnightly basis. Meeting up with uncles, aunties and cousins, Tariq states they 'talk and trouble is sorted out.' The fundamental part played by both immediate and extended family in Tariq's day-to-day life is underpinned by Islamic teachings. Here, it is thought that the family is irreplaceable by any other social form or structure, with healthy families thought to underpin the stability of any society or civilization. In this sense, Tariq's relationships and microsystems with family members will be some of the strongest he experiences during his lifetime. Although the strength of the family unit was evident in discussion with Tariq and his parents, the extent to which they, as a family, engaged in Islamic worship was unclear. When drawing up his ecomap with Helen, Tariq did not mention that he attended the after school mosque (held in the school lunch hall) and Helen saw him socialising with friends after school on a regular basis. In addition, in conversation with Helen, his parents made no explicit reference to Islamic teachings or that he attended the mosque. However, from this, one cannot assume that the Khan family did not follow Islamic practices; indeed, with the emphasis placed on family, it is clear that these practices did shape their lives.

Living in close proximity to Roseberry Hill, Tariq walked the journey to and from school. Reliably arriving early each day, he was assigned the responsibility for the

distribution of class registers. He carried out this task throughout the academic year with a class peer when the obligation fell to 6E. Helen was frequently greeted by Tariq upon her arrival at school. He would respectfully open the main entrance door and Helen would collect the Year 6 registers from him in the foyer before making her way upstairs. She often pondered over the differences she observed between his polite and helpful behaviour when greeted first thing and his disinterested and bored behaviour displayed in the classroom. It was such a stark difference, that Helen felt as if she was interacting with two different children. The greater consideration she gave to this discrepancy, the more complex she realised Tariq's experiences of Year 6 were.

On his way to school, Tariq was often accompanied by his friends Ameet and Jalal, both were members of class 6B. To associate with pupils in the other Year 6 class was highly unusual. It was apparent through observations of pupils' behaviour and conversations that there was a certain degree of rivalry between the two classes. Amidst this animosity, Tariq was the sole pupil to bridge the divide. He maintained close friendships with Ameet and Jalal throughout the year; they like him were Muslim. Tariq's strong friendships with these boys were noted by Alison and Helen as members of both class communities, but not by his class teacher, Mrs Eastwood. Tariq maintained these friendships outside the school setting, playing on bikes and watching films. Interestingly, the nature of Tariq's relationships with peers in his own class, were more delicate. All three members of staff were aware that Tariq was not a member of any definite friendship group in 6E, nor did he have particularly strong proximal relations with any fellow class peer. Here, Tariq's mere presence in the class community did not qualify him as a full member. Despite moving up with the same class of children from Reception through to Year 6, the nature of Tariq's membership within the class community was complex. The following observations highlight how the actions of others and indeed his own choices, impacted upon his levels of participation in this group.

To an outsider, it may seem that Tariq was a central participant of the class community of practice. Socially, he reports that he talked and played football and cricket with the boys in 6E, and this is confirmed by Alison in her role as lunchtime

organiser. Indeed, despite having close friends in 6B, he did not spend time with them during break or lunchtimes. Here, Tariq abided with explicit Year 6 practices, which dictated that children only socialised with those comprising their particular class. Despite his daily engagement in peer activities, to an insider, it was evident that Tariq actually socialised with peers on a superficial level. He did not form close relationships with anyone in his class and in fact was quite distant. Indeed, Mrs Eastwood commented that no other child in the class picked him when they had the opportunity to choose their own partners. Here, the actions of others inhibited his participation and served to isolate him. In these situations he was often allocated by teaching staff to make up a threesome. In this pairing, he was able to perform comfortably in social rather than work situations for short periods of time, frequently adopting the role of 'joker.' To receive attention in the past Mrs Eastwood noted that Tariq engaged in silly behaviour. She believed he did this as 'he craves attention off the other children in the class' and likes to 'feel part of the incrowd, to fit in, in their eyes.' She suggested that if he did not engage in silly behaviour, he did not receive this attention.

Because Tariq experienced difficulties maintaining effective proximal relations with class peers, it is perhaps unsurprising that collaborative work with a shared mutual goal was a struggle for him. In paired scenarios which saw him positioned as an equal or a less able partner, he repeatedly withdrew, either choosing to take a non-participatory role or on occasion, refusing point blank to participate. The only collaborative ventures of this type he seemed willing and able to participate in were one-to-one situations with teaching staff. Of course, in a class of thirty pupils, these opportunities were few and far between. Perhaps because he regularly interacted with adults and an older sister in his home life, he found it easier to relate to teaching staff rather than his peers. Although this may have been Tariq's preference, it is evident that he could relate to those his own age when he chose, as he did have a circle of friends who he interacted with on a daily basis.

However, Tariq was able to work effectively in collaborative ventures which saw him positioned as the 'expert.' For example, in computer lessons he was recognised by Mrs Eastwood and the teaching assistants as one of the more able

children in the class. Putting his knowledge and skills to good use, they frequently paired Tariq with a pupil who struggled or lacked confidence in this area. Working within a created zone of proximal development, he was able to provide scaffolding for fellow pupils, deconstructing tasks into a series of more manageable steps. In these scenarios, his focus was excellent and he worked successfully alongside his peers. He was also able to relate to younger pupils. When he worked with an autistic boy in Reception class, painting the younger child's design on a tile, he was singled out for praise by the Reception teacher who commended his polite and helpful behaviour. Again, in this example Tariq was positioned as the 'expert' and was thus able to work effectively in this collaborative venture. In light of this, one can see that the nature of collaboration for Tariq is quite complex, his decisions in these paired scenarios determine his level of participation.

When required to undertake an independent approach to work, the level of Tariq's engagement was again complex. There appeared to be discrepancies in his level of performance across different tasks. His level of interest in both the subject domain and the particular topic being studied was a key factor in determining his level of involvement. This was confirmed by his parents. For example, in one literacy lesson which looked at instructional writing, the class completed a comprehension entitled 'making pancakes.' Despite being unfamiliar with making and eating pancakes, Tariq was engaged at first in this lesson. In discussion of unfamiliar terminology in the comprehension passage, he asked 'what does batter mean?' He also offered an explanation of the word 'tossing' and drew a spatula on the board to indicate to a fellow pupil what the kitchen utensil looked like. In discussion with his mum, she stated that his involvement in this lesson stemmed from his interest in cooking. His knowledge in this area gained through experience of cooking with his mum, allowed him to participate in the class discussion. However, as other pupils spoke and he receded into the background, he disengaged.

Mrs Eastwood observed that throughout lessons, particularly whole class teaching time, Tariq had a short attention span and got bored quickly. Moreover, Helen noted that during these times, he seemed disinterested and was easily distracted,

for example, playing with the contents of the pen pots on the table. To address Tariq's tendency to drift, Mrs Eastwood called on both classroom assistants to target Tariq in class and ensure he was 'on task.' Because Helen was continually prompting him to listen and follow the lesson introductions, she felt that much of their interaction was negative. These circumstances didn't offer many opportunities for her to give Tariq positive praise. The explicit instructions from Mrs Eastwood thus served as an inhibiting factor to the establishment of a positive working relationship with Tariq. Alison also shared this difficulty. In asking the classroom assistants to adopt this role, Mrs Eastwood was able to focus on praising his achievements. Rather than saying to him 'Tariq, are you listening?' or 'Can you please put the pens back in the pot and concentrate?' she was able to check he was 'on task' by asking him a question and praising his contributions. Another factor impacting upon Tariq's level of involvement in a task was the value he attached to it. In class, Helen observed that Tariq put the bare minimum of effort into his work, just enough to ensure he attained average marks. This viewpoint was confirmed by Mrs Eastwood who believed that Tariq didn't want to work or challenge himself, he set himself targets which he could meet easily. Recognising this, she set him higher targets to challenge him, a practice which she reported he felt was demanding and unfair. Whilst the Year 6 teaching staff and Tariq's parents assigned value to the completion and high attainment of school tasks, it appeared that Tariq couldn't identify with this. In this respect his belief system was incompatible with the valued practices in his home and school communities of practice.

However, there were times when Tariq put the extra effort in. On the most part, these tended to be when working with computers or in test situations. When completing a practice SATs paper in science during the month of February, Helen observed Tariq fully engaged. One multiple choice question asked 'How could Peter make the shadow of his head bigger?' To identify the correct answer, Tariq enacted a similar scenario, holding his hand above the desk and creating a shadow. He moved his hand closer to and further away from the desk top, watching the size of the shadow formed. Here, he is independently using problem solving abilities to ascertain the correct answer; transferring his knowledge across

different scenarios to succeed. In this scenario, Tariq's belief system coincided with the practices valued in his home and school communities: performance on the Year 6 SATs was important.

Throughout Year 6 Tariq's measured attainment remained more or less static. He moved up at the end of Year 5 with a high Level 3 in English and a low Level 4 in maths. The practice SATs in January saw him achieve a Level 3 in English, and a Level 4 in both maths and science. In March, he attained a Level 4 in English and Science and a Level 3 in maths practice SATs papers. He left Year 6 having attained Level 4 in all three subject domains. In line with government expectations for his age group, Tariq can be considered an educational success. However, in terms of his social development, Tariq's journey in Year 6 has been difficult. Because his parents blamed themselves for his shortcomings in the classroom, he was in one sense, not encouraged to take responsibility for his own learning or behaviour. Mrs Eastwood's actions went some way to colluding with their mindset, as she allocated the responsibility to ensure he was 'on task' to all but Tariq himself. Throughout the year, it was apparent to Helen that Tariq's participation in the class community remained peripheral. Despite his presence in the same class for the entire duration of his primary school career, he struggled to abide by the valued practices of the class community. Whilst his recognition and compliance with some practices enabled him to fit in superficially and go unnoticed as a child experiencing difficulties, his refusal to engage in others drew attention. His preference to non-participate in lessons caused him to receive additional support from teaching staff as his behaviour went against the valued practices of the classroom. His current strategies to manage situations will no doubt complicate his learning journey in secondary school, where his refusal to adhere to practices may be met with alternative methods.

### ***Chapter summary***

In this chapter I have discussed why I have chosen to refashion my fieldwork experience in story form. The narrative approach I adopted is structured through

the multi-layering of five theoretical frameworks; this served as a vehicle to communicate the complexity of children's everyday learning experiences to the reader. I began the analysis by setting the scene, introducing Roseberry Hill Primary School and the focal characters and practices of Year 6. I then went on to present the learning stories of eight, Year 6 children: Charlotte, Isabel, Jaleela, Roberto, Beth, Daniel, Leanne and Tariq. Despite employing the same theoretical underpinnings, each story is very different and this illuminates the highly intricate and unique learning journey experienced by all. The use of the ecological model has permitted the exploration of a multiplicity of factors shaping each child's learning experiences; both those operating in the child's immediate setting and his/her more distal environment. With a focus beyond SATs results, the stories demonstrate that children's development extends much further than their measured attainment in the three core subject domains of English, mathematics and science. They emphasise the importance of developing effective social skills for participation in life within and beyond the school walls.

## CHAPTER SIX

### EXPLORING CHILDREN'S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND PERFORMANCE: A BIOECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

In this chapter, I again employ Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory of human development to contextualise the individual learning journeys of the eight children presented previously. Applying this pre-determined structure, I tease out some of the threads running through the fabric of the children's stories. The threads are framed within the constituent components of the Process-Person-Context-Time (PPCT) model. This approach allows me to address a large number of my research aims; both those which seek to provide an *understanding* of children's learning and performance and those which endeavour to make recommendations for *managing* their learning, based on this knowledge. Accordingly, this chapter is divided into two sections.

#### **Understanding children's learning and performance**

Framed using the bioecological model, this section aims to provide the reader with an understanding of children's learning and academic performance using the stories presented in the previous chapter. A focus on each of the principle components of this model permits me to address multiple research aims, specifically:

- ◆ *To examine children's intra-psychological learning relationship*
- ◆ *To explore the role of micro-, meso-, exo- and macro- systems on learning*
- ◆ *To explore the interrelationships of the micro- and meso- processes in view of exo- and macro- systems*
- ◆ *To identify or generate a theoretical framework for understanding children's day-to-day learning experiences*

### ***Process: the microsystem***

Located at the inner core of the bioecological model, the microsystem gives prominence to proximal processes in the child's immediate environment. It is proposed that development occurs as a result of regular, prolonged and increasingly complex reciprocal interaction between the focal child and the people, objects and symbols in his/her world. Such proximal processes are deemed critical to each child's learning journey, and as such, are characterised as the 'primary engines of development'. It is apparent in reading the stories of the eight focal children, that each experiences a rich tapestry of microsystems. Every child has relationships with multiple parties in their immediate physical and social world; for example, with family members, school staff, class peers, team members, friends etc. The crucial role assigned to relationships in the learning process is not a new or original idea, is also recognised in the socio-cultural theory of Vygotsky and the communities of practice literature. An underpinning assumption of all three theoretical lenses is the notion that learning is a social rather than an individual process. It is through our interactions with others that we construct and make sense of our world. In reviewing the children's stories, what can we ascertain about the effects of the relationship upon learning?

#### *Effects of the relationship upon learning: enabling or disabling?*

With Roseberry Hill positioned as the shared central setting, relationships with teaching staff and class peers were prominent features of everyday life for all of the focal children. Here, I focus on the teacher-learner relationship as it is often the co-operation between these parties which is identified as the integral element of the learning process. I use examples from both Year 6 classes to illustrate the intricacies of the relationship upon the developmental process, indicating how they can be both enabling and disabling to the learner. In class 6B, research data highlighted that Mrs Brookes focused the majority of her attention on the 'more able' pupils, a group which included Charlotte. Throughout lessons a greater number of questions were directed to these children which served to challenge and

extend their learning. This was acknowledged by Mrs Brookes who noted, 'I would say that I go more to extend the more able ones... you can do that easier in a class lesson because you can say, right if you don't understand this don't worry, if you do, we'll go on and the others will listen anyway.' In the majority of lessons, this group of children were seated together on one colour table, and their participation and good behaviour was regularly rewarded with table points and weekly treats. Such interactions served to exclude the rest of the class, as the relationship Mrs Brookes had formed with this group of children differed both qualitatively and quantitatively to those she had made with the other pupils. During lesson time, it could be seen that Mrs Brookes gave greater time and approval to the 'more able' children who, in addition, were the sole group to undertake weekly reading sessions alongside Mrs Brookes for much of the academic year. As a result of this continued support and encouragement, these children were permitted access to learning opportunities that fellow pupils were not and their progress in learning was clearly apparent.

In contrast, the 'lower ability' groups rarely received one-to-one attention from Mrs Brookes; rather, reading sessions and support during lessons was primarily given by Helen or Alison, the teaching assistants. In literacy lessons the 'less able' children were more often than not, taught elsewhere in the school by the school's special educational needs co-ordinator, a decision which prohibited their active participation as full members of class 6B. Those children who fell in between these two extremes exhibited active participation during some lessons (raising their hands to answer questions, contributing during class discussions etc.) and non-participation during others (easily distracted by peers and objects, disinterest in the work at hand etc.) For example, in Isabel's story she actively made the decision not to raise her hand during literacy lessons despite prompts from Helen. This was founded on the belief that Mrs Brookes didn't pick anyone on her table to answer questions. In this scenario, the bi-directional influence of both parties in shaping the nature of the teacher-pupil relationship is apparent. Whilst Isabel believed her chance of participation in the lesson was negligible, her decision not to raise her hand ensured her exclusion from the relationship and moreover, any engagement

in the lesson. Thus, Isabel was able to exert some influence and power over the proximal processes in which she engaged.

In summary, Mrs Brookes' teaching philosophy and practice greatly impacted upon the relationships she developed with the pupils in her class. She formed the most effective working relationships with the higher ability pupils, providing them with a greater number and superior quality of learning opportunities. In turn, she formed more distant relations with pupils falling outside this group, arguably diminishing their learning opportunities. The above exemplifies the notion that the decisions and actions of both parties serve to shape not only the teacher-learner relationship, but also the practices of the wider classroom community; both factors inevitably influencing the learning trajectory of every child in 6B.

In class 6E, Mrs Eastwood believed that the teaching and learning process was underpinned by the teacher-pupil relationship. She ploughed much time and energy into creating a safe and trusting environment, seeking to form positive relationships with every pupil in her class. During the academic year she spent a lot of time talking with pupils and their carers to try to establish where problems lay. Mrs Eastwood perceived her teaching role was 'to serve the children...you have got to find out what children need.... and what makes a child tick.' Teacher talk in the staff room had made her aware of the difficulties that some pupils experienced in Year 5. Daniel was one of these children. This was confirmed by Daniel and his parents in conversation. It was apparent that the poor relationship he experienced with both his Year 5 class teacher and teaching assistant had limited his opportunities to participate in the class community; he has been disabled as a learner. Seeking to rectify and make up for this situation, Mrs Eastwood ensured that he received the time and attention needed to build up his self-esteem and maximise his learning development from the beginning of his time in Year 6. Working as a team, Mrs Eastwood and the support staff facilitated Daniel's transformation into an active participant of the class 6E community, empowering and enabling him as a learner.

The above examples suggest a somewhat black and white approach to forming relationships, with a positive one enabling the learner and a negative one disabling the learner. However, this is over simplistic; the nature of forming and maintaining relationships is highly intricate. A notion powerfully illuminated in the following example. Whilst Mrs Eastwood valued her ability to make positive relationships with all children, a review of the stories may call into question the effectiveness of her relationship with Tariq. Mrs Eastwood's relationship with Tariq was complex. Whilst she reported to Helen that she had formed a positive working relationship with him, the research data led Helen to question this belief. The theoretical lenses employed in this thesis propose that development and learning occur for both parties in interaction, through initiation and response which ultimately leads to mutual transformation. The research data suggests that Tariq engaged minimally in this process. Whilst present as a legitimate member of the class, his low level of participation ensured he remained peripheral. He maintained much power in the formation and development of relationships with teaching staff in Year 6, choosing when to engage and when to withdraw. These actions, in turn, served to limit the power available to the teaching team and the extent of the relationship they could form with him.

In order to understand the complexity of what was happening here, it is necessary to give consideration to Tariq's background, most notably his relationship with his parents. At home and at school, Tariq was not encouraged to take responsibility for his own behaviour or learning. Communications with his parents inferred that they felt responsible for his shortcomings, be they lack of attention in the classroom, failure to complete homework or disruptive behaviour at school etc. Alongside this, Mrs Eastwood directed Helen and Alison to ensure he remained on task in class, in turn, inhibiting his potential to work autonomously. Mrs Eastwood's actions perhaps link into her belief that the role of the teacher is to serve the child. Although unaware of the ramifications of this situation, her decision to address Tariq's problems in this way, mirrored aspects of his relationship with his parents. Whilst seeking to facilitate his learning potential, the actions of all adult parties and Tariq himself, served to disable him as a learner as they allowed the relationship to be predominantly unidirectional. Through minimising his need to negotiate and

engage in reciprocal interaction, it was the teaching staff who adapted to the formation and maintenance of their relationship with Tariq. This situation confirmed to Tariq that it was acceptable to behave as he did and this is perhaps the most damaging aspect of the relationship to his learning trajectory.

This section has sought to highlight the integral role played by relationships in the learning process, the nature of which, can serve to either foster or inhibit a child's educational trajectory. Developmentally effective proximal processes are founded on reciprocity, with both parties working together via initiation and response to produce transformation. In these terms, we can visualise a healthy microsystem where perhaps the development of an effective working relationship between pupil and teacher can have significant ramifications for the child's position as a learner and in turn his/her educational attainment. However, in circumstances when reciprocity between parties breaks down, the quality of the microsystem declines and it can become impoverished, disabling the child as a learner in the classroom.

#### *Considering the role of interactions with objects and symbols in our world*

Whilst relationships are recognised to play a fundamental role in the developmental journey, proximal processes are not thought to be limited to our exchanges with people. Additionally, they pertain to our reciprocal interactions with objects and symbols in our immediate environment, specifically, those which invite and permit 'attention, exploration, manipulation, elaboration and imagination' (Bronfenbrenner 1999: 6). In reviewing the children's stories, these include those activities carried out independently or on mass in the classroom (for example, reading, problem solving, writing stories, drawing and painting), with friends in the playground (talking with an imaginary friend, playing football and running games), and activities undertaken outside of school (cooking and baking, repairing bikes, skateboarding, playing family games).

### ***Person: the developmentally instigative characteristics of the child***

To reiterate, recent revisions to the ecological model have acknowledged that a child's own repertoire of characteristics serves as a primary source of influence shaping his/her development. Three aspects of the individual's biopsychological characteristics are deemed most influential in mediating interactions at the microsystem level: dispositions, bioecological resources and demand characteristics. With the spotlight focused on the former, this research illuminates the role of the child's directive belief systems. Specifically, it considers the influence of metacognitive awareness, thought and action alongside perceptions of self-efficacy. In that these phenomena reside in the individual, consideration of the roles they play permits examination of a child's intra-psychological learning relationship. Critically, I argue that both metacognition and self-efficacy are not the result of an individual's thoughts and actions alone, but are also shaped by external factors, most notably, the influence of his/her web of microsystems. This notion is unsurprising given the bi-directional influence of proximal processes proposed by the model. To what extent do metacognition and self-efficacy initiate and sustain or conversely, actively interfere and inhibit or even prevent, the operation of proximal processes with persons, symbols and physical features in the child's environment?

In reviewing the children's stories, there are several examples where the use of metacognition and self-efficacy can be inferred. Charlotte was able to successfully transfer effective interpersonal skills developed in her microsystems across into more distant relationships. This was apparent when making relationships with both her class teacher and teaching assistants at the start of Year 6 and also visible on school visits. Although not explicitly asked about her approach to interacting with others, Charlotte's level of success in transferring her skills may infer metacognitive use. Moreover, her confidence in initiating contact suggests that Charlotte had high self-efficacy in her ability to make relationships.

Prior to his extra tutorial work, Roberto's low level of self-efficacy in maths actively inhibited his ability to perform. His heightened belief in himself to perform

successfully in numeracy was facilitated by his one-to-one relationship with his maths tutor. Together, they worked to break the cycle of panic he automatically experienced when faced with numeracy tasks. This served to give him the necessary space to challenge his self-debilitating thoughts and process the problems undertaken, thus increasing his level of success and raising his confidence. These qualities slowly became apparent in the classroom, both in Roberto's behaviour and in his work. He successfully began to transfer his coping strategies and heightened self-efficacy into the school milieu when undertaking numeracy tasks.

Metacognitive knowledge and application was perhaps best demonstrated by Leanne. Through class work, tests marks and conversation with her class teacher, Leanne became aware that there were several areas in maths that she could improve upon. In recognition of her need to work on these weakest areas, Leanne instigated further work at home. Setting her self questions and working through them, she brought her work into school seeking feedback on her performance. Prompted by proximal processes in the classroom, Leanne demonstrated metacognitive awareness of her knowledge, skills and understanding. In making a plan and executing it, she drew on a strategy to manage her learning, which she perceived would improve her performance. Her high self-efficacy in her ability to independently manage her learning and academic performance is evident.

My research data captured few examples of metacognitive use by the focal children. Perhaps metacognitive activity had not yet been developed or perhaps my research methods were insufficient to capture its use. Whilst observations allowed me to infer the use of metacognitive qualities, without explicit follow-up dialogue, I could not be sure if or to what extent metacognition was being used and whether it was being applied successfully. Indeed, the elusive nature of metacognition makes it problematic to ascertain and assess. In contrast, beliefs of self-efficacy are somewhat easier to identify and are often revealed through actions and dialogue. As I outlined in chapter two, metacognitive skills and self-efficacy are powerful qualities to possess in the educational arena. Developed and influenced through proximal processes in the microsystem, these qualities enable

the learner to work with greater independence. As exemplified in the scenarios above, together they enable the learner to self-regulate their own developmental trajectory. This is a formidable strength to possess in a society which is in a constant state of flux and moreover, which values and promotes individual attainment.

## **Context**

In this section, I give consideration to the factors operating in each of the wider systems comprising the child's world (meso-, exo- and macro- systems). These three outer ecological layers make up the context component of the PPCT model.

### *The mesosystem*

The mesosystem involves the linkages and processes taking place between two or more of a child's microsystems. Of central concern, are the number and quality of these and the encouraging or inhibitory effects they have upon the child's learning trajectory. A principle mesosystem for all the focal children involved in this research is the connection between home and school. This conceptual framework would maintain that a rich mesosystem link existed between these microsystems if communication flows were effective and bi-directional, with all parties working together for the benefit of the child. In contrast, an impoverished mesosystem link would be characterised by few or no meaningful linkages between the child's microsystems. Many parties may assume that the mesosystem link between Roseberry Hill primary school and the child's home is inevitably strong because they function as a small community. However, a review of the children's stories illustrates that this cannot be assumed, the experience of each child is unique. Two contrasting stories would be those of Beth and Daniel; whilst both pupils were in class 6E, each experienced very different relationships between home and school.

Beth has been a member of Roseberry Hill for the duration of her educational career. She was preceded by her two elder brothers, Chris and Mark, and followed by her younger brother, Jack. Because of the ongoing contact between the Redpath family and the staff at Roseberry Hill, strong and positive relationships had been developed. Beth is the third member of the family to be taught by Mrs Eastwood and as a consequence, she had become a firm favourite member of staff with the whole family. It wasn't uncommon to see Beth's mother in conversation with Mrs Eastwood before or after school, sometimes accompanied by her elder sons. Furthermore, Mrs Redpath frequently came in as a voluntary assistant to help out with school activities and visits; indeed, she became a member of Year 6, taking the role of classroom assistant in 6B at a later point in the academic year. With clear positive parent and teacher relationships in place, a rich home-school mesosystem link had been developed and maintained. This strong, healthy link served to facilitate Beth's ongoing learning and development, with all parties working together towards a mutual shared goal.

Daniel was one of a handful of pupils who lived further afield within the city boundaries. He joined Roseberry Hill in Year 3; with his elder sisters attending a separate special needs school. Living in geographical isolation from the Roseberry Hill community, he was dropped off and picked up by his father or a family friend as his mother did not drive. These parties could not be seen waiting with others in the playground but remained by their car. These factors already serve to indicate a fragmented home-school mesosystem link. In addition, communication between his parents and school staff had deteriorated over time, becoming most apparent in Year 5. Daniel's mother's ill health had put a strain on communications and subsequent contact was minimal and problematic. Despite outlining Daniel's difficulties to his class teacher, Mrs Richardson felt that the school had failed to address his problems and intervene appropriately. It was her belief that this inhibited Daniel's learning in Year 5. However, the teaching staff in Year 5 perceived his disruptive behaviour and poor concentration as the crux of the difficulties he experienced. Despite Daniel's parents meeting with Mr Tate, positive communication was not established between these parties. Unable to negotiate

and find a workable solution, Daniel was left unsupported, disabling him as a learner and negatively affecting his developmental progress. Although a positive mesosystem link between home and school was re-established in Year 6 through much time and effort by all parties, this year long situation in Year 5 had huge ramifications for Daniel. It required maximum input from all staff working in class 6E, to create a safe environment for Daniel in which he could build up the courage to trust himself and others. Whilst this was a huge accomplishment for Daniel, the poor home-school mesosystem link which had existed previously had detrimental effects for his performance on the end of year SATs. The lack of early intervention meant there was too much to try and accomplish in Year 6 for both teaching staff and Daniel; in turn, he was unable to achieve the expected standards of attainment.

In reviewing the mesosystem link between school and home in the learning journeys of Beth and Daniel, the intricacies of their educational trajectories are elucidated. Although present in both domains, there were factors impinging on the children's development which were out of their control. For Beth, the consequences were not detrimental, but for Daniel they were. In this section, I have focused on the links between the child's relationships with teaching staff and his/her parents. But in reality, this mesosystem is only one of many and in this respect, we can begin to ascertain the complexities of the child's world.

### *The exosystem*

In giving consideration to the more distal environmental features of the developing child's environment, I now turn to the role of the exosystem. This system includes events and decision making that the child does not directly participate in, but the outcomes of which, influence his/her experiences. Exosystems can exert influence upon the development of a child in two ways: directly via the active involvement of significant others in his/her life or indirectly through decisions made by social institutions which ultimately affect conditions of family, school and community life. With reference to the former this may include adjustment of family members (for

example moving house, change of school, job conditions or relocation etc.) and stressful life changes (separation or divorce of parents, redundancy, illness or loss of a loved one). In Leanne's story, we see that her developmental path is shaped by her mother's employment and status as a single parent. As the sole breadwinner, her income is spread thinly across the needs of her immediate family members. As a result of the family's economic hardship, Leanne's participation in social activities outside school was curtailed; she was required to choose which one activity she would most like to be involved in. In addition, within the school setting, Leanne was able to join in class visits and trips only because the school provided the funds. Here, events are taking place outside Leanne's control which nevertheless, directly impact upon her experiences.

Outside the family circle, there are additional exosystem influences which directly affect the child's development. A critical but often unrecognised factor is the ramifications of events in the teacher's home life. For example, in the stories presented in chapter six, the day-to-day lives of the children in 6B were affected by the stressful life events experienced by Mrs Brookes. A primary issue was the long-term ill health of a close family member. Battling with the responsibilities of providing care for this person and her full-time obligations at school, Mrs Brookes inevitably experienced difficulties. Trying to manage additional responsibilities at home, her strength and energy levels were depleted. At school, she increasingly became impatient and at times, was short tempered with both pupils and staff. Here, the children's experiences in the classroom were again affected by wider factors which they had no control over.

The decisions made by social institutions also affect children's development, albeit indirectly. This is evident in government policies, community facilities and the media to name but a few. These decisions ultimately affect conditions of family, school and community life. The focal children's school careers presented in this thesis were shaped in part, by an array of political agendas. These included national curricula, standardised national testing and the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. In prescribing learning content, delivery and assessment,

these influenced children's learning experiences in the classroom through school and teacher interpretation.

The children's lives at school were also affected by notions of healthy eating, driven by wider policy and the media. Achieving a bronze healthy school award at the beginning of January 2002, Roseberry Hill encouraged children to eat healthily. Rules permitted them to bring in fruit, nuts, raisins and crisps for their break time snacks, with the school also selling selected pieces of fruit and breadsticks in both the infant and junior playgrounds. No sweets, chocolates, biscuits or chewing gum were allowed. Following a trial with Year 6, the school also issued all pupils throughout Years 3 to 6 with bottled water which they could access throughout the day. This healthy eating drive has since intensified and government policy has increased funds to retrain catering staff and introduce healthy meals at school. The media aided this change through numerous television programmes (for example, Jamie Oliver's School Dinners) and adverts. The eating habits of families also came under scrutiny with parents encouraged to cut down on the consumption of processed and fast foods. Alongside this, the physical activity of children came into play as the obesity figures remained high in the UK. With messages emanating from multiple sources, a change in diet and lifestyle has become a national drive. Again, this is an example of the power of exosystem factors shaping children's quotidian experiences.

### *The macrosystem*

The macrosystem constitutes the outer ring of the child's ecological environment; whilst representing influences which are increasingly distal, they nonetheless remain pertinent in shaping a child's developmental trajectory. The macrosystem essentially represents the societal blueprint. Although society is in a constant state of flux, there remain prevalent social and cultural norms, a political landscape, core educational values and practices, prevailing religious imperatives and the economic backdrop etc. These overarching patterns of ideology and organisation are deeply entrenched throughout the remaining three systems. For example,

economic materialism has today become a core social norm for the western world. We have become known as the 'throw-away' society in that we are led to believe that personal happiness equates with the purchase of material possessions. We replace recently acquired mobile phones, televisions, computers etc. for the latest model. We are constantly encouraged to dedicate resources to our personal appearance: spending money on cosmetic treatments and updating our wardrobes. The economic consequences of these behaviours support the community in which we live. Financial institutions, government policy and the media etc. facilitate this state of consumerism.

Children's development is embedded within these overarching ideologies. For example, the above materialistic behaviours filter down into school life. Despite compulsory school uniforms, there is an expectation amongst many children to wear labelled clothing (coats, sportswear) and footwear. Moreover, the ownership of other materialistic items such as the latest electronic gadgets (iPods, mobile phones, computer consoles etc.) also comes under scrutiny. Practices dictate that the display of the 'right' clothing and gadgetry makes you more likeable and thus less susceptible to bullying; putting pupils and parents alike, under pressure to conform. This leaves children such as Leanne and Daniel, whose families experience financial limitations, exposed and more vulnerable.

Additional overarching patterns of ideology and organisation further pervade the day-to-day lives of children. Norms dictate that children become educated. This notion is manifested in the organisation and practice of schooling. By law, school attendance is compulsory for all children aged five to sixteen. Parents and carers are under threat of a jail sentence if children fail to go to school. Community police officers have the right to question children wandering in the street during school hours and check their explanation for school absenteeism with school staff and parents. Alongside these educational practices are developmental norms; there is an expectation that children's development will follow a predetermined pattern. This 'normal' model is echoed in the school's National Curriculum which emphasises the development of particular knowledge, skills and understanding at identifiable ages. Another prevalent belief in our society is the notion of the child

as vulnerable. Responsibility falls to adult parties, be it family, school staff or youth workers, to take care of children and voice their needs as they are deemed more competent. Children are thus rendered powerless in making decisions about many issues which affect them, as it is assumed they do not have the capacity. This includes the practice of schooling. Although children are characterised as the primary learning parties at school, they have little say in what they learn and how they will learn it. Rather, these decisions fall to adults: teaching staff and politicians. In these examples, we can see that wider societal values have penetrated the remaining three ecological systems, resulting in practices which have become so deeply entrenched, that they are no longer questioned.

***Time: the academic year 2001/2002***

Time constitutes the final component of the PPCT model; its inclusion accentuating the notion that the world in which we live is not static, but rather, in a constant state of flux. This component is concerned with the changes taking place both within the individual and his/her environment during the life course. The focus here is on the time that lapsed during this research (the 2001/2002 academic year). As pointed out in chapter two, time impacts most notably at three levels: the microsystem, the mesosystem and the macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner and Morris 1998). Below, I attempt to outline the impact of time upon these systems in greater detail, drawing on illustrations from the children's stories. Rather than existing in a vacuum, the phenomenon of time is inextricably linked to embedded factors, this inevitably makes it difficult to consider in isolation.

Micro-time pertains to the flow and disruption of a person's proximal processes, whether they are with people, objects or symbols. This notion is exemplified in the following situations taken from the children's learning journeys. In 6E, Mrs Eastwood allocated a proportion of Helen's timetable to working with Daniel both individually and in small group sessions. This decision formed the foundation of a positive working relationship between Helen and Daniel. With the SATs looming, this dedicated time was stopped in favour of whole class revision periods. Rather

than participating in small group work, Daniel was required to join his peers in daily revision exercises. This set of circumstances interrupted the flow in Helen and Daniel's relationship and, moreover, in his learning journey, as he was expected to watch revision videos despite poor concentration and little engagement. Thus, whilst Mrs Eastwood's former decision facilitated the continuity of the teacher-learner relationship, the latter served to disrupt it. In this example, Mrs Eastwood's decisions are not a consequence of the time elapsed, but are shaped by factors operating external to her, specifically, the need to perform on the end of year KS2 tests.

In class 6B, Roberto chose to actively withdraw from Helen's literacy group, preferring to undertake work independently. His decision to remove himself disrupted the continuity of his relationship formed with Helen, but in turn, aided his relationship with Mrs Brookes, who valued an autonomous approach to work. Moreover, his non-participation in Helen's literacy group, enabled him to increase his levels of participation in the wider class community of practice. Indeed, had it not been for Roberto's participation as a focal child in the research, it is possible that the relationship between Helen and Roberto would have been distant for the duration of the academic year. Again, the changes in the teacher-pupil relationships noted above, are not a consequence of mere time, but are intertwined with outside influences.

Meso-time defines the extent to which a person engages in relationships and events in his/her environment. In the story of Daniel, his father had relocated to another part of the city after moving out of the family home. As a direct consequence of this, contact diminished and his father was no longer a prominent feature in Daniel's daily life. Whilst Daniel's proximal processes with his father were thus disrupted by this set of circumstances, his relationships with his mother and his sisters were maintained. Charlotte's story provides an interesting contrast. Her parents continued to play prominent roles in her daily life despite no longer living together. As a family, they managed the situation to ensure that both parties were available to support Charlotte and her brother on a daily basis. In contrast to Daniel's situation, Charlotte's proximal processes within her parents have

maintained continuity. Again, in both examples the effects of time are intertwined with factors operating outside the child.

Macro-time pertains to changing expectations and events in larger society and within and across generations. For instance, within society there has been changing expectations for children's performance on the Year 6 SATs during the past five years. At the time of this research, it was a government expectation that all Year 6 pupils attain Level 4 on the end of KS2 National Curriculum tests; however, more recent years have seen this expectation rise to Level 5. Parental expectations also change within families and across generations. Some parents may expect their children to become educated to a higher standard than themselves, in the belief that their children will experience greater success in life.

In summary, time is an inevitable feature of our life course. Its inclusion as a primary component within this model ensures that due consideration is paid to the ever-changing nature of the world in which we live and how this serves to shape the developmental process. Whilst many people may have an awareness of those changes which occur over time in their micro- and meso- systems, less reflection is perhaps given to those changes taking place over a longer period of time in relation to the macrosystem.

### ***Section summary***

With a focus on each of the four components comprising the PPCT model, this section has sought to furnish the reader with an understanding of the sheer complexity of children's learning and academic performance utilising a fund of real life examples. Crucially, the bioecological model illuminates the intricate nature of children's developmental journeys and educational outcomes and, as such, serves as an effective analytical lens to aid researchers and practitioners in their understanding. Its pragmatic use is significantly aided through the incorporation of additional lenses: notions of metacognition and self-efficacy, Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory and the communities of practice framework. In unison, these

theoretical perspectives demonstrate that the developmental trajectories of all children are shaped by an array of factors operating both within the individual child and the multi-nested world in which s/he resides. The constellation of factors mediating each child's path is particular to him/her. Acting in diverse and idiosyncratic ways, the day-to-day experiences of each child are thus unique. Indeed, this is powerfully exemplified in each of the eight learning journeys presented previously. This premise challenges the over simplistic arrangement pervading schooling today and has significant ramifications for the management of children's learning and performance, a notion explored in the following section.

### **Managing children's learning and performance**

In light of the above bioecological analysis, this section seeks to make recommendations for the management of children's learning in the form of policy and practice. This allows me to address the final aim of this thesis:

- ◆ *To inform practice and policy in relation to the teaching and learning relationship*

The gestation and composition of my research conclusions has been no easy feat. A large part of my struggle is due to the loss of faith that I now have in the education system as it stands. The Government have, over the years, implemented multiple initiatives in an attempt to raise standards and make education a level playing field for all. In their efforts, they have sought to establish uniformity on the content of children's learning and teachers' pedagogical style (Cunningham 2002). Improved pupil attainment on standardised tests in core subjects at specific points throughout the child's educational career, has been cited as evidence for the success of these policies. With test results and teacher assessments the principle informants of a child's educational progress, parents and carers are increasingly reliant on them. With such high value placed on these tests as indicators of pupil success or failure, the role of the Year 6 teacher has become that of a trainer. S/he is required to prepare pupils for the tests, endeavouring to ensure that each pupil is in the strongest position to succeed. Rather than the ability to think through, understand or be original, it is the

accumulation of the knowledge defined by the National Curriculum as 'core' which is tested (Cullingford and Oliver 2001).

Traditional learning theories underpin today's schooling practices, with behaviourist theory continuing to exert the most influence. Essentially, this theoretical perspective reduces learning to a mechanistic simple cause and effect relationship. This notion contrasts sharply with the picture constructed by this research. Children's development is extremely complex, with relationships and participation positioned as the cornerstone of learning. Driven by test performance, I would argue that current policy and practice militates against the formation of positive working teacher-learner relationships and the full participation of many children in community practices. For relationships and participation to become the core focus of schooling, a radical change in the structure of education would be required. As I pointed out in chapter one, current schooling practices are founded on a number of fixed characteristics, which are underpinned by deeply entrenched assumptions about the nature of learning. Each time a new government policy is introduced, it reaffirms these assumptions, as its contents echo the attitudes and values many hold about the teaching and learning process per se. That is, the over simplistic formula of delivery → retention → performance. Because these policies fit in with societal attitudes towards education, they are implemented without much opposition.

Interventions to alter educational norms and values would be the quickest way to implement change, but this is unrealistic. Shifts in the macrosystem are an impossible goal of this research; such all-encompassing changes are not the result of one solitary event, but occur gradually over time in relation to multiple events. In light of this, the research outlines recommendations for changes in the remaining three systems of the child's nested world. Given the bi-directional influence of relationships, decisions, events etc. it is hoped that these multiple factors will over time, challenge societal values and attitudes towards education and academic performance. Underpinning all the recommendations outlined here is the highly complex and idiosyncratic nature of children's learning. Every child's developmental journey is unique; it is shaped by a constellation of particular forces

(psychological, social, educational, cultural, economic and political) which mediate his/her developmental path. This highly intricate understanding of learning is powerfully elucidated in the focal child's stories presented in chapter five. In these, we can see that learning is a process of social co-participation, rather than a separate activity located in the minds of individuals.

Unique learning journeys suggest that blanket initiatives have limited value. In that the same factor plays out differently for each child, this infers that interactions need to be tailored to the child's experiences. For example, policy may recommend the formation of positive home-school links to support child development. In interpretation of this, the school may encourage parental participation in the child's activities within his/her class. For a self-employed parent such as Roberto's mother, this may be more feasible, as she can organise her work around her commitments to the school. For full-time working parents, such as Isabel's mother, helping out at school is impossible. Working as a physiotherapist, her mum's hours started before and extended beyond the school day. In each scenario, the school and class teacher must tailor their commitment to making effective home-school links, as a blanket approach would serve to include some parents and exclude others. In that a highly individual approach is necessary, this thesis does not seek to provide solutions for every eventuality. Rather, it draws attention to some of the myriad factors operating in the child's world, in the hope that it will heighten the awareness and provoke action of all parties exerting an influence on a child's learning trajectory.

### ***Empowering the child as a learner: developing a toolkit***

The overarching aim with regard to the child is to empower him/her as a learner. This is in the belief that the child will be able to self-regulate his/her own learning both inside and outside the classroom walls. In doing so, the child will develop the capacity to participate in life long learning. Claxton (1999) talks about encouraging the child to develop a 'learning toolkit,' a collection of internal and external qualities to increase his/her development potential. He focuses on notions of reflectivity,

resilience and resourcefulness. The metaphorical image of the toolkit is useful. However, as Claxton points out, the implicit comparison breaks down when we consider how learning resources are acquired. 'A toolkit is a collection of separate instruments which can be built up independently... but the array of learning capacities which people can develop are not picked up one by one in this way (page 11). Rather, they develop through the interaction of the child's own repertoire of characteristics and the proximal processes which s/he engages in within the microsystem.

The two qualities that I believe should play a focal role in every child's toolkit are metacognition and self-efficacy. In unison, I propose that these will empower the child as a learner. This research suggests that all children have the potential to develop metacognitive knowledge and awareness and in addition, apply it when undertaking tasks to increase successful performance. These metacognitive qualities are in themselves of little use without raising the child's knowledge and awareness of self-efficacy perceptions and the ramifications of these for his/her performance. As such, both phenomena need to be taught as part of the learning curriculum. Without further research, it is difficult to identify the optimum age to instigate the development of these, but my time in the classroom suggests that it is feasible prior to Year 6.

The question then becomes how best to teach metacognition and self-efficacy. In chapter two, research suggested that the development of metacognition could be taught through two key methods. In the modelling approach, the instructor seeks to make his/her strategy thinking public (Hall and Myers 1999). The teacher thinks aloud as s/he undertakes a task in front of pupils, thus rendering cognitive processes normally implicit, explicit. Founded on social learning principles, this technique expects the child to copy the teacher's behaviour and in turn develop the necessary skills; again, arguably an over simplistic picture of the complexities involved. A second method to encourage the development of metacognition is self-questioning, where the teacher provides the learner with a checklist of questions which will encourage self-reflection. For example, before carrying out a task, the child may be encouraged to identify: what the overarching objectives of

the task are, how they can best be met and what prior knowledge may assist them. During the task, the child might be asked to reflect on whether s/he is using the right information and resources and whether s/he is progressing well. Finally, on completion of the task, the child might be asked to consider to what extent the aims were met and whether s/he needs to go back and revise anything. Whilst this method is useful, it utilises blanket questions and this makes it of limited use. Moreover, it assumes some pre-existing level of awareness on part of the learner and that s/he can automatically apply this information when undertaking tasks.

I believe that the development of metacognition can be further aided by another technique which has emerged through this research. Awareness of metacognitive knowledge and its application can be encouraged through exploration of children's decisions and behaviours and the ramifications of these for their participation in social spaces. For example, in Isabel's story she made the decision not to raise her hand to answer questions posed during literacy lessons, despite continual prompts from Helen. This was because she believed that there was little point as no one on her table was ever picked by the teacher to contribute. Whilst the teacher's actions did ensure the participation of pupils on her table was minimal, Isabel's own decision ensured her own non-participation. Asking Isabel to reflect on her behaviours in this scenario would facilitate metacognitive and self-efficacy development and in doing so, generate alternative responses to her predicament with a focus on participation.

Through reciprocal discussion with a more able other, children can be encouraged to reflect on the consequences of their behaviour and, moreover, identify any faulty thinking and management strategies. This latter issue is a core problem in the use of metacognition, one which is not acknowledged in the two alternative teaching methods listed above. In heightening the child's awareness about the impact of his/her decisions and behaviours, the child is arguably in a better place to tackle the blanket checklist above. With experience in self-reflection, the child can approach the questions with increased self-efficacy. This involves transferable skills, a problematic area in the research surrounding metacognition. The transfer process is not automatic, as our knowledge, skills and understanding are context

dependent. However, self-reflection and awareness enables the learner to actively and deliberately construct metacognitive links between different contexts, facilitating transfer of knowledge, skills and understanding between specific domains. In the development and utilisation of metacognition and self-efficacy, children are perceived and treated as competent decision makers rather than vulnerable entities, incapable of self-regulating their own learning. They can become aware of the practices in operation in the classroom (both implicit and explicit) and how their beliefs and attitudes serve to influence them.

***Acknowledging the complexities of the teaching-learning process: supporting and developing teachers***

This research has illuminated the importance of school and classroom practices in shaping children's development. This recommendation seeks to heighten teachers' awareness of the impact of practices, both implicit and explicit, on children's day-to-day learning experiences. Such practices are shaped by the contributions of multiple parties; in the classroom, these include teachers and pupils. Whilst rules may be set by the teacher at the start of the academic year, many do not remain static but undergo renegotiation over time in response to the attitudes and actions of the children. Raised awareness of the practices in operation could be achieved through regular group supervision. For example, whilst Mrs Brookes acknowledged that she directed her teaching to the brighter pupils in her class, did she reflect on the ramifications of her behaviour for the participation levels of all pupils? Was she aware that her actions served to exclude the majority for the benefit of the minority? Whilst Mrs Eastwood stressed the need to build relationships with all pupils in her class, was she aware of the detrimental effects of her behaviour upon Tariq's development? The practice of providing group supervision not only acknowledges the complexity of the learning and teaching process, but also provides the teacher with a safe supportive space to explore this complexity through discussion of difficult issues.

In that this research identifies that relationships and participation are the cornerstone of learning, this notion needs to be introduced into teacher training. As a core module of the degree curriculum, it would be beneficial to integrate the theory and practice of multiple psychological perspectives of learning. This would include a review of the communities of practice literature, Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory and Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model. It is the application of psychological theories of learning which allows the practitioner to identify the strengths and limitations of each approach. Following on from this, teacher training days could be offered to specifically look at the practice of enhancing relationships with pupils and the impact this has on the participation levels of children.

### ***Enhancing the role of the school community***

With the overarching goal to facilitate children's learning, this section outlines several recommendations which relate to factors operating within the school community.

#### *Management supervision*

As noted above, the teacher-pupil relationship is integral to the learning process. The interactions between these parties are shaped by the lives of both. In the teacher's life, principle factors include the micro-politics of the school community and their home environment. Rather than ignoring the existence of these factors or asking teachers to leave them at the classroom door, I propose that the teachers should have access to regular, ongoing management supervision by an external party. This would provide teaching staff with a safe space to explore issues without judgement. The idea of introducing ongoing supervision was supported by Mrs Eastwood, who noted that as a Key Stage Manager, she addressed others' problems but felt there was no-one for her to turn to in confidence. Rather than discussing matters with the Deputy Head teacher, Mrs Eastwood noted that she turned to the teaching assistants in Year 6 'not to complain but to talk about issues.' The danger of such supervision being carried out by internal parties is the

clash of agendas. Supervision will raise a teacher's awareness of how s/he relates to others and how others relate to him/her, having the potential to improve proximal processes with people (children and colleagues) and objects in the school community. Personal issues that might arise outside the context of school could be addressed in personal counselling; the external party ideally would have information on how this could be accessed.

### *Enriching the home-school link*

This research has demonstrated the importance of a strong home-school link for the development of children. This suggests that schools and parents should engage in practices to enhance this link. Based on the ideas implemented in one school in Salt Lake City, Utah (see Rogoff et al 2001), schools could implement a volunteer programme which encourages parents to provide assistance in the classroom. Initially, this assistance may be under the class teacher's explicit instruction, for example, to listen to children reading. With ongoing contact, the role of the volunteer could become more specific to the skills of the individual person. For example, drawing on the focal children's stories, if a parent is a landscape gardener, she could share her expertise about plants, soil types, growing conditions etc. Taught within the context of science curriculum, the children could then go on to apply their knowledge in practice, designing a garden (design and technology) and preparing the ground before planting it and looking after it. All parents and carers will have expertise to offer, be it through their jobs (mortgage advisor, mechanic, housewife, physiotherapist, family therapist, psychologist, administrator etc.) or hobbies. This approach would not only serve to strengthen home-school links through parental participation in the class and school communities, but also sever the superficial links between curriculum subjects. Of course, the feasibility of the programme would be dependent on the freedom given to schools by the government and in addition, Criminal Records Bureau screening.

### *Improving relations between primary and secondary schools*

My experiences in Year 6 suggest that was a tenuous relationship between Roseberry Hill and the secondary schools to which it feeds into. This observation has been mirrored in other research. For example, in their first year at secondary school, Tobbell (2006) found that Year 7 children were repeating work covered in the later years of primary school. She believed this was a result of poor communication and mistrust between primary and secondary schools. Tobbell suggests the mistrust stems from a difference in status. Whilst primary and secondary teachers undergo the same training, it is the secondary school teacher who is seen to be the expert. S/he is perceived to have expertise in art, maths, history, English etc. whilst the primary school teacher has knowledge of all areas but no specialism. Indeed, the perceived low level status of primary school teachers was echoed in conversation with one Year 6 teacher. In discussion of the value of teacher assessment at primary level, Mrs Brookes highlighted that people did not hold confidence in primary school teachers' assessment. Poor ties between the schools will inevitably impact upon children's developmental trajectories. This infers that it may be advantageous to strengthen the links between primary and secondary schools nationwide.

At the time of this research, several links were in place, some more enriching than others. The weekly language classes taught by the visiting secondary school teacher worked well. She entered the children's day-to-day environment and introduced new teaching and learning practices in the classroom. These involved high levels of active participation on the part of the children. Homework was set and done in class with the Year 6 teacher, ensuring her participation too. In contrast, the literacy work sent by Greenwood towards the end of the academic year, encouraged passive rather than active roles for the children. One copy of two fiction books was sent alongside a question booklet for each pupil. This meant that the books had to be read aloud in whole class sessions by the class teacher or a classroom assistant, a teaching method they were no longer familiar with. Many pupils struggled to fill in the question booklets because of poor engagement in the reading material. Moreover, as staff resources were limited, all children,

regardless of whether they were transferring to Greenwood or not, were required to complete the work sent. The first intervention to strengthen ties was successful in that it enhanced relationships between primary and secondary teaching staff and the children. All parties were permitted space to negotiate the practices in the new community and become full participants. In the latter intervention, there was no secondary school teacher present; rather, the person involved had met with the Year 6 teachers and delegated the work, providing them with a box of resources. The relationship formed between the primary and secondary school teachers in this second scenario was superficial, whilst the relationship formed with the Year 6 children was none existent. From my observations, there was no recognition by the secondary school teacher of the current Year 6 practices. Opportunity to negotiate the work and its format was not made available, and as such, both primary school teachers and children were only permitted to be peripheral participants.

It would seem that to strengthen the ties between primary and secondary schools, reciprocal relationships and increased participation levels are fundamental. Integral to this is the negotiation of practices; time needs to be spent in each others environment to gain an understanding of their practices. Taking the language lesson outlined above as a model of good practice, secondary school teachers could undertake weekly lessons over the second and third terms in Year 6. These could span the subject domains of the Year 7 curriculum rather than focusing just on languages. In addition, action could also be implemented during the transition stage. The first term's curriculum of Year 7 could be planned by the Year 6 teacher, the Year 7 teacher and the children working together. Time could be set aside for this during the last half term of Year 6. With transition a key phase in the child's educational career this is an optimum opportunity to strengthen links between factors in different ecological systems to enhance children's development. The proposals outlined above essentially function as methods and tools to support the expression and negotiation of shared practice.

## ***Beyond tests, targets and league tables: new directions for government policy***

Many of the recommendations outlined above cannot take place without changing the policy which dictates the current climate of education. The importance of essential relationship formation and maintenance between teachers and pupils will inevitably involve much commitment and energies from both parties. Several changes need to take place in order to make available the necessary time needed for relationship development. Firstly, the breadth and depth of the National Curriculum needs to be reduced, as it currently places too much pressure on both teachers' and children's time. In its current form, it dictates to teachers, children and parents alike, the content of children's learning. However, in practical terms Mrs Eastwood felt that the National Curriculum outlined too much material for her to cover in the space of an academic year and moreover, that children were expected to undertake too much. As discussed previously, research has highlighted that there is no justification for the core knowledge, skills and understanding which make up the National Curriculum. In terms of empowering children and allowing them to be full participants in their learning, the communities of practice framework would suggest that children should have some input into the decisions regarding the content of their learning. An interesting move forward may be to carry out an audit of the National Curriculum, allowing all focal parties (teaching staff, children and parents) to reflect upon and suggest changes for learning content. In its current format, there is no room for teacher flexibility to respond to the needs of their children and this at least, needs to be addressed.

A second recommendation to facilitate relationship development is to reduce class sizes. In terms of Vygotsky's social-cultural theory, teaching and learning is about movement through a mutually constructed ZPD. This perspective contrasts sharply with the view of teaching and learning pervading current practices, where it is characterised as the management of children's behaviour and the delivery and retention of the curriculum. As it stands, it is an impossible feat for the teacher to form a ZPD with each child in each subject. Class sizes need to be reduced dramatically in order for this to become feasible. Moreover, high pupil numbers

also serve to ensure the unidirectional transmission practice of teaching and learning. With the interactive nature of lessons limited, only some children are provided with opportunities to participate, whilst others are inevitably left on the sidelines. Without power, children are ensured a position of peripheral participation. Full participation in learning only occurs through reciprocal interactions which allow negotiation and in turn, transformation.

A third method to create time to concentrate on interactions in the classroom is to reduce the mountain of paperwork teachers are required to complete. Indeed, Mrs Eastwood expressed disapproval of the amount of paperwork they were required to undertake; she believed it involved too much of writing the same thing in different ways. Furthermore, she noted that the paperwork completed during the course of the academic year was not developed, but disregarded and thrown away. This infers that the practice of paperwork is merely the teacher going through the motions; they complete it because policy dictates they do, not because it will aid their personal development. Consider the nature of paperwork a teacher is encouraged to prepare, for example, lesson planning. Prescriptive lesson planning limits flexibility and denies spontaneity in response to the contributions of pupils. Whilst explicit lesson objectives are valuable, the intricate deconstruction of a lesson plan assumes simplistic and unidirectional delivery. At the start of each class, it would be beneficial for the teacher to be explicit in outlining the lesson objectives to the pupils; these can then be revisited at the end of the lesson to ensure understanding. Instruction should seek to initiate children's participation, as reciprocal interaction enables their needs to be met more effectively than if a unidirectional approach was utilised.

Finally, this research questions the value of the three core tools drawn on by the Government to raise educational standards, namely: tests, targets and league tables. The principle role given to these measures means they have immense power in determining the success and failure of pupils, parents, teaching staff and schools and as such, are instrumental in creating feelings of triumph or defeat in all parties. In this respect, it is understandable that pupils are trained to perform on the tests by teachers, parents and tutors. These 'training' practices call into

question the value of these measures; they have no place in the socio-cultural theories favoured here. Coursework and teacher assessments are the alternative to tests. The suggestion to replace tests with these will no doubt cause uproar, as they have become deeply ingrained in our educational practices because of the value our society places on measurement. As these alternatives do not sit easily in the current system their value and use will be challenged. Crucially, one needs to be aware that neither a single piece of coursework nor performance on a one hour test can adequately capture a child's abilities or progress. In this respect, ongoing teacher assessment is the way forward and one that will be enriched through the time dedicated to teacher-pupil relationships proposed above. Indeed, the preference for teacher assessment as a core indicator of children's educational development was expressed by both Year 6 teachers.

### **Chapter summary**

Drawing on the fund of real life examples available in the focal children's stories, this chapter has provided an understanding of children's learning trajectories and academic attainment based on the bioecological model of Bronfenbrenner. With a focus on each of the constituent components of the PPCT model, the analysis has given consideration to some of the more pertinent factors operating within the child and the nested world in which s/he resides. In shining the spotlight on some factors, I have inevitably let others fall away from the foreground. This is somewhat unavoidable, as no analysis could give consideration to the myriad factors in play and the idiosyncratic ways in which they act out in conjunction with the child's repertoire of characteristics and the other phenomena in his/her embedded environment. Using this bioecological understanding of children's development as a platform, this chapter has also outlined a number of recommendations for the management of children's learning. In that the data collected in this research only provides a partial view of a much wider picture, it follows that the proposed recommendations are only suggestions. As I noted earlier, it is impossible to provide blanket solutions when each person's experience of life is so unique. Changing societal values and attitudes towards children's

development and education is an impossible task of this research. In view of this, recommendations have been made that simultaneously target the remaining systems of the ecological model together with the development of the person. These changes will not sit easily in the current education system, as they do not fit with the psychological theories underpinning today's practices. Nonetheless, it is envisaged that multiple changes targeting each component of the PPCT model is the most effective way to initiate change at the macrosystem level and produce a shift in societal values towards education and schooling practices.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THESIS REVIEW

The aims of this research were:

- ◆ *To examine children's intra-psychological learning relationship*
- ◆ *To explore the role of micro-, meso-, exo- and macro- systems on learning*
- ◆ *To explore the interrelationships of the micro- and meso- processes in view of exo- and macro- systems*
- ◆ *To explore whether the literature available is applicable and helpful in understanding the themes arising from this research*
- ◆ *To develop a range of methodologies appropriate to the multi-level theoretical framework*
- ◆ *To identify or generate a theoretical framework for understanding children's day-to-day learning experiences*
- ◆ *To inform practice and policy in relation to the teaching and learning relationship*

Overall, I believe that each of these aims have been met, although to varying degrees of success. In reflecting upon the content of this thesis, I think that the sixth research aim has been addressed most effectively. The layering of five theoretical lenses, each characterised as socio-cultural, has allowed for the complexity of the learning process to emerge. Moreover, their use has highlighted the possibility of making interventions into the process of learning, targeting multiple factors within each of different levels comprising a child's world simultaneously. Conversely, I believe that I have struggled most, to effectively address the first aim. In my collection of data, I found it difficult to identify the children's use of metacognition and the self-efficacy beliefs they held. In my opinion the reasons for this were threefold. Firstly, the difficulties I experienced were in part due to my lack of expertise in this area at the time of the research. This would have impacted on my ability to observe metacognition and self-efficacy

in action. Secondly, because there was no explicit role assigned to the development of metacognitive skills or increased self-efficacy beliefs in the curriculum at the time of this research, the children's knowledge and use of these phenomena was not automatic. Finally, in my dual researcher/classroom assistant role, I worked with over sixty pupils and rarely had the opportunity to spend extended periods of time with individual children. Had circumstances permitted more one-to-one work, I believe it would have been easier to see the application of metacognitive activity and the role which self-efficacy beliefs played in practice. This is evident in the story of Daniel, where increased proximal interactions allowed me greater insight into his perceived self-efficacy beliefs across subject domains and tasks, and in addition, highlighted his under development of reflective thinking and metacognitive strategies.

The sheer complexity of each focal child's world means that I was able to capture a handful of the myriad factors in operation shaping each child's quotidian experiences. Unable to represent the full extent of the data that I did manage to collect in the short learning journeys presented in chapter five, I have inevitably explored only a 'snap shot' of those recorded. In my decision to focus on some aspects of the children's lives, I have inevitably overlooked other important factors. In the children's stories I have attempted to reflect the richness of each child's unique learning journey. I have made every effort to be faithful to my data, but I recognise that in the processes of recording, storying and analysing, the data has been shaped by my subjectivities as a researcher.

I am keen to emphasise that the aim of this thesis was not to judge or criticise the people or practices of Roseberry Hill primary school or the wider school community. Rather, I have sought to stimulate debate about education. Close scrutiny of educational policy and practice has led to me to conclude that in its current 'training' format, schooling practices to a large extent, deny children's right to participate fully in their learning. This is achieved through an intricate web of power and control both in the child's immediate school environment and beyond. In illuminating the true complexity of children's learning and performance at school, this research has sought to raise the awareness of stakeholders and demonstrate

that any understanding of these phenomena cannot be understood apart from the embedded context in which they reside. In doing so, it is hoped that: dialogue will be provoked; the underpinning tenets of current schooling practices will be challenged; and action will be taken that embraces the diversity and intricacies of the learning and development process.

### **Contribution to the literature**

I believe this research contributes to the existing body of literature on children's school learning and performance in multiple ways. Firstly, in illuminating the fixed characteristics of schooling, this research has brought to the fore and challenged, many of the psychological tenets underpinning current instructional practices. Dissatisfied with the transmission model of learning which pervades present day education, one of the aims of this research was to generate a theoretical framework for understanding children's day-to-day learning experiences. This I feel has been achieved through the multilayering of five socio-cultural theoretical perspectives, which in unison provide an understanding of learning on multiple levels. To my knowledge, the combination of these theoretical lenses has not previously been conceptualised. The deconstruction of field data and composition of the children's stories using this framework, thus offers original insight. Together, the five perspectives permit the entirety of Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model to be operationalised; in a review of the literature I have been unable to locate any other attempts to do so. Whilst the scope of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model means that it serves primarily as an analytical tool, the integration of additional perspectives enables it to be drawn upon as an interventionist framework to inform educational policy and practice. This proposed framework positions reciprocal relationships and participation as the cornerstone of development. And I have used this understanding to suggest ways that pupils, teachers and schools can promote and enhance both factors as a means to improve children's learning trajectories.



## **Further research**

Stemming from this research, there are a number of potentially rich avenues for further study. Many of these were discussed in the previous chapter in relation to managing children's learning, but to summarise, I suggest more research surrounding:

- ◆ The explicit instruction of metacognitive capacities for pupils and teachers alike. I have proposed that an awareness of metacognitive knowledge and its application can be encouraged through exploration of a person's decisions and behaviours and the ramifications of these for their participation in social spaces.
- ◆ The notion of transfer in relation to metacognition. Does the active construction of links between tasks enable the transfer of knowledge and strategies for successful performance?
- ◆ The extent to which self-efficacy beliefs shape participation levels in surrounding communities of practice.
- ◆ An exploration of classroom practices and relationships and how these are shaped and negotiated through the understandings and actions of teachers and children.
- ◆ The implementation of a volunteer programme which encourages parents to provide assistance in the classroom.
- ◆ An audit of National Curriculum content.

## **Concluding comments**

Education is a worthy endeavour; it seeks to enable the masses to live successfully in their day-to-day lives in wider society. However, in its current format, I believe schooling will leave children ill-equipped to deal with the demands of the ever-changing world in which they reside. This research reveals that the present format of our education system involves teachers 'training' pupils for performance on the SATs. It suggests a need to replace this with a process of teaching which positions children as active participants in their own learning and facilitates guided

assistance through mutually created zones of proximal development in the social spaces which makes up a child's world. This calls for a different way of thinking about learning and a re-structure of schooling practices.

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**AN ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF  
CHILDREN'S SCHOOL EXPERIENCES  
AND EDUCATIONAL OUTCOME**

**APPENDICES**

**Helen Stivaros**

**A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield in partial fulfilment of  
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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<b>Appendix 1.A</b>	<b>Articles 28 and 29 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child</b>
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Included in the core human rights set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, is every child's right to education and schooling. The particulars of this are set out in Articles 28 and 29 of the Convention

(source: <http://www.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm>; accessed 14/11/06)

**Article 28**

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular:

- ◆ Make primary education compulsory and available free to all
- ◆ Encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need;
- ◆ Make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means;
- ◆ Make educational and vocational information and guidance available and accessible to all children;
- ◆ Take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates.

2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity and in conformity with the present Convention.

3. States Parties shall promote and encourage international cooperation in matters relating to education, in particular with a view to contributing to the elimination of ignorance and illiteracy throughout the world and facilitating access to scientific and technical knowledge and modern teaching methods. In this regard, particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries.

## **Article 29**

1. States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:

- ◆ 'The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;
- ◆ The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;
- ◆ The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own;
- ◆ The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;
- ◆ The development of respect for the natural environment. '

2. No part of the present article or article 28 shall be construed so as to interfere with the liberty of individuals and bodies to establish and direct educational institutions, subject always to the observance of the principle set forth in paragraph 1 of the present article and to the requirements that the education given in such institutions shall conform to such minimum standards as may be laid down by the State.

<b>Appendix 1.B</b>	<b>An overview of the programmes of study and attainment targets identified as level 4 for all core and foundation subjects at KS2</b>
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**Source:** The National Curriculum handbook for primary teachers in England, 1999

<b>English</b>
<p><b>PoS:</b> <i>Speaking and listening, reading and writing.</i> During KS2 pupils learn to change the way they speak and write to suit different situations, purposes and audiences. They read a range of texts and respond to different layers of meaning in them. They explore the use of language in literary and non-literary texts and learn how language works.</p> <p><b>AT:</b> <i>Writing.</i> Pupils' writing in a range of forms is lively and thoughtful. Ideas are often sustained and developed in interesting ways and organised appropriately for the purpose of the reader. Vocabulary choices are often adventurous and words are used for effect. Pupils are beginning to use grammatically complex sentences, extending meaning. Spelling, including that of polysyllabic words that conform to regular patterns, is generally accurate. Full stops, capital letters and question marks are used correctly, and pupils are beginning to use punctuation within the sentence. Handwriting style is fluent, joined and legible.</p>
<b>Mathematics</b>
<p><b>PoS:</b> <i>Using and applying mathematics; number and algebra; shape, space and measures; handling data.</i> During KS2 pupils use the number system more confidently. They move from counting reliably to calculating fluently with all four number operations. They always try to tackle a problem with mental methods before using any other approach. Pupils explore features of shape and space &amp; develop their measuring skills in a range of contexts. They discuss &amp; present their methods and reasoning using a wider range of mathematical language, diagrams &amp; charts.</p> <p><b>AT:</b> <i>Number and algebra.</i> Pupils use their understanding of place value to multiply and divide whole numbers by 10 or 100. In solving number problems, pupils use a range of mental methods of computation with the four operations, including mental recall of multiplication facts up to 10 and quick derivation of corresponding division facts. They use efficient written methods of addition and subtraction and of short multiplication and division. They add and subtract decimals to two places and order decimals to three places. In solving problems with or without a calculator, pupils check the reasonableness of their results by reference to their knowledge of the context or to the size of the numbers. They recognise approximate proportions of a whole and use simple fractions and percentages to describe these. Pupils recognise and describe number patterns, and relationships including multiple, factor and square. They begin to use simple formulae expressed in words. Pupils use and interpret coordinates in the first quadrant.</p>
<b>Science</b>
<p><b>PoS:</b> <i>Scientific enquiry; life processes and living things; materials and their properties, physical processes.</i> During KS2 pupils learn about a wider range of living things, materials and</p>

phenomena. They begin to make links between ideas and to explain things using simple models and theories. They apply their knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas to familiar phenomena, everyday things and their personal health. They begin to think about the positive and negative effects of scientific and technological developments on the environment and in other contexts. They carry out more systematic investigations, working on their own and with others. They use a range of reference sources in their work. They talk about their work and its significance, and communicate ideas using a wide range of scientific language, conventional diagrams, charts and graphs.

**AT:** *Life processes and living things.* Pupils demonstrate knowledge and understanding of life processes and living things drawn from the KS2 or KS3 PoS. They use scientific names for some major organs of body systems [for example, the heart at KS2, the stomach at KS3] and identify the position of these organs in the human body. They identify organs [for example, stamen at KS2, stigma, root hairs at KS3] of different plants they observe. They use keys based on observable external features to help them to identify and group living things systematically. They recognise that feeding relationships exist between plants and animals in a habitat, and describe these relationships using food chains and terms [for example, predator and prey].

#### Design and technology

**PoS:** During KS2 pupils work on their own and as part of a team on a range of designing and making activities. They think about what products are used for and the needs of the people who use them. They plan what has to be done and identify what works well and what could be improved in their own and other people's designs. They draw on knowledge and understanding from other areas of the curriculum and use computers in a range of ways.

**AT:** *Design and technology.* Pupils generate ideas by collecting and using information. They take users' views into account and produce step by step plans. They communicate alternative ideas using words, labelled sketches and models, showing that they are aware of constraints. They work with a variety of materials and components with some accuracy, paying attention to quality of finish and to function. They select and work with a range of tools and equipment. They reflect on their designs as they develop, bearing in mind the way the product will be used. They identify what is working well and what could be improved

#### Information and communication technology (ICT)

**PoS:** During KS2 pupils use a wider range of ICT tools and information sources to support their work in other subjects. They develop their research skills and decide what information is appropriate for their work. They begin to question the plausibility and quality of information. They learn how to amend their work and present it in a way that suits its audience.

**AT:** *ICT.* Pupils understand the need for care in framing questions when collecting, finding and interrogating information. They interpret their findings, question plausibility and recognise that poor quality information leads to unreliable results. They add to, amend and combine different forms of information from a variety of sources. They use ICT to present information in different forms and show they are aware of the intended audience and the need for quality in their

presentations. They exchange information and ideas with others in a variety of ways, including using email. They use ICT systems to control events in a predetermined manner and to sense physical data. They use ICT based models and simulations to explore patterns and relationships, and make predictions about the consequences of their decisions. They compare their use of ICT with other methods and with its use outside school.

### History

**PoS:** During KS2 pupils learn about significant people, events and places from both the recent and more distant past. They learn about change and continuity in their own area, in Britain and in other parts of the world. They look at history in a variety of ways, for example from political, economic, technological and scientific, social, religious, cultural or aesthetic perspectives. They use different sources of information to help them investigate the past both in depth and in overview, using dates and historical vocabulary to describe events, people and developments. They also learn that the past can be represented and interpreted in different ways.

**AT: History.** Pupils show factual knowledge and understanding of aspects of the history of Britain and the wider world. They use this to describe characteristic features of past societies and periods, and to identify changes within and across different periods. They describe some of the main events, people and changes. They give some reasons for, and results of, the main events and changes. They show some understanding that aspects of the past have been represented and interpreted in different ways. They are beginning to select and combine information from different sources. They are beginning to produce structured work, making appropriate use of dates and terms.

### Geography

**PoS:** During KS2 pupils investigate a variety of people, places and environments at different scales in the United Kingdom and abroad, and start to make links between different places in the world. They find out how people affect the environment and how they are affected by it. They carry out geographical enquiry inside and outside the classroom. In doing this they ask geographical questions, and use geographical skills and resources such as maps, atlases, aerial photographs and ICT.

**AT: Geography.** Pupils show their knowledge, skills and understanding in studies of a range of places and environments at more than one scale and in different parts of the world. They begin to recognise and describe geographical patterns and to appreciate the importance of wider geographical location in understanding places. They recognise and describe physical and human processes. They begin to understand how these can change the features of places, and how these changes affect the lives and activities of people living there. They understand how people can both improve and damage the environment. They explain their own views and the views that other people hold about an environmental change. Drawing on their knowledge and understanding, they suggest suitable geographical questions, and use a range of geographical skills from the KS2 or 3 PoS to help them investigate places and environments. They use primary and secondary sources of evidence in their investigations and communicate their findings using

appropriate vocabulary.

### Art and design

**PoS:** During KS2 pupils develop their creativity and imagination through more complex activities. These help to build on their skills and improve their control of materials, tools and techniques. They increase their critical awareness of the roles and purposes of art, craft and design in different times and cultures. They become more confident in using visual and tactile elements and materials and processes to communicate what they see, feel and think.

**AT:** *Art and design.* Pupils explore ideas and collect visual and other information to help them develop their work. They use their knowledge and understanding of materials and processes to communicate ideas and meanings, and make images and artefacts, combining and organising visual and tactile qualities to suit their intentions. They compare and comment on ideas, methods and approaches used in their own and others' work, relating these to the context in which the work was made. They adapt and improve their work to realise their own intentions.

### Music

**PoS:** During KS2 pupils sing songs and play instruments with increasing confidence, skill, expression and awareness of their own contribution to a group or class performance. They improvise, and develop their own musical compositions, in response to a variety of different stimuli with increasing personal involvement, independence and creativity. They explore their thoughts and feelings through responding physically, intellectually and emotionally to a variety of music from different times and cultures.

**AT:** *Music.* Pupils identify and explore the relationship between sounds and how music reflects different intentions. While performing by ear and from simple notations they maintain their own part with awareness of how the different parts fit together and the need to achieve an overall effect. They improvise melodic and rhythmic phrases as part of a group performance and compose by developing ideas within musical structures. They describe, compare and evaluate different kinds of music using an appropriate musical vocabulary. They suggest improvements to their own and others' work, commenting on how intentions have been achieved.

### Physical education (PE)

**PoS:** During KS2 pupils enjoy being active and using their creativity and imagination in physical activity. They learn new skills, find out how to use them in different ways, and link them to make actions, phrases and sequences of movement. They enjoy communicating, collaborating and competing with each other. They develop an understanding of how to succeed in different activities and learn how to evaluate and recognise their own success.

**AT:** *PE.* Pupils link skills, techniques and ideas and apply them accurately and appropriately. Their performance shows precision, control and fluency, and that they understand tactics and composition. They compare and comment on skills, techniques and ideas used in their own and others' work, and use this understanding to improve their performance. They explain and apply basic safety principles in preparing for exercise. They describe what effects exercise has on their bodies, and how it is valuable to their fitness and health.

<b>Appendix 1.C</b>	<b>An overview of the level four attainment targets for all elements of the English PoS</b>
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**Source:** The National Curriculum handbook for primary teachers in England, 1999

**AT: Speaking and listening.** Pupils' talk and listen with confidence in an increasing range of contexts. Their talk is adapted to the purpose: developing ideas thoughtfully, describing events and conveying their opinions clearly. In discussion, they listen carefully, making contributions and asking questions that are responsive to others' ideas and views. They use appropriately some of the features of standards English vocabulary and grammar.

**AT: Reading.** In responding to a wide range of texts, pupils show understanding of significant ideas, themes, events and characters, beginning to use inference and deduction. They refer to the text when explaining their views. They locate and use ideas and information.

**AT: Writing.** Pupils' writing in a range of forms is lively and thoughtful. Ideas are often sustained and developed in interesting ways and organised appropriately for the purpose of the reader. Vocabulary choices are often adventurous and words are used for effect. Pupils are beginning to use grammatically complex sentences, extending meaning. Spelling, including that of polysyllabic words that conform to regular patterns, is generally accurate. Full stops, capital letters and question marks are used correctly, and pupils are beginning to use punctuation within the sentence. Handwriting style is fluent, joined and legible.

The KS2 SATs required Year 6 pupils to undergo assessments in the three core subject domains. At the time of this research, these assessments took the format detailed below:

**Table i:** Format of KS2 National Curriculum assessments 2002

Subject domain	Papers	Duration
English	Reading test (levels 3-5)	60 minutes
	Writing test (levels 3-5)	60 minutes
	Spelling and handwriting test (levels 3-5)	20 minutes
Mathematics	Written test Paper A (levels 3-5)	45 minutes
	Written test Paper B (levels 3-5)	45 minutes
	Mental arithmetic test (levels 3-5)	20 minutes
Science	Written test paper A (levels 3-5)	35 minutes
	Written test paper B (levels 3-5)	35 minutes

The aim of the assessments is the measurement of children's knowledge and understanding of the KS2 NC. This is indicated through pupils' performance in selected parts of the NC at a particular time, on a particular day. Here, I review examples of questions taken from the 2001 batch of SATs papers (the year prior to that when the research was undertaken); deconstructing them in an attempt to assess the government's aim to test children's knowledge and understanding in the three core subjects.

### *English*

In the KS2 English tests, the Year 6 pupil is required to sit three papers. Each assesses his or her performance in the three constituent areas of English: reading, writing; spelling and handwriting.

- ◆ *Reading:* In this test, Year 6 pupils are given fifteen minutes to read through a booklet about a particular topic. For example, in the KS2 2001 paper, this took the form of a wildlife magazine entitled 'Wildtrack.' The booklet was said to represent the first edition of the magazine and featured information on whales. Pupils are then given forty five minutes to answer the questions sets out in the accompanying answer booklet. The QCA website states that in this task, pupils 'will be tested on their

understanding of main themes, ideas, characters and events and their ability to read 'between the lines'. They will be asked questions that will assess a range of reading skills, such as their ability to interpret information and comment on writers' use of language.' ([http://www.qca.org.uk/12818\\_13016.html#English](http://www.qca.org.uk/12818_13016.html#English); accessed 28/06/06).

- ◆ *Writing:* In this test, Year 6 pupils are presented with a choice of four writing tasks and are required to choose one. In the KS2 2001 paper, these choices were: a report entitled 'tried and tested'; a playscript entitled 'scene from a play'; a traditional tale entitled 'three wishes' and a short story entitled 'mystery solved'. Each task is elaborated upon in the 'writing test instructions and planning sheets' booklet which pupils read through with their teacher. In enabling readers to form a more coherent picture of what this test involves for Year 6 pupils, I have provided readers with excerpts taken from the instruction and planning booklet (see table ii); these pertain to two of the 2001 writing tasks. Pupils are given fifteen minutes to make their decision and plan their work, the booklet states this time is 'to think about what to write and to make a notes of your ideas.' Pupils are then provided with another booklet and given forty-five minutes to complete the writing task. The QCA website states 'In this test, markers will be looking at your child's ability to write well and engage the reader, their punctuation and the range of vocabulary they use' ([http://www.qca.org.uk/12818\\_13016.html#English](http://www.qca.org.uk/12818_13016.html#English); accessed 28/06/06).

Whilst the information in the booklet means that the nature of each task is somewhat limited in scope, it does nonetheless, provide pupils with some sense of direction and structure for their piece of writing. Moreover, the extent of the additional guidance notes vary according to each task, which means children are permitted more freedom in undertaking some tasks (such as the 'three wishes' traditional tale) than others (for example, the 'tried and tested' report). For example, the PoS for KS2 English outlined in the previous section, states that Year 6 pupils should possess the ability to change the way they write to suit different audiences. Thus, before completing either task, the children are expected to consider the nature of their target audience. The target audience for the report is stated as the Pack-it-in-Bag company; however, no audience is specified in the guidance notes for the three wishes. Although one could speculate that because traditional tales are typically written with the younger age group in mind, there is a tacit expectation that pupils will write their tale accordingly.

**Table ii:** Writing task excerpts

<b>Source:</b> KS2 2001 writing paper
<p><b>Tried and tested</b></p> <p>Your class was asked to try out a new kind of school bag which was designed to carry books and equipment in school – the <b>Pack-it-in-Bag</b>. You all tried the new bag for a month and although it worked well in some ways, it wasn't a complete success. Your task is to write <b>a report for the company</b> to tell them how well the Pack-it-in-Bag works, and to give them some information that might help them to improve it. The company have asked you to report on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>whether the bag is made from suitable materials;</li><li>whether all the things you need for school can fit inside the bag;</li><li>whether the bag is strong enough to carry the things you need;</li><li>things that could be improved.</li></ul> <p><i>The planning sheet states 'this is for very brief notes to help you plan your ideas. Your ideas will not be marked. Firstly, it suggests that pupils make a note of the things that worked well and the things that could be improved in a table format. It states 'remember to think about: how to describe the way the bag worked; how to include details that will help the company; how to end your report.'</i> An example of how to start the report is provided although it does state that pupils may decide to start it another way. <i>The suggested example: Report on the Pack-it-in-Bag</i> <i>I have tested the Pack-it-in-Bag for one month, and have reached the following conclusions.</i></p>
<p><b>Three Wishes</b></p> <p>Write a <b>'traditional' tale</b> with the title <i>Three Wishes</i>. You will need to decide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Who the tale is about;</li><li>How the three wishes are gained;</li><li>How the three wishes are used.</li></ul> <p><i>The planning sheet states 'this is for very brief notes to help you plan your ideas. Your ideas will not be marked. Remember to think about: the characters in your tale; how to start your tale; what happens with each of the wishes; how to end your tale; the way traditional tales are written.</i></p>

Furthermore, both of the aforementioned writing tasks require pupils to use their imagination; again, one may propose that each task involves this to varying extents. Pupils in the primary school that I worked in were not required to carry their school bags around with them all day long as many pupils do at secondary school. Instead they had an allocated hook in the Year 6 cloakroom where they could leave their coats and bags, and an allocated tray in the classroom into which they could transfer any materials they would need for the days lessons. Nevertheless, if pupils were able to draw on metacognitive qualities and make explicit and purposeful links between their own experiences and the goals of the task, in choosing this written task, they could draw on their concrete

experience of using a school bag to carry stationary, books and PE kits to and from home. This would provide a useful starting point for their report, upon which they could build further ideas, fuelled by their imagination.

In comparison, no previous experience can be drawn upon to inspire the content of the traditional tale. In reflecting on these issues, it is apparent to me that in order to make an informed choice of task on the writing paper, the pupil would need to be aware of their strengths and the areas in which they struggle to perform. Of particular relevance here, are notions of self-efficacy and metacognitive strategies, knowledge of which would inevitably empower the pupil in his or her decision making process. This insight will have implications for the degree of educational success he or she will experience. If a child struggles to develop ideas independently and finds it difficult to impose a structure on their writing, then the report would be a good choice. The guidance notes provide the pupil with a hypothetical situation which they can relate to drawing on their own direct experience, this sets the ball rolling. Furthermore the company has provided a list of areas they would like feedback on; this can be used by the pupil to structure his or her written report. However, if a pupil's flow of ideas and story telling ability flourishes when provided with greater freedom, the traditional tale would be a better choice. Given the minimal guidance provided in the accompanying notes, the pupil must be accomplished at structuring their own work to attain high marks.

- ◆ *Spelling and handwriting:* The Year 6 pupil is asked to spell twenty words during a ten minute long spelling test. The words which they are required to spell are read aloud in the context of a passage. An example is provided below; it is taken from the KS2 spelling and handwriting SATs paper, 2001, entitled 'Attack and defence.' The words which the children are required to spell are highlighted in bold type. The Year 6 pupil is then required to complete a handwriting task. They are given a short paragraph that finishes the spelling passage and are instructed to 'write it out very neatly.'

Some people may claim that pupils benefit from spelling words which are bound in the context of a passage rather than presented as a meaningless list. It has the potential to aid pupils' understanding and familiarity of words which may serve as a prompt or failing that, aid pupils' confidence so they feel comfortable enough to make an attempt at spelling. However, it could be suggested that for many Year 6 pupils, the attacking and defensive behaviour of sea creatures is not be the most familiar topic area and as such, the context of the passage is rendered less helpful. Although, the same could be said

about the previous SAT papers; in 2000 the topic was skyscrapers and in 1999, the topic was spiders. Perhaps a topic relevant to children's everyday lives would be more appropriate?

**Table iii:** 'Attack and defence'

<b>Source:</b> KS2 2001 spelling and handwriting paper
<p>Many sea creatures are <b>ready</b> to defend <b>themselves</b> when predators attack. Some use venom, or poison, as a defence and may <b>advertise</b> that they are dangerous by displaying specific markings.</p> <p>Lionfish have <b>stripes</b> to warn enemies that they are armed. Any predator that <b>attempts</b> to bite the lionfish may be <b>injured</b>, or even killed, by its spines. If it escapes death, the predator will avoid the lionfish in the <b>future</b>. Because of their markings, lionfish have to <b>surprise</b> their prey when they are hunting.</p> <p>Stonefish are one of the most menacing inhabitants of the ocean. They can blend <b>perfectly</b> with the background when waiting on a reef for their prey to come <b>swimming</b> by.</p> <p>In similar fashion, octopuses can <b>change</b> colour to match their surroundings. The blue-ringed octopus will <b>produce</b> blue spots to indicate that its bite is venomous. Another <b>technique</b> used by octopuses, squid and cuttlefish is <b>vanishing</b> in a cloud of ink. The file shell releases a sticky fluid from its tentacles, which is also <b>designed</b> to put off approaching predators.</p> <p>Jellyfish are well <b>known</b> for their stings, and one of the <b>nastiest</b> belongs to the box jellyfish. Any <b>individual</b> that comes into contact with this creature may be left with uncomfortable sores, but the consequences can be far more <b>serious</b>.</p> <p>No method of defence is completely foolproof. Some turtles will eat even the most venomous jellyfish, <b>regardless</b> of their stings.</p>

### *Mathematics*

In the KS2 mathematics tests, the Year 6 pupil is required to sit three papers:

- ◆ *Paper A*: a forty-five minute test that has to be completed without a calculator. Children are instructed to 'work as quickly and carefully as you can...If you cannot do one of the questions, go on to the next one. You can come back to it later, if you have time. If you finish before the end, go back and check your work.' The paper states that in some questions children can receive marks for working out; these questions are highlighted throughout the paper.

- ◆ *Paper B*: a forty-five minute test in which a calculator can be used. The instructions set out are the same comprising paper A.
- ◆ *A twenty minute mental mathematics test consisting of twenty questions*. Children are permitted to use pens or pencils only; they are not allowed access to rubbers, rulers, calculators, mathematic equipment or paper for working out answers. Each child is given an answer sheet upon which to record their answers. It is divided into three sections, which allocate five, ten or fifteen seconds in which to mentally work out and record the answers to the questions heard on a tape recorded version of the test. Each question is read aloud twice. For some of the questions, the information the children will need is noted down in or beside the answer box on their answer sheet. The instructions the children receive note '*You should work out the answer to each question in your head, but you may jot things down outside the answer box if this helps you. Do not try to write down your calculations because this will waste time and you may miss the next question.*'

The QCA website states that all three mathematics papers: 'ask questions that require children to draw on their skills in using and applying maths. These skills include: knowing all the timestables and using them to divide and multiply; using a protractor to measure angles; calculating the perimeter and area of shapes that can be split into rectangles; solving problems by collecting and using information in tables, graphs and charts; solving problems involving ratio and proportion' ([http://www.qca.org.uk/12818\\_13016.html#Maths](http://www.qca.org.uk/12818_13016.html#Maths); accessed 28/06/06). Sample questions taken from the KS2 2001 mathematics papers are provided overleaf.

In order to attain on both the mental mathematics paper and Paper A, the child must be quite competent in solving calculations mentally. In reviewing only the questions in table iv, they require knowledge of the basic mathematical operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication and division) but also knowledge of currency, percentages, decimals, perimeter, and a familiarity with different shapes. Because many questions posed use hypothetical situations, pupils must also be able to identify the mathematical operation required. For example, in the question taken from Paper B, they need to use both multiplication and addition in order to work out the answer to the first part of the question. The need to use two steps to achieve the solution is indicated by the marks available for the answer (although, because it is not explicitly stated in the instructions, using the available marks as a means of guidance is reliant upon the teacher pointing this out in practice sessions).

**Table iv:** Sample mathematics questions

<b>Source:</b> KS2 2001 mathematics paper A (calculator not allowed)			
Calculate 15% of 460. (States in the margin that the answer is worth 1 mark).			
<b>Source:</b> KS2 2001 mathematics paper B (calculator allowed).			
This is the cost to visit the waxworks.			
<table border="1"><tr><td>Adults £8.50</td></tr><tr><td>Children £4.50</td></tr></table>		Adults £8.50	Children £4.50
Adults £8.50			
Children £4.50			
On Friday morning <b>12 adults</b> and <b>20 children</b> visit the waxworks. How much do they pay altogether? Show your <b>method</b> . You may get a mark. Answer box marked with a '£' (States in the margin that the answer is worth 2 marks)			
Guide books cost £1.50 each. The waxworks sells £24 worth of guide books. How many guide books is this? (States in the margin that the answer is worth 1 mark).			
<b>Source:</b> KS2 2001 mental mathematics test			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ What is three quarters as a decimal? (five seconds given)</li><li>◆ Each side of a pentagon is twelve centimeters. What is the perimeter of the pentagon? Pupil sheet states '12cm' (ten seconds given)</li><li>◆ Calculate ten minus four point three five. Pupil sheet states '10' '4.35' (fifteen seconds given)</li></ul>			

### *Science*

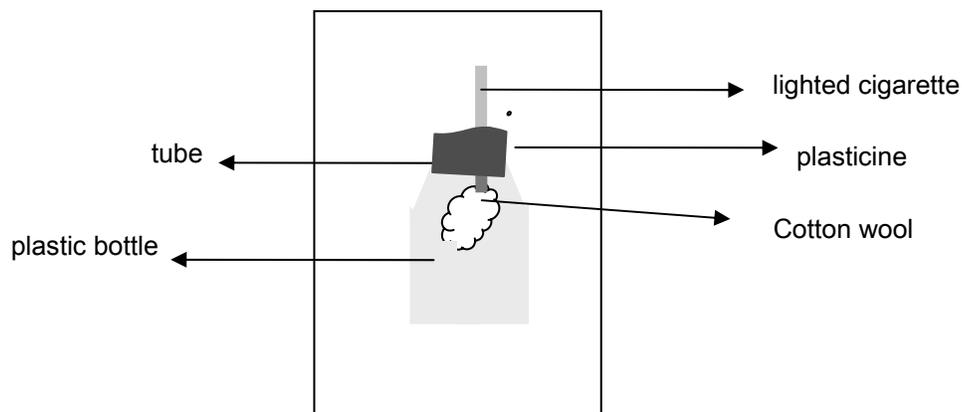
In the KS2 science tests, the Year 6 pupil is required to sit two papers, each lasting thirty-five minutes. The QCA website states 'The tests assess your child's understanding of the development of scientific ideas and the use of scientific evidence. Your child will be tested on many aspects of science and may be asked to: name the major body organs and know where they are, classify materials by their different properties, comment on the design of a simple experiment, make changes to and draw simple electrical circuits' ([http://www.qca.org.uk/12818\\_13016.html#Science](http://www.qca.org.uk/12818_13016.html#Science); accessed 28/06/06)

**Table v:** Sample science questions

**Source:** KS2 2001 science paper A

3. Smoking and health

a. Some children watch a video showing what happens when air passes through a lighted cigarette. The video shows a scientist using this model (the following is an adaptation of the illustration provided in the paper):



The scientist squeezes the plastic bottle. This forces air out. Then she lets go. This forces air back into the bottle, through the lighted cigarette. She does this several times. The cotton wool becomes black and dirty.

- What is taken into the bottle with the air and makes the cotton wool dirty?
- What organ of the body does the cotton wool represent?
- What harmful effects can cigarette smoking have on the body?

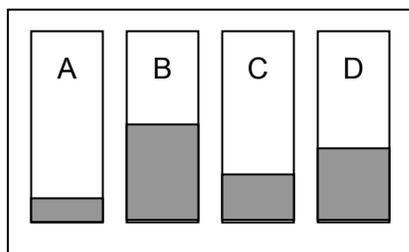
(It states in the margin that the answer to each of the questions above is worth 1 mark).

**Source:** KS2 2001 science paper B

1. Absorbent materials

a. Absorbent materials **soak up** water well.

Kay and robin have four equal strips of different types of paper. They want to find out which is most absorbent. They dip the strips into coloured water, then take them out again (paper provides illustration). The picture below shows the pieces of paper after they are taken out of the water (adapted from the paper).



How can you tell from the picture that material B has soaked up the most water? (States in the margin that the answer is worth 1 mark).

b. Circle **TWO** materials that soak up water well:

**kitchen roll plastic sheet cotton fabric aluminium foil**

(States in the margin that the answer is worth 1 mark).

Whilst the multiple choice format of some questions means that children can make an 'informed guess' on some occasions (for example, the absorbent materials question noted above) others require the children to have a thorough understanding of the topics comprising the KS2 science PoS (for example, the smoking and health question). Where children are required to answer more in depth answers, marking schemes reveal that pupils need to use specific terms in order to attain the available marks. This is exemplified in table vi, which illustrates the criteria for marking pupils answers to the smoking and health question noted above. In light of this, I would argue that of all the three core subjects, the questions on the science papers call for the highest degree of regurgitation on the part of the pupil.

**Table vi:** Marking criteria for the smoking and health question

**Source:** KS2 2001 science tests mark scheme

Question	Requirements	Mark	Additional guidance
3a	Award <b>ONE</b> mark for an understanding that smoke or tar from the cigarette will be drawn into the bottle with the air: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ smoke/fumes;</li> <li>▪ tar</li> </ul> <p><b>Allow:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ nicotine;</li> <li>▪ soot</li> </ul>	1 mark	<b>Do not give credit for a response that includes incorrect science:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ cotton wool/plasticine;</li> <li>▪ ash;</li> <li>▪ tobacco</li> </ul> <p><b>Do not give credit for an insufficient response:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ drugs;</li> <li>▪ gas;</li> <li>▪ carbon dioxide;</li> <li>▪ dirt/black stuff</li> </ul>
3b	Award <b>ONE</b> mark for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ lungs</li> </ul>	1 mark	<b>Do not give credit for:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ lips;</li> <li>▪ mouth;</li> <li>▪ throat;</li> </ul> <p>(These are represented by other parts of the model, such as the plasticine and tube).</p>
3c	Award <b>ONE</b> mark for an understanding that organs of the body are damaged and general health is impaired, possibly leading to death: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ you can get (lung) cancer;</li> <li>▪ it gives you heart</li> </ul>	1 mark	<b>Do not give credit for an insufficient response that restates information given:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ it stops you being healthy;</li> <li>▪ it makes you ill;</li> <li>▪ it makes your lungs black;</li> <li>▪ it stops your heart</li> </ul>

	<p>disease/heart attack;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ it can damage your lungs;</li><li>▪ it can impair your breathing;</li><li>▪ it can give you a bad cough.</li></ul> <p><b>Allow:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ it makes your lungs tarry;</li><li>▪ it causes addiction;</li><li>▪ it can kill you.</li></ul>		
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## Appendix 1.E: Spring term literacy teaching objectives for Year 6

**Source:** The National Literacy Strategy Framework for Teaching: section two, pages 52-53

**Fiction and poetry:** longer established stories and novels selected from more than one genre; e.g. mystery, humour, sci-fi., historical, fantasy worlds, etc. to study and compare; range of poetic forms e.g. kennings, limericks, riddles, cinquain, tanka, poems written in other forms (as adverts, letter, diary entries, conversations), free verse, nonsense verse.

**Non-Fiction:** (i) discussion texts: texts which set out, balance and evaluate different points of view, e.g. pros and cons of a course of action, moral issue, policy (ii) formal writing: notices, public information documents.

### WORD LEVEL STRAND

*Phonics, spelling and vocabulary*

#### **PUPILS SHOULD BE TAUGHT:**

##### *Spelling strategies*

- 1. to identify mis-spelt words in own writing; to keep individual lists (e.g. spelling logs); to learn to spell them;**
- to use known spellings as a basis for spelling other words with similar patterns or related meanings
- to use independent spelling strategies, including:
  - building up spellings by syllabic parts, using known prefixes, suffixes and common letter strings;
  - applying knowledge of spelling rules and exceptions;
  - building words from other known words, and from awareness of the meaning or derivations of words;
  - using dictionaries and IT spell-checks;
  - using visual skills, e.g. recognising common letter strings and checking critical features (i.e. does it look right, shape, length, etc.)

##### *Spelling conventions and rules*

- to revise and consolidate work from previous four terms with particular emphasis on:
  - learning and inventing spelling rules;
  - inventing and using mnemonics for irregular or difficult spellings;
  - unstressed vowel spellings in polysyllabic words;
- to extend work on word origins and derivations from previous term. Use personal reading, a range of dictionaries and previous knowledge to investigate words with common prefixes, suffixes, word roots;

##### *Vocabulary extension*

- collect and explain the meanings and origins of proverbs, e.g. *a rolling stone gathers no moss, familiarity breeds contempt*, - referring to dictionaries of proverbs and other reference sources;
- to understand that the meanings of words change over time, e.g. through investigating such words as *nice, presently*,

*without;*

8. to build a bank of useful terms and phrases for argument, e.g. *similarly... whereas..*

## SENTENCE LEVEL STRAND

*Grammar and punctuation*

**PUPILS SHOULD BE TAUGHT:**

### **Grammatical awareness**

1. to investigate further the use of active and passive verbs:
  - secure the use of the terms active and passive;
  - know how sentences can be re-ordered by changing from one to the other;
  - identify examples of active and passive verbs in texts;
  - experiment in transformation from active to passive and vice-versa and study the impact of this on meaning;
  - consider how the passive voice can conceal the agent of a sentence, e.g. the chicks were kept in an incubator;
2. to understand features of formal official language through, e.g.:
  - collecting and analysing examples, discussing when and why they are used;
  - noting the conventions of the language, e.g. use of the impersonal voice, imperative verbs, formal vocabulary;
  - collecting typical words and expressions, e.g. *'those wishing to...' 'hereby...' 'forms may be obtained...'*;

### **Sentence construction and punctuation**

3. to revise work on complex sentences:
  - identifying main clauses;
  - ways of connecting clauses;
  - constructing complex sentences;
  - appropriate use of punctuation;
4. to revise work on contracting sentences:
  - summary;
  - note making;
  - editing
5. to use reading to:
  - investigate conditionals, e.g. using *if ...then, might, could, would*, and their uses, e.g. in deduction, speculation, supposition;
  - use these forms to construct sentences which express, e.g. possibilities, hypotheses; explore use of conditionals in past and future, experimenting with transformations, discussing effects, e.g. speculating about possible causes (past), reviewing a range of options and their outcomes (future).

## TEXT LEVEL STRAND

### *Comprehension and composition*

#### *PUPILS SHOULD BE TAUGHT:*

#### **Fiction and poetry**

#### **Reading comprehension**

1. to understand aspects of narrative structure, e.g.:
  - how chapters in a book (or paragraphs in a short story or chapter) are linked together;
  - how authors handle time, e.g. flashbacks, stories within stories, dreams;
  - how the passing of time is conveyed to the reader;
2. to analyse how individual paragraphs are structured in writing, e.g. comments sequenced to follow the shifting thoughts of a character, examples listed to justify a point and reiterated to give it force;
3. to recognise how poets manipulate words:
  - for their quality of sound, e.g. rhythm, rhyme, assonance;
  - for their connotations;
  - for multiple layers of meaning, e.g. through figurative language, ambiguity;
4. to investigate humorous verse:
  - how poets play with meanings;
  - nonsense words and how meaning can be made of them;
  - where the appeal lies;
5. to analyse how messages, moods, feelings and attitudes are conveyed in poetry;
6. to read and interpret poems in which meanings are implied or multi-layered; to discuss, interpret challenging poems with others;
7. to identify the key features of different types of literary text, e.g. stock characters, plot structure, and how particular texts conform, develop or undermine the type, e.g. through parody;
8. to analyse the success of texts and writers in evoking particular responses in the reader, e.g. where suspense is well-built;
9. to increase familiarity with significant poets and writers of the past;

#### **Writing composition**

10. to use different genres as models to write, e.g. short extracts, sequels, additional episodes, alternative endings, using appropriate conventions, language;
11. to write own story using, e.g. flashbacks or a story within a story to convey the passing of time;
12. to study in depth one genre and produce an extended piece of similar writing, e.g. for inclusion in a class anthology; to plan, revise, re-draft this and bring to presentational standard, e.g. layout, paragraphing, accuracy of punctuation and spelling, handwriting/printing;
13. parody a literary text, describing stock characters and plot structure, language, etc.;

14. to write commentaries or summaries crediting views expressed by using expressions such as 'The writer says that...';

## **Non-Fiction**

### **Reading comprehension**

15. to recognise how arguments are constructed to be effective, through, e.g.:

- the expression, sequence and linking of points;
- the provision of persuasive examples, illustrations and evidence;
- pre-empting or answering potential objections;
- appealing to the known views and feelings of the audience;
- to identify the features of balanced written arguments which, e.g.:

16. summarise different sides of an argument;

17. clarify the strengths and weaknesses of different positions;

18. signal personal opinion clearly;

17. to read and understand examples of official language and its characteristic features, e.g. through discussing consumer information, legal documents, layouts, use of footnotes, instructions, parentheses, headings, appendices and asterisks;

### **Writing composition**

18. to construct effective arguments:

- developing a point logically and effectively;
- supporting and illustrating points persuasively;
- anticipating possible objections;
- harnessing the known views, interests and feelings of the audience;
- tailoring the writing to formal presentation where appropriate

19. to write a balanced report of a controversial issue:

- summarising fairly the competing views;
- analysing strengths and weaknesses of different positions;

20. to discuss the way standard English varies in different contexts, e.g. why legal language is necessarily highly formalised, why questionnaires must be specific

**Appendix  
1.F**

**Year 6 key teaching objectives for numeracy**

**Source:** National Numeracy Strategy Framework for Teaching: section three, 26-27)

STRAND	KEY OBJECTIVE
<b>Numbers and the number system</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Multiply and divide decimals mentally by 10 or 100, and integers by 1000, and explain the effect.</li> <li>▪ Reduce a fraction to its simplest form by cancelling common factors.</li> <li>▪ Use a fraction as an operator to find fractions of numbers or quantities (e.g. <math>\frac{5}{8}</math> of 32, <math>\frac{7}{10}</math> of 40, <math>\frac{9}{100}</math> of 400 centimetres).</li> <li>▪ Solve simple problems involving ration and proportion.</li> <li>▪ Order a mixed set of numbers with up to three decimal places.</li> <li>▪ Understand percentage as the number of parts in every 100, and find simple percentages of small whole-number quantities.</li> </ul>
<b>Calculations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Carry out column addition and subtraction of numbers involving decimals.</li> <li>▪ Derive quickly division facts corresponding to multiplication tables up to 10 x 10.</li> <li>▪ Carry out short multiplication and division of numbers involving decimals.</li> <li>▪ Carry out long multiplication of a three-digit number by a two-digit integer.</li> </ul>
<b>Solving problems</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify and use the appropriate operations (including combination of operations) to solve word problems involving numbers and quantities and explain methods and reasoning</li> </ul>
<b>Measures, shape and space</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Calculate the perimeter and area of simple compound shapes that can be split into rectangles.</li> <li>▪ Read and plot co-ordinates in all four quadrants.</li> <li>▪ Use a protractor to measure acute and obtuse angles to the nearest degree</li> </ul>
<b>Handling data</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Solve a problem by extracting and interpreting information presented in tables, graphs and charts.</li> </ul>

**Appendix 1.G: Unit plan for the Year 6 spring term. Unit 5, part 1: fractions, decimals and percentages.**

**Source:** [http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primary/teachingresources/mathematics/nns\\_unit\\_plans/year6/Y6T1Unit5Fractionsdecimals/](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primary/teachingresources/mathematics/nns_unit_plans/year6/Y6T1Unit5Fractionsdecimals/) (accessed 23/03/05)

<b>Planning sheet</b>	<b>Day One</b>	<b>Unit 5 pt.1 Fractions, decimals and percentages</b>	<b>Term: Spring</b>	<b>Year Group: 6</b>
<b>Oral and Mental</b>		<b>Main Teaching</b>		<b>Plenary</b>
<b>Objectives and Vocabulary</b>	<b>Teaching Activities</b>	<b>Objectives and Vocabulary</b>	<b>Teaching Activities</b>	<b>Teaching Activities/Focus Questions</b>
<p>Know simple fractions as percentages /decimals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use the counting stick marked from 0 to 1. Point to a division and ask what fraction is this? Repeat asking for values as decimals and percentages. Then ask questions like:</li> </ul> <p><b>Q</b> If this is <math>\frac{1}{4}</math> what is that as a decimal /percentage?</p> <p><b>Q</b> If this is <math>\frac{1}{5}</math> what is that as a decimal/ percentage?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write the number 400 on the board. Ask children for <math>\frac{1}{2}</math> of 400, <math>\frac{1}{4}</math> of 400 and then 50%, 25% of 400. Link these to <math>0.5 \times 400</math>, <math>0.25 \times 400</math> and repeat with <math>\frac{1}{5}</math> and <math>\frac{1}{10}</math>.</li> </ul>	<p>Begin to convert fractions to decimals using division.</p> <p>Develop calculator skills and use a calculator effectively.</p> <p><b>VOCABULARY</b> ascending numerator denominator equivalent</p> <p><b>RESOURCES</b> Calculators OHP calculator</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write these fractions on the board: <math>\frac{1}{10}</math>, <math>\frac{1}{5}</math>, <math>\frac{4}{10}</math>, <math>\frac{5}{8}</math>, <math>\frac{9}{16}</math>.</li> </ul> <p><b>Q</b> Which fraction is bigger than <math>\frac{3}{5}</math> and why?</p> <p>Establish that <math>\frac{1}{10}</math>, <math>\frac{1}{5}</math> and <math>\frac{4}{10}</math> are smaller than <math>\frac{3}{5}</math>.</p> <p><b>Q</b> How could we compare the size of <math>\frac{4}{10}</math> and <math>\frac{3}{5}</math>?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remind the children that tenths are easy to convert to decimals and <math>\frac{1}{10} = 0.1</math>, <math>\frac{4}{10} = 0.4</math>.</li> </ul> <p><b>Q</b> What is <math>\frac{1}{5}</math> in tenths?</p> <p>Establish it is <math>\frac{2}{10}</math> and <math>\frac{2}{10} = 0.2</math>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use an OHP calculator and demonstrate how to convert <math>\frac{1}{5}</math> to a decimal using division.</li> </ul> <p>Get the children to convert <math>\frac{1}{10}</math>, <math>\frac{4}{10}</math>, <math>\frac{3}{5}</math> with their calculators.</p> <p><b>Q</b> How does this help us to compare fractions?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask the children to convert <math>\frac{5}{8}</math> and <math>\frac{9}{16}</math> to decimals and write the answers on the board. Establish that <math>\frac{9}{16}</math> is smaller than <math>\frac{3}{5}</math>. Write the five fractions in order of size, smallest first.</li> </ul> <p>Write <math>\frac{6}{7}</math> and <math>\frac{5}{6}</math> on the board. Get children to convert them to decimals and discuss the calculator displays. Remind the children the answer on the display is only part of the decimal representation. Order the two fractions.</p> <p>Give the children groups of fractions and ask them to convert them to decimals and then order them, e.g. <math>\frac{2}{7}</math>, <math>\frac{1}{5}</math>, <math>\frac{3}{8}</math>.</p> <p>Collect answers and correct errors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write <math>\frac{5}{11}</math> on the board. Invite children to write a fraction on the board that they think is smaller than <math>\frac{5}{11}</math>.</li> </ul> <p><b>Q</b> Is this correct? How do you know?</p> <p>Check whether they are right by using the OHP calculator. Repeat with another fraction and ask for bigger and smaller fractions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write <math>\frac{1}{2}</math>, <math>\frac{2}{3}</math>, <math>\frac{5}{6}</math>, <math>\frac{1}{4}</math> on the board. Ask the children to sort them in ascending order.</li> </ul> <p><b>Q</b> What is the correct order? Did you use a calculator; if you didn't, how did you do it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask the children to think of four fractions that they would <b>not</b> need a calculator to help sort.</li> </ul> <p>Take responses.</p> <p><b>By the end of the lesson the children should be able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enter fractions into a calculator and interpret the display to find the equivalent decimal;</li> <li>Predict the result before confirming;</li> <li>Use a calculator to compare fractions.</li> </ul> <p align="right">(Refer to supplement of examples, section 6, page 31.)</p>

**RESOURCES**  
Counting stick

*Holly had been looking forward to moving up into Year 6 for some time, particularly as she would be in Mr Smith's class. He had taught both her older brother and sister, both of whom held favourable opinions of him. In fact, despite moving on to secondary school, both her siblings continued to pop in to see Mr Smith and 'catch up.' Holly's parents, Mr and Mrs Price, also viewed Mr Smith in high esteem. Whilst primarily he encouraged children to do their best and facilitated as many as he could in attaining Level 4 on the end of year SATs, he also ensured his class enjoyed themselves and experienced as many extra curricula activities as the school could feasibly squeeze into the timetable. Holly's parents valued this practice in particular; they felt such activities were critical in what had become a highly pressurised academic year. Self-employed, Mr and Mrs Price were fortunate to be able to take it in turns to help out on class trips. In this respect, they had over the years, become increasingly involved as members of the school community. Mr Smith was particularly grateful for their continued support; ongoing involvement meant they had become familiar with his practices and those of the school and this made activities beyond the boundaries of the school walls so much easier to undertake. Moreover, Mr and Mrs Price were familiar with many of Holly's class peers. The majority of children lived locally, and their parents could regularly be seen chatting in the playground before and after school, Mr and Mrs Price often joining them. Holly saw a few girls in her class, her 'closest friends' outside school in her 'home life'; they often came over for dinner and had sleepovers at each others' houses every other weekend. As such, Holly's close friends had become a regular feature of life at home for Mr and Mrs Price. With successive children attending the same school for the entirety of their primary education, Holly's parents had established and maintained positive relationships with several members of staff; Mr Smith a firm favourite. Any issues they had, they felt able to discuss with him openly and with ease, knowing from experience that it would be followed up immediately. Collecting Holly each day after school, Mrs Price stopped to chat with her daughter's class teacher most days and was well informed with the class activities: what trips were coming up, the dates of the SATs, any school events and celebrations etc. Just in case she did miss anything, the school provided regular written communication in the form of letters which Holly handed to her mum as soon as she got home. Indeed, Mrs Price would be quite sad when Holly left the school at the end of Year 6; as the youngest child in the family, it meant that both Mr and Mrs Price would no longer be involved in the school community, they too would be leaving.*

*Alice was in the same class as Holly. She moved into Year 6 begrudgingly. She had heard on the grapevine that Year 6 was nothing but hard work right from the beginning; all you ever hear about it is 'tests, test, tests.' School was already hard work for Alice, not only did she struggle with the work, but she lived some distance from school and this made her working day longer than everybody else's. She didn't see any of her class peers outside school, in fact her home and*

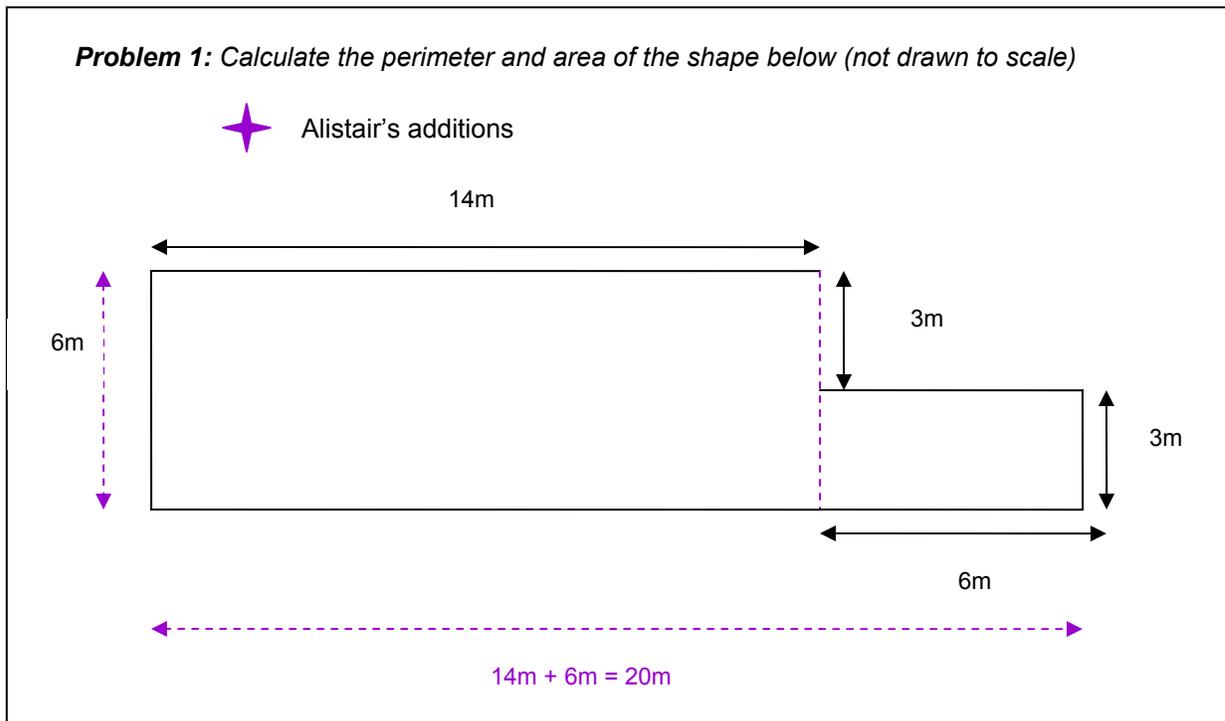
*school lives were very much separate. She couldn't wait to finish primary school and move to a secondary school closer to home; she hoped she would become a pupil at a particular local school which her two 'home' friends already attended. Alice joined her current primary school in Year 5, when they lived for a short period, four months in total, with her mum's 'friend.' There had been a breakdown in living arrangements and they were again, now staying with her grandmother. She had fallen ill over recent months and needed round the clock care; with her mum's long working hours, this meant that Alice sometimes had to take time off school to help. It wasn't that Ms Jones didn't value her daughter's education, but there were for the moment, more pressing matters that needed to be dealt with: firstly, organising care for Alice's grandmother. Concerned that Alice was missing valuable school time in what was deemed a very important year, both her class teacher, Mr Smith and her Head teacher, Mrs Patel, were constantly leaving messages on the home answer phone, trying to make contact with Ms Jones. Ringing her daughter's school had been at the top of her 'to do' list every day that week, but other tasks kept creeping up and taking over her time; the little she had available when she was not working. Previously, the school staff had called round to the house to discuss Alice's progress at school, but Ms Jones had come away from the meeting feeling quite annoyed. She recalled no mention of positives, simply that 'Alice lacked concentration in class'; 'she is often overly tired and unable to undertake work'; 'she is not working at the expected level for her age group.' Whilst Alice may currently be experiencing some difficulties at school, Ms Jones was confident in her daughter's capabilities and was adamant that whilst she may not attain the desired level in the tests this year, she could make it up at secondary school. Whilst education is important, so is family and Ms Jones knew she was not in a financial position to be able to care or provide for her daughter and mum, unless she worked long hours. Aware that these circumstances were not going to change in the immediate future, she continued to do what she felt was best.*

In the above vignette, Holly's parents experience a rich mesosystem link with the school; both parties' report to share a good relationship. Whilst Mr and Mrs Price feel that Holly's class teacher, Mr Smith, is very approachable and respect his values for the academic and personal development of all children in his class; Mr Smith in turn, is particularly grateful for the ongoing parental support for school endeavours provided by Holly's parents. Moreover, a number of Holly's class peers are her closest friends who she sees regularly in her home life. In these terms the linkages between her peer group and her home and school life are also strong. In terms of the ramifications for her development, Bronfenbrenner's model would suggest that Holly benefits immensely from the multiple and rich links she experiences between these microsystems in her life. With each of the parties playing a role in the home, school and friendship spheres, aspects of Holly's life are inextricably linked. In contrast, Alice experiences a highly compartmentalised life between her home, school and peer group microsystems. Now living some distance from

her primary school, Alice's 'home' and 'school' friendship groups exist as separate communities to which she belongs. Despite the continued efforts of Alice's class teacher, Mr Smith and her Head teacher, Mrs Patel, communication with Alice's mother, Ms Jones is limited. Working long hours and with several other priorities, Alice's mother currently finds it difficult to maintain regular contact with school. Here, Alice experiences few linkages between the home, school and friendship spheres of her life and those links which are apparent, seem somewhat impoverished. In terms of Bronfenbrenner's model, the lack and poor quality of linkages existing between Alice's microsystems would serve to impact negatively upon her development and learning journey.

*Consider a ten year old pupil, Lucinda, who has recently moved house. Joining a new primary school, she is positioned as a newcomer and wishes to become a member of the established Year 6 community. She feels a need to align her experience with the competences they define. For example, to be a popular pupil within her new class, Lucinda may have to display the following competencies: assist peers with any class work on the occasions that they experience difficulty; attain high scores on class tests to secure a level four on the SATs at the end of the year; avoid taking days of school to secure school awards for attendance; participate in question and answer sessions during class; join fellow class members in playing games at lunchtime etc. It is the competences defined by the community which pull her experience. In the same school community, an experienced teacher, Mr Reily, has worked in Year 6 for a number of years. He knows the ropes and is familiar with the work outlined in the National Curriculum for this age group. With very few exceptions, pupils in his class achieve at least a level four in each of the SAT tests at the end of Year 6. Having gained a reputation for being an effective teacher, fellow members of staff frequently observe his lessons as a means of passing on best practice; he is competent in his own eyes' and in the eye's of fellow teaching staff. But he experiences a situation which opens his eyes' to a new way of looking at the world. In attending a workshop he listens to a paper and engages in several activities which essentially present a fresh perspective on the nature of children's learning. The content of the workshop has made him question his teaching practices and he has begun to see limitations with his instruction methods that he was not previously aware of. Back at school, he sets out to communicate his newly found understanding with fellow teaching staff. Through his discussion with peers he tries to change how the community defines the competency of being an effective and successful teacher. In this scenario, it is the experiences of the teacher which shapes the competencies defined by the community.*

After providing a short chalk and talk introduction, the class teacher presented her pupils with several problems to solve independently. In the previous lesson the teacher had explained how to calculate the area and perimeter of rectangles; today they were looking at more unusual shapes. Recalling Alistair's homework after the last lesson the class teacher was aware that this exercise would prove difficult for him to approach alone; in turn she chose to sit with him and work through the first problem together (illustrated below):



Suspecting Alistair was unclear about the meaning of 'perimeter' and 'area' she began by deconstructing the terminology. She asked him to write down the definition of each term in his own words and explained that he could return to these if he ever felt unsure. To provide a concrete model which Alistair could refer to, the teacher drew a rectangle and wrote down the calculation needed to ascertain firstly the perimeter and secondly, the area of the shape. She then noted the solutions. The teacher encouraged Alistair to have a go. She drew another rectangle and asked him to calculate the perimeter. She reiterated that this was 'the distance all the way round the edge of something' and traced the outline of the shape on the diagram. Following the same pattern, the teacher asked Alistair to calculate the area of the same rectangle. She commented 'the area is the amount of surface space inside the perimeter' and pointed this out on the diagram. Alistair experienced success. He calculated the perimeter and area of several other rectangles drawn out by the teacher before he attempted to undertake the problem set at the start of the numeracy

*lesson. He filled in the missing measurements on the diagram as suggested by his teacher and was in turn, able to calculate the perimeter of the shape quite easily. However he still struggled to work out the area. The teacher revealed to Alistair that each of the unusual shapes could be divided into two rectangles. She prompted him where to draw an additional line on the diagram and asked Alistair to write down the calculations needed to ascertain the area of each rectangle. At this point, the teacher asked, 'you have the areas of both rectangles, what do you think is the final step?' After allowing Alistair the space to think the answer through, she confirmed he was correct; he did indeed need to add together the area of both rectangles to reach the final solution.*

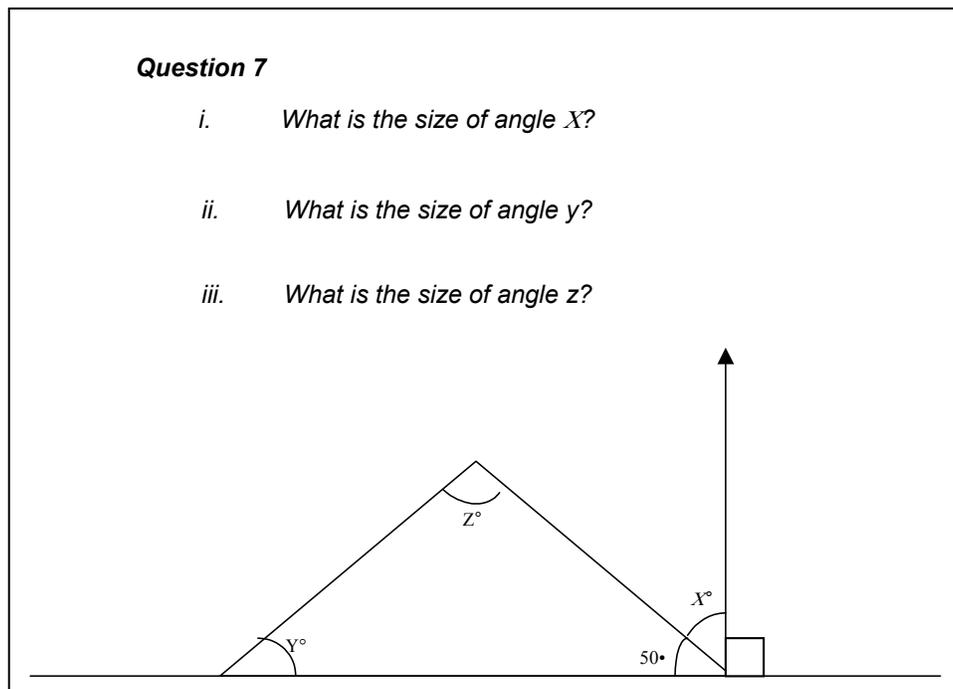
In part fulfillment of the end of KS2 assessments in English, Year 6 pupils are presented with a choice of writing exercises and required to complete one task in the designated time. In 2002, the writing test had four choices: a letter (entitled 'A Special Guest'), an information leaflet (entitled 'Community Park') and two short stories (entitled 'A Forgetful Character' and 'A Change in Time'); additional information outlining each task was also supplied. Pupils are allocated fifteen minutes 'in which to think about what to write and to make a note of your ideas'; and a further 'forty five minutes to do your writing.' These instructions make no mention of making a decision between the four tasks (which presumably takes place before the fifteen minutes) yet for some this decision is crucial and thus worth thinking about.

*Consider a Year 6 pupil, Matt. In contemplating the choice, he may reflect on his previous attempts at writing letters, information leaflets and stories. Whilst recollecting that he particularly enjoyed the latter two exercises, he is aware that it takes time for him to formulate his ideas and write them down in a manner appropriate for his audience, time he didn't feel he had. However, he had a suspicion that his friend Tom would choose the story option as he seemed to have a natural flair for composing stories in a short space of time. Given the circumstances, Matt decided he would write the letter as it represented the task he could most easily attain high marks on given the short space of time. So, in the remaining ten minutes of thinking time, he re-read through the additional information pertaining to 'A Special Guest' and jotted down the specific points he needed to cover in the content of the letter breaking them up into suitable paragraphs. In addition, he drew a quick sketch of the basic structure of a letter to remind him the correct layout, noting the position of his address and his correspondents' alongside the date. Lastly he wrote in large capitals 'PUNCTUATION' to remind himself to check his use of commas, full stops and capital letters, as he knew it was easily to loose marks in this area if he did not pay close attention.*

In this hypothetical scenario, Matt's use of metacognitive knowledge about people, tasks and strategies played a key role in his decision about the task he would undertake and the means by which he would successfully complete it. Whilst it took time for Matt to consciously think through the options, his use of metacognitive knowledge meant he made an informed choice. In this scenario, it is important to note, that Matt's use of metacognitive knowledge pertains to phenomena outside himself. His performance is shaped by his knowledge of person, task and strategy, metacognitive knowledge which is he has gained through his social participation in the valued practices of the classroom

community. As a member of this community, he had accessed the knowledge required through his experiences in the classroom and this enabled him to make an informed decision about which question to tackle on his KS2 English assessment.

It's the month of May and Chris is one of the many Year 6 pupils who are sitting the Standard Attainment Tests (SATs) this week. Chris has been feeling anxious all weekend and the prospect of doing the maths papers has been filling him with dread. Although he has made great progress in maths this year, he is aware he will find it hard to achieve the expected level 4, which he has been told by his teacher, is the average attainment level for Year 6 pupils on all SATs. However his class teacher and his mum had said that he was not to worry about this and to just try his best. Also Chris knew he worked 'better' when he was calm so he tried to suppress his anxiety as he settled down to begin the test, remembering the words 'just do your best'. Chris is currently twenty five minutes into his maths test (paper A), which is forty minutes in duration. He is on question seven, illustrated.



Chris recalls studying angles in class but is struggling to remember anything; he thinks if he recalls the angle properties of a triangle it will assist him. He decides to ask for the question to be read aloud as this usually helps him to understand it further and sometimes serves as a prompt to recall. As the classroom assistant finishes reading the question, Chris remembers that angles in a line add up to  $180^\circ$  and angles in a right angle add up to  $90^\circ$ . Using this knowledge he knows he can calculate angle  $X^\circ$  in that he can subtract  $50^\circ$  from  $90^\circ$ , meaning the value of  $X$  is  $40^\circ$ . His thoughts are distracted by the girl sitting next to him, who seemed to be working through the questions at a fast pace and was coming to the end of the paper. This left Chris feeling a little unsettled as he was just at the midway point. He tried to ignore this and increase his concentration on the question at

*hand; suddenly Chris remembers the information he wanted: 'all angles in a triangle add up to 180°'. However, Chris realises he cannot work out the value of  $Y^\circ$  and  $Z^\circ$  as he has insufficient information. He does not know what type of triangle it is: equilateral, scalene or isosceles and he knows this will determine the size of the remaining angles. Unfortunately, he is distracted again by the noise of the pupils playing outside. It was break time for the rest of the pupils in the primary school and the windows in the classroom were open as it was a warm day. Chris was sitting directly by the window. He becomes aware his thoughts have drifted and attempts to redouble his concentration on the question. He asks himself, 'what are the properties of each of the triangles?' His thoughts are disrupted yet again by the teacher's voice, stating they had ten minutes remaining; Chris is hit with a sinking feeling in his stomach, 'ten minutes and only half way through.' He decides to continue through the questions in the paper and come back to question 7 if he has any time left at the end.*

This vignette illustrates the complexity of learning in an activity typical of everyday life in a primary classroom. As Chris attempts to work through this maths question, his thoughts, feelings and actions can be described as metacognitive. Chris's use of metacognitive knowledge can be inferred when he recognises the knowledge he requires to calculate the size of the angles; when he requests the question to be read aloud as he knows this can aid his progress; and when he becomes aware that he does not possess sufficient information to calculate the size of the remaining two angles. Chris displays metacognitive skills when he actively suppresses his anxiety as the test begins, knowing he works better when calm; as he attempts to increase his concentration following several distractions; and his decision to continue working through the paper returning to the question if time permitted. Metacognitive experiences are illustrated as Chris recognises his anxiety at the weekend was due to the prospect of sitting the maths SATs and when he experiences a sinking feeling in his stomach as the teacher stated the time left to work through the paper. In this example, we can see that Chris's use of metacognitive phenomena impacted powerfully on his performance in this ordinary classroom activity.

Source: Bell, Swan, Shannon and Crust (1996)

**Interview checklist**

***You will need a partner***

***Take it in turns to ask each other these questions.***

***Make notes of your answers.***

1. What were you asked to do this lesson? Show me an example.
2. In what ways did you work? Were you for example... listening to explanations? Discussing? Practicing skills you already had? Solving problems? Using practical equipment? Experimenting and investigating?
3. What do you think you were expected to learn? What *did* you learn?
4. What were the most important ideas? Make a list of these.
5. What was the hardest thing about this topic
6. How well did you understand the work? Is there something that you still don't fully understand?
7. What mistakes did you make? Why did you make these mistakes?
8. What choices did you make while you were working? Why did you choose the way you did?
9. Why do you think your teacher gave you this work to do?
10. Have you got any tips for someone else who has got to do this work? What should they do first? How should they work? What should they watch out for?
11. Are there any connections with mathematics that you have done before? What mathematics did you need to know already in order to do this work?
12. Is there anything else you would like to say about this topic?

*Adapted from:* Bandura (1995)

***Mastery experiences***

The most effective way of developing a strong sense of efficacy is through mastery experiences; these impact on the way in which a child approaches and executes tasks and his or her management of changing life situations. Performance successes build a robust sense of self-efficacy, whilst failure undermines it. If a child experiences a series of easy and immediate successes in his or her pursuits, he or she comes to expect quick results and can easily be discouraged in the presence of obstacles or failure. A child develops a resilient sense of efficacy in overcoming obstacles through perseverant effort. In experiencing difficulties and setbacks in his or her endeavours, a child learns that success usually required sustained effort.

***Vicarious experiences***

Vicarious experiences provided by social models also serve to create and strengthen personal efficacy beliefs. Observing other similar children succeed by perseverant effort encourages a child's sense of personal efficacy that he or she too, possesses the capacity to perform successfully. In turn, seeing others who despite sustained effort, fail in their attempts, lowers a child's sense of self-efficacy. The extent to which social models impact on children's beliefs of personal efficacy are strongly influenced by the child's perceived similarity to the observed other. A model's successes and failures serve to be more persuasive, the greater the child's perceived similarity. Notions of identity come into play here, influenced by a child's membership and level of participation in given communities of practice. Presumably a child would more readily identify with members of the same social community, such as those children with the lower level ability group or those within the same reading group etc. Bandura notes, that perseverant attitudes modelled by similar others can be more enabling to the observer than the particular skills the model exhibits.

***Social persuasion***

Social persuasion is another method strengthening children's beliefs that they have what it takes to succeed. Children in receipt of persuasive boosts, who are told (by teaching staff, parents, fellow peers etc.) that they possess the capabilities to perform a given task successfully are likely to do so via heightened levels of motivation and sustained perseverance. Children who have been persuaded that they lack the capacity to achieve their endeavours tend to avoid challenging tasks and situations, participation in which, could serve to foster their potential. Limited opportunities to engage in such demanding pursuits strengthens a child's sense of self-doubt, undermines his or her motivation levels and impacts on his or her readiness to give up in the face of adversity. In ensuring children are placed in situations where they can experience success rather than failure, stakeholders possess considerable influence upon children's development of self-efficacy beliefs. For example in a classroom context, teaching practices may define achievement and success in terms of a child's self-improvement rather than triumph over fellow peers. However in considering the wider picture, such practices would be undermined by current governmental policy, which in stressing the role of national tests and school performance league tables defines achievement and success in individualistic and competitive terms. Consider a Year 6 child who, through heightened levels of motivation and effort, greatly improves his or her academic prowess; in these terms he or she can be considered a massive success. However, in failing to attain the expected level 4 on the end of year curriculum tests, the child is labelled a failure by governmental standards; this is a pervasive message that will undoubtedly impact on his or her development of self-efficacy beliefs.

***Physiological and emotional states***

Children's judgements of their ability to perform tasks successfully are also underpinned by their perception and interpretation of the physiological and affective states they experience. For

example, experiencing a sudden feeling of dread when the teacher picks on you to answer a question on the comprehension just read, or the feeling of butterflies in your stomach as the teacher announces that she will be giving the class a surprise mental arithmetic test at the end of the lesson, such signs of stress and anxiety can be interpreted as vulnerability to poor performance. Clearly, the emphasis here is in the individual child's perception and interpretation of such physiological and emotional states which, if explicitly addressed in the classroom context as part of the learning process could provide much needed insight for the child. If encouraged to reflect on their bodily states, perhaps children, particularly those beset by self-doubt and negative emotional proclivities could learn to effectively manage their interpretations and overtime with encouragement, begin to view affective arousal as an energizing facilitator of performance rather than a source of debilitation. Importantly, if the child maintains a positive mood (fuelled by his or her sense of personal control over the situation) this will serve to enhance perceived self-efficacy; alternatively, a despondent mood will diminish it.

*Imminently due to start her second Maths SATs paper, Mia was feeling quietly confident. Only days before she had sat Maths paper A and secretly believed she had performed quite well. She recalled her feelings of content accompanied by a sense of huge relief as her paper had been collected in. 'One down, one to go' she thought, 'soon enough it will be over!' Having repeatedly practiced undertaking papers in timed settings, Mia had ensured that she was comfortably able to complete papers and go over her work at least once, within the allotted time frame. Going over her paper at the end usually meant she picked up a few more marks, as she had time to spot and correct any mistakes she made the first time round. Of course, upon entry to Year 6, this had been one of her core problems, one which she had been able to identify through discussion with her class teacher. With her support, she had worked hard throughout the year to ensure that it wouldn't be an issue in the 'real' tests as it would put her under unnecessary pressure; pressure which affected her self-confidence to perform. Despite her beliefs that she had performed well, Mia was not overly complacent. She was well aware that paper B was more difficult than paper A. Many of her class peers felt it was an easier paper simply because the use of a calculator was permitted, but she knew this would be of little help unless she understood the nature of the questions; that is, what mathematical operation(s) were needed to ascertain the correct answer. With this in mind, she had been undertaking practice questions at home, with the support of her parents. Together, they had been going over the varying terminology for multiplication, division, addition and subtraction. Aware that it was easy to get caught out, Mia would take extra care and read each question twice before deciding what approach to take. Nonetheless, with the belief that she had performed well on Paper A at the back of her mind, Mia felt the pressure to attain top marks on the second paper had been somewhat alleviated. She had been careful not to share her thoughts about her performance with anyone; after all, they may place her under even greater pressure to achieve a higher grade. Knowing high levels of anxiety affected her concentration and ability to perform well, Mia was determined to keep pressurising thoughts at bay. With repeated exposure to the test format throughout Year 6, Mia was now familiar with the practices and undertook the tests with little apprehension. She was well aware she needed to keep it this way in order to 'do her best' and avoid panicking. In line with the general expectations for her age group (as repeatedly pointed out by her parents, class teacher and peers), Mia was aiming for Level 4. She had accomplished this level of achievement in the last three practice SATs papers done in class and this fuelled her confidence; Mia knew she was capable of achieving Level 4 in maths. Moreover, she was determined to, she wanted to please her parents and class teacher and also show both her peers and future secondary school that she was more than capable of achieving success. Mia's perceived self-efficacy to effectively manage the testing situation and perform well on maths paper B served her well; she left Year 6 with a Level 5 in maths, exceeding her teacher's expectations and inwardly meeting her own!*

*Adapted from:* Bandura 1994 and 1995

### ***Cognitive processes***

Self-efficacy beliefs affect cognitive processes in multiple ways. According to social cognitive theory, human behaviour is regulated by forethought embodying valued goals. The goals which an individual sets are shaped by the self-appraisal of his or her capabilities; stronger perceived self-efficacy results in greater goal challenges and firmer commitment to attaining them. Many courses of action originate in thought, where efficacy beliefs shape the anticipatory scenarios constructed and rehearsed. Those children who possess a high sense of self-efficacy visualise successful scenarios which act as a positive support for ongoing performance despite any pressing situational demands or setbacks. Conversely, those with low efficacy envisage failure and are beset by the countless obstacles they may face. A strong sense of efficacy is needed to remain task focused in the face of obstacles, setbacks and failures. Those who have low self-efficacy find such situations difficult, they are occupied by self-doubt, lower their aspirations and the quality of their performance understandably deteriorates. In contrast, those individuals who maintain a resilient sense of efficacy typically set themselves challenging goals and are able to draw on effective analytic thinking skills to enable them to attain their task performance. In a given community of practice, a child's cognitive processes will affect his or her desired level of engagement and participation within this social space. If a child with high self-efficacy beliefs decides that she would like to become a member of particular a community or indeed increase her participation within it, she will strive to secure this position and persevere in the face of setbacks until experiencing success.

### ***Motivational processes***

Motivation is thought to be cognitively generated, where efficacy beliefs play an integral role in its self-regulation. Through the exercise of forethought, people motivate themselves and guide their actions: they form beliefs about what they can do; they anticipate likely outcomes of prospective actions; they set goals for themselves and plan courses of action designed to realise valued futures. Each of these aspects is influenced by how efficacious one's beliefs are. For example, in the school context efficacy beliefs dictate: the learning goals children set for themselves, the amount of effort required to succeed, the capacity to sustain effort in the face of adversity and the level of resilience to failure of set goals. Children who have a strong belief in their capabilities exert greater effort when they fail to master a challenge; those who lack belief give up more readily in the face of failure and obstacles. A child's motivational processes will serve to influence the nature of his or her participation within a given community of practice.

### ***Affective processes***

In threatening or difficult situations, the extent to which children experience stress and anxiety are determined by their beliefs in their ability to cope. A low sense of efficacy leads to the magnification of the severity of possible threats, worrying about things that rarely happen and high anxiety levels. Through such inefficacious thinking children distress themselves and impair their level of performance. Those children with high efficacy in their ability to cope when exposed to same environmental phenomena are able to regulate avoidance behaviour, levels of stress, anxiety and other negative emotional proclivities. The stronger the sense of self-efficacy a child possess, the bolder he or she is in taking on taxing and threatening activities. Affective processes will shape a person's experiences in a given community of practice, influencing levels of participation through an ability to successfully adapt.

### ***Selection processes***

Efficacy beliefs can shape children's trajectories by influencing the types of activities and environments they choose to participate in, or alternatively put, those communities of practice children choose to involve themselves in. Children who possess a low sense of personal efficacy avoid challenging tasks due to their perceived inability to manage the array of obstacles they imagine they will encounter, have a weak commitment to the goals they pursue and following failure or setbacks, are slow to recover any belief they did have in their capabilities. Such children may explicitly choose not to participate in given communities of practice, locating themselves on the margins or excluding themselves altogether. In a classroom community of practice, such children may be perceived as lazy, uninterested and distracted. In contrast, a high sense of self-efficacy serves to foster a child's interest in activities of a diverse nature, where he or she approaches difficult tasks as a challenge to be accomplished rather than a threat to be avoided. Such children maintain strong commitment to challenging goals which they set for themselves, sustain heightened effort in the face of difficulties and recover quickly after any setbacks or failures to perform. Children with high self-efficacy beliefs may actively seek to become full members in many communities. In the social space of the classroom, such children may thrive in the challenges presented by the practices of that particular community and may in turn, be perceived by teaching staff as driven, engaged, committed and hardworking. Clearly, personal efficacy beliefs have massive implications for a child's level of participation in learning activities and his or her commitment to academic pursuits. He or she needs a robust sense of personal efficacy to sustain the perseverant effort needed to academically succeed and overcome learning obstacles in the school setting.

<b>Appendix 2.J</b>	<b>Items taken from self-report measures exploring the role of self- efficacy in academic settings</b>
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*Adapted from: Pajares 1996*

<b>Measurement of self-efficacy beliefs</b>
<p><b>Pajares and Miller (1994)</b> <i>Mathematics problem-solving self-efficacy</i></p> <p><i>Item:</i> How confident are you that you could give the correct answer to the following problem without using a calculator?</p> <p>Twenty algebra or geometry problems listed. For example, 'simplify: <math>-6[x + (-7y)] + (-5)(3x - y)</math>'</p> <p><i>Measurement:</i> Likert scale marked 1 to 6 with intervals of 1. No confidence indicated by 1 and complete confidence indicated by 6</p>
<p><b>Shell, Colvin and Bruning (1995)</b> <i>Self-efficacy for reading tasks</i></p> <p><i>Item:</i> How confident are you that you can perform each of the following reading tasks.</p> <p>Eighteen tasks presented. For example, 'read a letter from a friend'</p> <p><i>Measurement:</i> Likert scale marked 1 to 5 with intervals of 1. I'm sure I can indicated by 1 and I'm sure I can't indicated by 5.</p>
<p><b>Shell, Murphy and Bruning (1989)</b> <i>Self-efficacy for writing skills</i></p> <p><i>Item:</i> How confident are you that you can perform each of the following writing skills</p> <p>Eight skills presented. For example, 'correctly spell all words in a one page passage'</p> <p><i>Measurement:</i> Likert scale marked 0 to 100; students write the specific number</p>

**Adapted from:** Bandura (1997)

*Beech Grove primary school can be characterised as highly efficacious. High expectations and standards of attainment pervade the practices of this community. All members of teaching staff regard their pupils as capable of high achievement; they set challenging academic targets and reward pupil attainment and development. It is recognised that high standards alone do not accomplish much and can in fact, be demoralising unless learning activities are structured and conducted in ways that ensure they will be mastered. At Beech Grove, teachers' accept their responsibility for instructing pupils and ensure they attain appropriate marks; low inherent ability or difficult pupil backgrounds are not accepted as reasons for poor attainment. Smaller group instruction is often utilised as a method to accelerate the learning of selected pupils in order to cover any gaps in their knowledge or understanding to enable them to rejoin mainstream lessons. Exclusion on a long term basis is not an accepted practice within this school community. The Head teacher of Beech Grove serves not only in an administrative role but continually seeks ways to improve instruction, boost morale, and work around stifling policies and regulations that may be construed as impeding academic innovativeness. The story painted for staff and pupils comprising Willow Road primary school community, is very different. Willow Road primary school is renowned for being a low achieving school. Teachers here spend limited time actively teaching and monitoring pupils' academic progress as they believe a large proportion of the pupil population is uneducable. Unsurprisingly, pupils attending Willow primary school experience a high sense of academic futility. Practices at the school see pupils stratified into academic paths orientated toward particular vocations. Teachers spend a greater proportion of time taking the role of disciplinarian in order to maintain order in the classroom, thus leaving less time for teachers to engage in academic instruction of their pupils. Pupils who struggle with class work are taught in separate smaller groups, predominantly away from mainstream groups where less is expected of them academically. They remain segregated from mainstream classes and lessons as they fail further behind.*

<b>Appendix 3.A</b>	<b>The multiplicity of decisions inherent in undertaking ethnographic fieldwork</b>
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***The amount of time to spend in the field***

Given the diverse applications of ethnography across disciplines and the differing goals of the researchers involved, the amount of time spent in the field can range considerably. Indeed, there are no definitive rules which specify the amount of time a researcher should spend in the field (Spindler and Spindler, 1992). Nonetheless, the extent of time spent on site inevitably impacts on data collection and can thus make a difference to what the ethnographer might find. Thus, the onus is on the researcher to decide how much time is sufficient to access the experiences and meanings of those he or she seeks to understand.

***Establishing and sustaining relations with people in the research field***

The goal of ethnography can be defined as an attempt to grasp the 'native's point of view, his relation to life, to realise his vision of his world' (Malinowski, 1922: 55). However, whilst immersed in the field, one cannot truly go native (Pearson, 1993). Rather, access to the social world from the insider viewpoint is dependent on the nature of the relations the researcher forms with people in the field, as this ultimately impacts on the richness of the data he or she can gather. Essentially positioned as an outsider, the act of getting to know people and actively participating in the social processes and practices of a given community or culture is more difficult to accomplish than is commonly recognised (Geertz, 1973). In a quest for authenticity, any ethnographer embarking on field research is thus required to give careful consideration to the process of establishing and maintaining access and rapport with those in the particular community being studied. Access is not simply a matter of the researcher's physical presence or absence in the field, nor is it about merely granting or withholding permission for the study to take place; access is an ongoing process of negotiation (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). In terms of the research agenda, the ethnographer is required to negotiate the successive acts of entering, staying in, surviving and getting out of the research field (Pearson, 1993). Quitting the research field is often an emotional experience. As a researcher, one will have inevitably invested much time and effort in building relationships and upon leaving and returning to the academic field, many of these relationships come to an end (although this is not an inevitable outcome for all). In those circumstances where relationships are terminated upon the completion of fieldwork, it heightens awareness of their instrumental and exploitive character (Rock, 2001). After attaining the necessary knowledge and understanding in the field, the researcher leaves, seeking to ultimately share or expose it to the rest of the world via published and presented ethnographic accounts.

***Levels of participation***

Participant observation is the primary research tool of the ethnographic approach. Given the multiple levels of participation the ethnographer can adopt in the chosen setting, he or she must decide at what level he or she will become involved. Will the researcher limit his or her role to observer or would this serve to constrain the richness of the data that could be gathered. Does the researcher become part of the field, adopting the practices of the community being studied or would his or her presence unduly compromise the data and undermine the notion of objectivity?

***The nature of the data in the field:***

In doing ethnography, to what extent does the researcher choose to rely on the use of fieldnotes and/or headnotes? Are they viewed as integral to practice or deemed suitable only for the novice? In the act of recording fieldnotes, one needs to make decisions regarding their form, their content and when and where they will be written.

***Detail of the data***

It is impossible to record all the data acquired in the course of fieldwork. Thus in recording fieldnotes, one must decide what detail to include and in turn what to exclude (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). Does the researcher aim to solely capture the descriptions of social process and

contexts which he or she observes? Or, does the researcher choose to include his or her own actions, questions, reflections and feelings? Are the latter recorded in a separate diary or journal because the researcher believes there is a distinction between writings pertaining to others and those pertaining to him or herself (Emerson et al, 1995)?

### ***Methods of analysis***

There are multiple techniques which can be employed to undertake analysis of ethnographic data, how does the researcher choose which is most appropriate? Whichever method of analysis is selected to review and reorganise fieldnotes amassed, each serves as an additional lens to that used by the researcher when gathering the data in the research field.

### ***Issues of representation***

As a researcher, does one accord with realist theory and believe there is an independent reality that one can capture through being immersed in the field and experiencing it first hand? If so, the overarching aim is to construct accounts that correspond with this reality, drawing on field data which is thought to be an objective reflection of the phenomenon studied (Hammersley, 1992). In this scenario, one may always question the efficacy of the researcher's fieldnotes in making his or her interpretational claims of this independent reality. Alternatively, a researcher may adhere to the view of social constructivism in which the social world is thought to be constructed through people's interpretations of it and their actions based on these interpretations. Following this line of thought, there is not one reality, but multiple versions of it (Hammersley, 1992). In attempts by the ethnographer to access the beliefs and understandings of others' whilst in the field, these multiple perspectives can be documented. According to this approach, any data gathered and used by ethnographers is thus a product of their participation in the social encounters of the field, data which is further constructed in the process of analysis and the production of ethnographic accounts. Thus, any written tales of the field do not represent an independent true reality but constitute one version of the world amongst others.

Another issue of representation is the notion of 'voice'. A major strength of the ethnographic approach is the claim to authenticity (Pearson, 1993) achieved through attempts to understand another way of live from the native's point of view (Spradley, 1979). However, in writing an ethnographic account, one may question whether a researcher can truly represent another's story. Whilst much emphasis is placed on giving voice to the participants of qualitative research including that stemming from ethnographic field research, this notion can be challenged on a number of levels (Stivaros, 2004). Firstly, in analysis of data, theory is typically employed to understand participants' experiences and in so doing, researchers inevitably reconstruct those experiences. In addition, many authors look at the meanings which underpin 'the voice', rather than report the voice per se. It is also clear that voice is mediated through the interaction between researcher and participant and as such, one of many possible stories emerges. Accordingly, the material conveyed in tales of the field is always a selection, the researcher's and that shared by the persons being studied. Whilst the ethnographic approach may establish a space for the story of others' to be heard, one may question if a story can only be articulated authentically by the person him or herself. In which case any other voice, including that of the researcher, would serve to detract from this authenticity (Gubrium and Holstein, 2002). As pointed out by Rock (2001), the ultimate authority on a particular person's life and actions must be the person him or herself; the ethnographer whilst spending a prolonged time in the field, will have but a fleeting glimpse of matters known.

In qualitative studies the researcher lens has a prominent impact on the narrative heard, as it underpins every stage of the research process from initial aim to dissemination of findings (Stivaros, 2004). In the ethnographic approach it influences: the researcher's choice of community and people therein which he or she wishes to learn from, the research methods employed, the events in the field observed and ignored, the way in which the emerging data is understood and the theoretical framework drawn on to interpret the data. As such, there resides considerable power with the researcher in the formation of narrative accounts. This renders the notion of 'giving voice' to research participants more complex than it would first appear. Written tales of the field represent an understanding of the social reality of others, through the analysis of

the researcher's own experience in their social world (Van Maanen, 1988) rather than specifically 'giving voice to others' in the field. Whilst polished accounts are committed in some measure to reconstructing the view of the participants and seeks to be faithful to their everyday experiences, it is in the end, the researcher's voice which is ultimately heard.

#### ***Ethical considerations:***

Research undertaken in most disciplines today is directed by a body of ethical guidelines. For example, when conducting research involving human participants, the British Psychological Society (BPS) revised Code of Conduct, Ethical Principles and Guidelines (1993) is the primary ethical resource within the discipline of psychology. However, given the diversity in research topics, aims, participants and methods, guidelines can only ever serve as a general rather than a specific aid. As such, the researcher will be required to manage ethical dilemmas as they arise in the field. This is particularly evident in qualitative studies, where research is fluid and dynamic in nature rather than static and fixed. Punch (1994) describes the area of ethics as a swamp, noting that in the process of conducting field research one typically encounters a number of unanticipated difficulties. Hence, one definitive map cannot be provided for every researcher; rather, every individual has to trace his or her own path through the swamp. In undertaking ethnographic field research, issues surrounding notions of access, consent, confidentiality, trust and relationship building are typically ongoing. Most decisions regarding ethical issues are dependent on the researcher's personal perception of the field situation at a given point in time, a perception which is shaped by the researcher's beliefs and his or her interactions with those being observed. This situational complexity can be further heightened through dual role tensions and working with those groups labelled vulnerable (for example, children). Thus, in terms of managing the ongoing occurrence of ethical dilemmas, the researcher is his or her own primary instrument in the research context and he or she must be sensitive to the needs of others.

#### ***Acknowledging the influence of the researcher***

In carrying out field research, to what extent does the researcher seek to eliminate or minimise the effects of his or her presence on the data gathered? Does his or she believe any effects or resulting bias could be isolated? Or does the researcher believe any attempts would be futile, acknowledging that he or she is not a neutral vessel of cultural experience (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983) but an active member of the social world being studied? In these terms, perhaps the ethnographer chooses to set about understanding the effects of his or her presence and participation in the field, choosing to exploit others' reactivity as a source of data. In choosing to embrace or deny the effects of the ethnographer on the research process, notions of reflexivity also come into play here. To what extent does the practitioner seek to be reflexive throughout the research process? It is thought to aid or hinder his or her role in the field? Should reflexive thoughts be given emphasis in ethnographic accounts as a means of insight for fellow researchers or should they be relegated to the appendices as they are unworthy of audience attention?

In chapter one, I outlined my ontological and epistemological beliefs as a researcher. What are the implications of my philosophical standpoint in terms of carrying out this research? Firstly, I maintain that our existence cannot be divorced from the context in which we reside. If that all experiences are embedded, it follows that research must be undertaken in situ rather than be studied in isolation in the laboratory or office. Secondly, in acknowledging the uniqueness of each child's world and experiences, I posit a notion of development and learning which is different for each child. Thus, the provision of uniform goals and prescriptions of child development is neither desirable nor helpful.

I believe that stakeholders can only gain insight into the complexities of the learning process through accessing the individual's perspective and giving prominence to the role of subjective experience. A task which I believe is more suited to a qualitative rather than a quantitative approach. Less constrained by the traditional science paradigm, qualitative practice perceives the notion of subjectivity, exemplified through knowledge, experience and interpretation, as a strength rather than a limitation (Keegan, 2006). Given the uniqueness of the development process and learning journey, the perspective of the learner is invaluable. Whilst I acknowledge that we can only ever have partial understanding of that which goes on around us, it is nonetheless critical and representative of our experiences. After all, the ultimate authority on a person's life and actions is the person him/herself and in this respect s/he can provide a rich source of material pertaining to personal experiences; insight which could not otherwise be accessed by the researcher. However, whilst this information is necessary to gain an understanding of the learning process, it is not sufficient. This data alone provides an incomplete understanding of the learning experience. In that development and learning are wider phenomenon, encompassing the individual and multiple settings in which s/he is embedded, the researcher must look beyond the focal person in order to gain a fuller understanding of the intricacies involved; supplementing personal data with that pertaining to the myriad factors operating in his/her wider environment. Herein, lies the value of others' perspectives; their understanding permits exploration of influences operating in the wider systems of Bronfenbrenner's theoretical framework.

When undertaking any research endeavour, I believe that the practitioner is able to gain a more holistic picture of the phenomenon being studied, by accessing material pertaining to each of the systems comprising Bronfenbrenner's model. This has implications for the methodology a researcher can choose, as only certain methods are able to fulfil such parameters. For example, interviews are very effective in accessing information regarding a person's microsystems but perhaps less useful in collecting data concerning their exosystems or macrosystem. Similarly, participation observation is useful for accessing material pertaining to micro-, meso- and exo- systems but again, is of limited use in terms of the macrosystem. In this sense, drawing on a multiplicity of research methods serves to benefit the researcher in that they enable him or her to gain insight into factors operating in each of the systems. Herein, lies the value of ethnography; this approach is able to capture the complexity of the constellation of forces shaping the learning journey of a particular child. As a form of analyses, story narratives further facilitate the researcher's ability to capture a more holistic picture of the learning journey because data pertaining to each of the embedded systems can usefully be presented.

The above discussion has sought to trace the impact of my ontological and epistemological position upon the decisions and actions I have undertaken during the course of this research endeavour. Although not exhaustive, it has illuminated a number of areas which have clearly been shaped in light of my philosophical position, these include: my choice of theoretical frameworks, my use of a qualitative approach, the integration of ethnographic methodology, the form of data analyses and presentation. Although rarely made explicit, outlining one's philosophical standpoint as researcher aids the insight of both reader and practitioner in the research endeavour.

<b>Appendix 3.C</b>	<b>The mainstream model of research with children in the field of developmental psychology</b>
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<i>Adapted from: Hogan (2005)</i>		
<b>Ontology</b> <i>Assumptions about children and childhood</i>	<b>Epistemology</b> <i>Assumptions about research with children</i>	<b>Methodology</b> <i>Applications in research with children</i>
Context-free	Research leads to information about the 'true' nature of the child	The effects of a child's context can be controlled or neutralised.
Predictable	A focus on the generation of universal laws of child development	Use of standardised tests and measures. Transgression from normative models labelled as deviant.
Irrelevant	Higher value attached to adult reports than children's	The voice of adult stakeholders is most often sought in the exploration and welfare of children's lives.
<b>The child is positioned as an object of research</b>		

As illustrated above, there are three ontological arguments about the nature of children which underpin the mainstream model; each is reflected in particular epistemological positions and methodological approaches. Firstly, it is maintained that children exist independent of the world in which they live. Conceptualised as context-free entities, many practitioners work from the premise that children function chiefly at an individual level. Herein lies a core epistemological belief: the effects of context, be it relationships, community of practice, culture, time in history etc. can be controlled or neutralised, in turn, allowing the 'true' child to emerge (Hogan, 2005). Methodologically, many of a child's abilities and behaviours can effectively be studied in the laboratory or office setting because they are isolable from the social world in which s/he resides. This standpoint reflects the assumption that there exists a real rather than socially constructed world; a notion which stems from the positivist paradigm such as that embodied in the behaviourist approach. With little interest in understanding the nature of relations between the child and the factors shaping his/her world, the child alone, becomes the sole focus. Subject to the manipulation of the researcher, it is assumed that the psychological and physical characteristics of the child can be objectively recorded and interpreted by the detached and neutral researcher. In adopting this methodological approach, little if any consideration, is

given to the child's personal understanding and response to the research process; insight which critics state, inevitably has implications for data gathering, analysis and presentation.

Preoccupied with documenting age-related skills and understanding, developmental psychologists seek to discover the factors most likely to ensure competency and positive functioning throughout adult life. This in turn, has led to the search for globally applicable laws of child development which progress in a natural and linear sequence; laws which have become embodied in normative models (for example, Piaget's theory of intellectual development outlined in chapter one). Considered to be invariant, universal and all-encompassing, these laws of child development are thought to operate independently of both cultural context and historical time. Herein, lies the second ontological principle of the mainstream model: the notion of children as predictable. It assumed that the phenomenon of childhood is already known to adult practitioners because the process of children's cognitive and physical development follows a preordained path of successive steps; a journey which they themselves have already experienced. The cornerstone of universal laws is reflected in the prominent use of standardised tests and measures, drawn on by researchers irrespective of time, place or participant pool. These instruments permit the comparison of children to the normative model, where any evidence of transgression is typically labelled as deviant.

The third ontological viewpoint which underpins the mainstream model is the conceptualisation of the child as irrelevant; a vision which implies children per se, have little to offer the research process. There are several strands to this overarching ontological premise. Firstly, children are characterised as unformed persons; adults-in-the-making rather than persons in their own right in whom stakeholders should be interested. Indeed, as Christensen and Prout (2005) point out, in many societies the child is valued for their potential and for what they will grow up to be but are devalued in terms of their present perspectives and experiences. They are perceived to be intellectually immature and incompetent (Mandell, 1991) and thus ill-equipped to understand the aims of the research study and the ramifications of their involvement in it. In turn, they are unable to provide informed consent to participate, a responsibility which falls to those in *loco parentis*. Secondly, children are considered to be passive receptors of socialisation rather than active agents who manage and negotiate their own experiences and in turn, shape those of others. Possessing little power, they are assumed to be vulnerable, innocent and dependent on others. Thirdly, children are thought of as unreliable informants as they

cannot credibly or consistently provide information about events or experiences. Indeed, any material ascertained from children for research purposes is often viewed with scepticism unless it concurs with the report or standpoint of an adult. In exhibiting a degree of overlap with an adults 'true and accurate' account, the child's narration undergoes a metamorphosis, becoming both a reliable and valid source of information. Nonetheless, with the child perceived as irrelevant, it is voice of adult stakeholders which is most often sought in the exploration and welfare of children's lives (Christensen and Prout, 2002). In such studies the child's voice is often presented as background noise in an arena where the main players are adult caregivers, parents or teachers etc. In the act of giving prominence to the voice of adult parties', the child is prevented from assuming the role of expert in his/her own life. Rather, it is the adult with his/her 'superior capacity for objectivity and more sophisticated understanding' (Hogan, 2005: 27) who becomes validated as an expert informant on the child. Devoid of the child's own perspective, such research clearly has limited scope.

In unison, these three ontological arguments underpin the mainstream model of research with children in the domain of developmental psychology. This is particularly apparent in a review of the research publications emanating from North America, where much of the work in this field takes place (*ibid.*). This mainstream model which has in the past, dominated the social sciences and currently continues to pervade developmental psychology in particular; presupposes a notion of the child as object. This conceptualisation stems from a positivist paradigm, exemplified powerfully in behaviourist theory. As outlined in chapter one, this approach positions the child as a passive recipient of knowledge and actions, where agency is viewed to be external and dependent. Perceived as an object of research, it is assumed that the researcher can learn all there is to know through rigorous examination of the child in a controlled environment. In favouring the collection of quantifiable data, the positivist approach relies principally on experimental, survey and objective testing methodologies which foresee the role of researcher as a distanced and neutral party, who is able to observe and record the 'truth'.

<b>Appendix 3.D</b>	<b>The philosophical standpoint underpinning my approach to undertaking research with children</b>
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<b>Ontology</b> <i>Assumptions about children and childhood</i>	<b>Epistemology</b> <i>Assumptions about research with children</i>	<b>Methodology</b> <i>Applications in research with children</i>
Childhood is contextually situated → it is socially, culturally and temporally specific.	Research permits insight into children's subjective experiences; these are shaped by the particular characteristics of his/her dynamic world.	To gain access to and understanding of children's quotidian experiences, researchers must acknowledge the importance of context and ensure studies are ecologically valid.
Development and learning experiences are unique and idiosyncratic.	Research leads to knowledge and understanding of the experiential lives of those particular parties' involved.	There exists no blanket approach to undertaking research with children. The researcher must work with the particular competencies of those involved and use tools and techniques to capture data accordingly.
Every child is perceived to be a unique and valued experiencer of his/her worlds.	Children's views form an integral aspect of any research which explores phenomena that shapes their lives.	Children can be considered 'a reservoir of expertise on their own lives' (Roberts, 2000). As such, practitioners must seek to access and hear the child's voice; giving it equal weight to those of adult stakeholders
<b>The child is positioned as a subject of research</b>		

The above reappraised ontology of children and childhood has significant ramifications for any research endeavour. Crucially, I believe that children are not all the same and moreover, do not proceed through a uniform development process. Rather, I believe that children encounter their worlds in an individual and idiosyncratic manner; worlds in themselves which are all different due to the dynamic nature of the factors working in each of the child's micro-, meso-, exo- and macro- systems. Researching children's experience implies a respect for each child as a unique and valued experiencer of his/her world. Notably, it illuminates that the voice of the child is a valuable commodity in any research endeavour and thus behoves researchers to give consideration to the pragmatics of accessing and understanding this voice. To achieve this, some practitioners may feel that the participation of children in the research process requires the use of special methods and tools of investigation. A review of the literature reveals practitioners have drawn on a

plethora of innovative and adapted techniques to enable a child to actively participate in tasks and enhance his/her ability to communicate (Hill, 1997); for example: drawings, photographs, diaries (Punch, 2002); the use of vignettes (Barter and Renold, 2000); questionnaires and interviews (Brannen, 2002); sentence completion and writing (Morrow 1999). In addition, Alderson (2000) has highlighted the growing body of literature in which children undertake projects adopting the role of researcher themselves. However, I do not believe that there is a particular body of tools or methods that will enable *all* children to express themselves. Rather, I propose it is more about developing a relationship with those involved in the research, be they children or adults, and working with their particular competencies, incorporating tools and techniques accordingly.

Positioned as a participant, the child is perceived to be a person with a comparable degree of agency as an adult; where the participation levels of both parties' is shaped by mediating factors operating in his/her world. In that there is diversity amongst all children there can be no blanket approach or universal answers to the methodological and ethical issues which stem from undertaking research with them. Rather, this notion implores practitioners to adopt more individualistic avenues of exploration, attuned to the specificity of the situation and the people involved. It is only in doing this, that researchers can facilitate participants to share their subjective experiences. This individualistic approach demands the use of methods that can capture the intricate nature of children's lives as lived, with research undertaken in the context of their everyday experiences rather than in a laboratory or office (Greene and Hill, 2005). To meet these requisite conditions, I consider ethnographic qualitative methods the most suited to enquiry into children's unique and individual encounters with their world; an approach which permits the illumination of the diversity of children's learning and development journeys.

This is a copy of my research proposal submitted to the Faculty's Research Degrees Committee at the Manchester Metropolitan University. Copies of this were given to the Head teacher and all members of Year 6 teaching staff.

### **AN ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF CHILDREN'S SCHOOL EXPERIENCES AND EDUCATIONAL OUTCOME**

**Student name:** Helen Stivaros

**Supervisory team:** Jane Tobbell, Rebecca Lawthom and Carolyn Kagan

#### **AIMS:**

1. To examine children's intra-psychological learning relationship
2. To explore the role of micro- and meso- systems on learning
3. To explore the role of exo- and macro- systems on learning
4. To explore the interrelationships of the micro- and meso- processes in view of exo- and macro- systems
5. To explore whether the literature available is applicable and helpful in understanding the themes arising from this research
6. To develop a range of methodologies appropriate to the multi-level theoretical framework

#### **RATIONALE:**

In the past psychology has tended to think about children from an individual perspective and success or otherwise in learning has been explained by reference to level of intelligence, motivation etc. However, more recent theories have acknowledged that learning is not just an individual experience but rather is influenced by the wider relationships that a child has (Pollard & Filer, 1996). Also, these relationships are mediated by the societal context in which they exist. This is reflected in the neo-Vygotskian framework that represents a radical shift "away from the notion of learners as isolated individuals who succeed or fail; by their own resources, towards a view of learning as a situated, culturally-contextualized activity," (Mercer 1994, p101).

Complementing the neo-Vygotskian approach, this research will also draw upon the bioecological model of Bronfenbrenner (1998). This framework conceptualises the environment as a set of four nested interdependent ecological systems, which contribute to the variance in an individual's behaviour. Consider a year six child. The child's experience at school is influenced by many interacting factors, including the interrelation between the micro and meso systems. For example the peer relationships the child has formed in the school, how the child manages her/his relationship with teachers and support staff and the home environment. Accordingly, Pollard and Filer (1996) suggested an important influence on the way in which a child comes to view herself, is how she is seen by others. The immediate school environment in the form of the governing body and the aims and objectives of the school, will further impact upon the child's school experience. Moreover the school exists in an embedded context. Thus school policies and procedures are influenced by governmental policy, in terms of, funding, the national curriculum etc; LEA support services; wider cultural norms and expectations of the immediate community. This reflects the interrelating roles of the exo and macro systems.

This research proposal will attempt to address the myriad interacting factors by setting a child's relationships in a wider context. Complementing Bronfenbrenner's model, the framework of Talbert and McLaughlin (1999) will be incorporated. This conceptualises the classroom at the core of the multiple embedded contexts of schooling. Talbert and McLaughlin (1999) postulated "that the meaning and effects of school-context conditions are embedded in individual and community values, beliefs and standards for teaching and learning." (p205). They identify three theoretical lenses through which the school setting can be explored.

So, to understand the child and her/his experiences it follows that all the levels of influence should be considered. The focus of this research is the school environment, so the experiences of the child will be considered within the context of educational outcome. However, it is acknowledged that this is a problematic term in that it can be operationalised in many different ways. For one child a good outcome may constitute progress made in forming relationships with peers whilst for another child it may be gaining a level 5 in the SATs. So to properly explore the child's experience, individual and societal understanding of educational outcome must be examined.

#### **METHOD:**

It is proposed that a qualitative approach be used, as this will best enable the collection of data, which reflects the child's experiences. An ethnographic methodology is envisaged. Specifically the following approaches will be used:

- ◆ Participant observation – Through my role as classroom assistant I will gather information in the form of field and head notes. (Aims 1, 2, 3)
- ◆ Interviews – children, teachers, parents and other stakeholders will be interviewed using a semi-structured technique. Interviews will be transcribed and thematically analysed. (Aims 1, 2, 3, 4).
- ◆ Analysis of children's work – collecting examples of work across the different subject areas through the year. (Aim 1)
- ◆ Document analysis – reading and analysing relevant documentation such as government policies, the national curriculum. (Aims 4, 5)
- ◆ Qualitative mapping – a technique which allows the researcher to investigate children's experiences. (Aim 1, 2)

#### **ETHICS:**

Research will conform to BPS ethical guidelines. The consent of children, parents, school staff and governors will be sought. With reference to children's participation, informed consent will be sought from children and parents/carers. This will be achieved via a letter explaining the research and a written consent form (Greig & Taylor, 1999). Through my dual role as researcher and classroom assistant, I may obtain evidence of psychological or physical problems a participant is experiencing, particularly a child (Graue & Walsh, 1998). If this situation arises, caution will be exercised and the appropriate source of professional advice will be sought. At the outset, I will explain to child participants that anything said in our time together would be confidential. However if they told me anything threatening their well being, I would have to take it out of our meeting together and discuss the information with my supervisor.

#### **PARTICIPANTS:**

Eight year six children; parents/carers; teachers; head teacher; school governing body and local educational authority representatives

**OUTCOMES:**

It is proposed the research will have multi-level implications and may be drawn on to inform a number of areas: government educational policies, primary school policies and teacher training.

**REFERENCES:**

BPS Code of Conduct, Ethical Principles and Guidelines (2000)

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<b>Appendix 4.B</b>	<b>Ethics check form</b>
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Here I detail my application for ethical clearance from the Departmental Ethics Committee, Department of Psychology and Speech Pathology at the Manchester Metropolitan University. Below is a copy of my submitted ethical check form. I have typed up the original handwritten submission, omitting any details which permit identification of the school and parties involved and in their place, using pseudonyms.

<b>Name of investigator:</b>	Helen Stivaros
<b>Collaborating organisation:</b>	.....Primary School
<b>Title of research:</b>	An ecological perspective of children's school experiences and educational outcome
<b>Supervisory team:</b>	Jane Tobbell, Rebecca Lawthom and Carolyn Kagan.
<b>Give a brief statement of the aim and method:</b>	
<p>This research aims to contribute to the understanding of children's learning experiences at primary school. It will explore the myriad interacting factors in operation, which serve to shape children's day-to-day experiences. This includes wider relationships that a child has, with peers, teaching staff, parents and carers. It will seek to identify the nature of the embedded context in which the school exists; both underlying structures within the educational system and society as a whole. A qualitative approach will be utilised, incorporating ethnographic methodology. This research will draw on the use of participant observation, interviews, conversations, analysis of children's work, document analysis and qualitative mapping.</p>	
<b>Describe briefly the arrangements for briefing potential participants</b>	
<p>The focal members of school staff and the representatives of the governing body and local educational authority will each be given a copy of the research proposal (see attached). They will have the opportunity to clarify their understanding of the research and ask any questions before their consent to participate is sought (see attached). Parents and carers of the focal children will receive a letter via the school, explaining the rationale behind my research and what it entails (see attached). They will be invited to meet with me to discuss the study further before giving their consent for their child to participate in the study (see attached). Children will be briefed through informal chats and again, written consent sought (see attached). All participants will be informed of their right to withdraw from the research at any time. Confidentiality limits and steps taken to address issues of anonymity will be explained.</p>	
<b>Describe briefly the arrangements for obtaining participants consent. Include a copy of the information they will be given before the study and a written consent form where this is appropriate.</b>	
<p>The consent of children, parents and carers, school staff and other stakeholders will be sought. With regards to the children's participation, informed consent from both the children themselves and their parents or carers will be sought. This will be achieved via a letter explaining the research and a written consent form (see attached).</p>	
<b>Are the participants able to provide informed consent?</b>	
<p>Child participants: no  Adult participants: yes</p>	
<b>If the answer is NO, what arrangements have been made to obtain approval from parents, representatives or advocates?</b>	
<p>The consent of each child participant will be sought alongside their parents or carers approval via a written consent form</p>	

<p><b>Does the research present any risk, other than that expected in the course of normal life, for the physical or mental well-being of the participants?</b></p> <p>No</p>
<p><b>Does the research present any risk to you as the researcher?</b></p> <p>No</p>
<p><b>Is deception (including withholding information) involved?</b></p> <p>No</p>
<p><b>Is invasion of privacy involved?</b></p> <p>Yes</p> <p><b>If the answer is YES, explain why it is needed.</b></p> <p>I have no intention of invading participant's privacy. Rather, I seek to absorb the classroom milieu. Details pertaining to participants private lives maybe revealed during informal chats.</p>
<p><b>Describe briefly the arrangements for debriefing participants:</b></p> <p><i>Adult participants:</i> I will offer to prepare and give a presentation to all participants about the research; discussing the rationale of the study, what I found, what conclusions may be drawn and how these may be applied pragmatically. This is an opportunity to clarify any misconceptions of the research.</p> <p><i>Child participants:</i> To debrief child participants I intend to have an informal discussion about my research; detailing what I found from my work with them and the importance of several of the emerging factors in everyday life.</p>
<p><b>Will the data on every individual be anonymous?</b></p> <p>Yes</p>
<p><b>Research data cannot be kept entirely confidential because it must be available for discussion within the research team. What steps have been taken to warn participants before they take part in the study?</b></p> <p>It will be explained to all participants within the briefing, the limits of confidentiality that can be maintained. That is, information will be discussed in supervision session and will be made available in the academic arena in the form of this thesis and research papers. It will be emphasised that every effort will be made to preserve the anonymity of the participants and school.</p>
<p><b>What secure storage of data has been arranged?</b></p> <p>All fieldnotes will be held securely and computer files will be password protected.</p>
<p><b>In order to gain access to participants, will you have to gain clearance from an external Ethical Committee?</b></p> <p>No</p>
<p><b>Are your results likely to be of interest to your participants?</b></p> <p>Yes</p> <p><b>If YES, please explain how your research findings will be communicated to your participants.</b></p> <p>Upon completion, I will offer focal children, parents and teaching staff a written summary of my research.</p>

Dear Kathryn,

**Re: clarification of school participation within my research**

I am writing to clarify the involvement and role of Roseberry Hill Primary school within my current research. The research project is guided and supervised by members of staff within the psychology department at the Manchester Metropolitan University. As such, my research has to meet certain criteria discussed in ongoing supervision sessions, to satisfy the Faculty Research Degrees Committee and the Departmental Ethics Committee.

The attached research proposal explains the aims and intentions of my research. As stated, the consent of children, parents, school staff and governors will be sought. With reference to children's participation, informed consent will be sought from children and parents/carers. This will be achieved via a letter explaining the research and a written consent form. Through my dual role as researcher and classroom assistant, I may obtain evidence of psychological or physical problems a child participant is experiencing. If this situation arises, caution will be exercised and the appropriate source of professional advice will be sought. At the outset, I will explain to children that anything said in our time together will be anonymous. However if they told me anything threatening their well being, I would have to take it out of our meeting together and discuss the information with my supervisors. All participants will be informed of the objectives of the study. It will be emphasised that participants have the right to withdraw any consent given to participate in the research and can request for their data to be destroyed at any time. Participants will be informed that every effort will be made to preserve their anonymity.

Alongside my role as classroom assistant, my role as a researcher will involve the absorption and observation of the classroom milieu and school setting. Thus the research will not involve intervention work.

Please can you stamp, sign and date the attached research proposal to confirm you are aware and approve of the research being conducted in your school. I have enclosed two copies, so a copy may be kept for future reference. In addition, I would be grateful if you could write a letter confirming the role of the school as a collaborating organisation within my research, in terms of providing the research setting.

Should you have any queries or seek confirmation on any of the above issues, please do not hesitate to contact my research supervisors:

Jane Tobbell (0161) 247 2564  
Rebecca Lawthom (0161) 247 2559

Yours sincerely,

Helen Stivaros

Addressed to appropriate member of staff (Sophie, Gillian or Alison),

As you are already aware, alongside my post at classroom assistant, I am also a part-time postgraduate student in the psychology department at the Manchester Metropolitan University. As part of my M.Phil. studies and to contribute towards a Ph.D., I am carrying out research which explores the embedded nature of children's learning experiences. The attached research proposal explains the nature of this research in greater detail. My research study has now gained ethical approval from the Departmental Ethics Committee at the university and once I have ascertained written consent from all parties' involved, I am permitted to start my data collection.

I have already approached Kathryn as Head teacher of Roseberry Hill, to confirm that she is both aware of and approves of the research being carried out. She has given her consent for the research to take place and confirmed the status of Roseberry Hill as a collaborating organisation in my research project. The next step is to gain your consent before I approach individual parents/carers and children.

Most of my data collection will take place during lesson time, where I will record the day-to-day activities of teaching staff and pupils in the classroom. I intend to observe the behaviour of focal children, noting their levels of involvement and any progress made throughout the year, both socially and academically. I perceive the children as active participants in the research process and as such want them to be involved. With your permission, I will endeavour to undertake some research activities with the children outside lesson time, for example, diary writing. I appreciate that lesson time in Year 6 is precious because of the heavy work load and I will try and keep this to a minimum.

At some point during this year I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss with you, your personal philosophy and approach to teaching and learning. I would be grateful if you could complete the attached 'research contract' and return it to me as soon as possible.

Many thanks,

Helen.

<b>Appendix 4.E</b>	<b>Research contract</b>
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*Distributed to all adult participants*

This form seeks to obtain informed consent from you, as a participant, involved in the research entitled ‘An ecological perspective of children’s school experiences and educational outcome.’ The research aims to contribute to the understanding of the child’s experience at primary school. It will explore the myriad interacting factors influencing a child’s experience. This includes wider relationships that a child has, with peers, teachers, school support staff and parents/carers. It will seek to identify the nature of the embedded context in which the school exists: both underlying structures within the educational system and society as a whole.

Several different research methods will be utilised to enable the collection of data. These will include participant observation, interviews and analysis of children’s work and documents.

As a research participant, neither your identity, nor that of the primary school, will be revealed in the research write-up or to any other party but the researcher and her supervisors at the university. There are limits to the confidentiality that can be maintained. The research will be available for a number of other people to access, including those within the academic community.

As a participant you have the right to stop participating at any time. You have the right to withdraw whilst the data is being collected and the right to withdraw the collected data, from the researcher prior to or post analysis.

In signing this form, it indicates you understand the research project and what it entails for you as a participant. It acknowledges that the researcher has discussed the consent form with you. Furthermore, that she has also discussed any areas or details to which you have sought clarification. The transcriptions of the interview(s) you have been involved in are available for you to read through and amend if you wish. Access to the analyses and conclusions of the research can be discussed with the researcher.

PARTICIPANT’S SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

PRINT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ROLE OF PARTICIPANT:  
(parent/carer, teacher etc) \_\_\_\_\_

DATE : \_\_\_\_\_

*Written on school head paper and distributed to parents/carers of all focal children*

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am a full-time classroom assistant working alongside children in Year 6 at Roseberry Hill Primary School. I am also studying for a M.Phil degree at the Manchester Metropolitan University and this involves carrying out research. My research is based on the exploration of children's school experiences and your child has been selected to participate in this study.

The proposed research has satisfied the criteria outlined by the ethics committee within the psychology department at the university. In addition, the Head teacher, Ms. Thompson has approved for this research to be carried out at Roseberry Hill. Alongside, this, I required the consent of Parents/Carers to confirm you approve of your child participating in this research.

Should you agree to your child participating in my research, he or she will be involved in informal discussions and observation work. My research does not involve any testing whatsoever; rather, it is about the absorption of children's experiences. Thus, the research will not involve intervention work and will not infringe upon your children's time in class.

All participants have the right to withdraw any consent given to participate in the research and can request for their data to be destroyed at any time. Measures will be taken to ensure anonymity of participants and the school. The information gathered will not be confidential as it will constitute an element of my research reports in the academic community.

Please sign and date the attached consent form to confirm you are both aware and approve of your child taking part in my research.

Should you have any queries or seek confirmation on any of the above issues, please do not hesitate to contact myself at the school, or my research supervisors at the university:

Jane Tobbell (0161) 247 2564  
Rebecca Lawthorn (0161) 247 2559

Yours sincerely,

Helen Stivaros

## INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Dear Helen,

I am aware and approve of my child \_\_\_\_\_ taking part in your research project.

Parents/Carers signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

As part of Helen's university homework, she is writing a book about how children feel about school and how children learn. For this, she needs to ask children questions and watch them in lesson time.

Helen has asked me to take part in her university homework. I understand that Helen will not repeat anything we have talked about together, to anybody else, unless she is worried about me. If Helen speaks to somebody else about me, she will tell me before she talks with them.

I know that she will talk to her teachers at university about her homework and what we talk about, but she will not use my real name. I understand my name will not be written down in her book.

Helen has explained to me I can stop taking part in her homework at any time.

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I agree to take part in Helen's university homework.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

*Discussion work*

I decided to start by setting the scene; looking at broader notions of research before focusing on the particulars of the study. Initiating discussion, I asked the children if they could explain to me what the term ‘research’ meant. With several children volunteering answers, we moved on to talk about some the different methods that could be used to gather information; again I asked for the children’s input. Emphasising the importance of their understanding, I sought to ensure that the children further queried any points which remained unclear to them. Initially, they seemed reluctant to seek clarification. This was perhaps because the format of the research discussion was so unlike that of a typical class lesson in that I sought a lot more vocal participation. As the children responded increasingly to my questions, their confidence grew and they seemed more at ease with the situation; in turn, they began to initiate conversation. For example, a number of the children were curious about what the term psychology meant and what it was like to be at university.

*Written work*

Upon being given this task without prior warning, some of the children became panicked. The exercise required their independent thought and action and *all* of the children in the research group expressed concern about getting their answers ‘wrong.’ Despite being reminded on repeated occasions that there was no right or wrong answers, every child sought constant reassurance from me that their work was ‘okay.’ A subsequent review of the children’s work showed that their understandings were not uniform; with some issues much clearer than others. In terms of the first issue ‘*understandings of research,*’ the

children's comments were insightful. Some talked about research in general and others focused more on the specifics of the research study, highlighting my focus on children's learning and noting down some of the key research methods which I sought to utilise.

### The focal children's understanding of research

- ◆ **Daniel:** 'I think Helen is working on cicology and cicology means looking how children work.'
- ◆ **Leanne:** 'I think Helen is learning how our mind works. She researching about us and is going to ask us questions and watch us about our work and how we can improve and if we understand. Research is finding out information by looking on the internet or in books or by asking us.'
- ◆ **Tariq:** 'I think Helen is doing psycology on kids. research on them so she knows how kids learn.'
- ◆ **Beth:** 'Helen is doing a reserch (finding out) about how kids work and learn and phycology.'
- ◆ **Isabel:** 'I think that Helen is doing a research on how children learn. Research is where you find loads of information. Helen is watching and asking us questions during lessons.'
- ◆ **Jaleela:** 'I understand Helen when she told me that I had to complete this work and she is doing a research on children and how they learn. Helen will talk to us in lessons and answer are questions she will also watch us and tell us things we did not know.'
- ◆ **Roberto:** 'I think Helen is doing a reasearch on children for her university. Reasearch is getting information from something or someone. Helen is doing this so she knows how we are learning and this is for university so she gets an A+. Helen will be watching us now and then and asking us questions.'
- ◆ **Charlotte:** 'I think Helen will ask us questions about how we learn and about out learning. Helen is doing research on how children learn for university. Research is when you find out about something.'

In an adult-dominated society, the child possesses limited power and these dynamics are mirrored in teacher-pupil relations in the primary school setting (Devine, 2002). The child is positioned as subordinate in the school, where teaching staff control and organise pupils' space, movements, activities and interactions. Mindful that the dual nature of my research/work role had the potential to make any decisions regarding participation difficult, it was necessary to made it explicit to the children that their participation was not compulsory. In reviewing their written work it was apparent that each child was aware that

participation was an option and moreover, that their decision to participate was not cast in stone for the entirety of the project. Despite this, I did on reflection repeatedly wonder if the children really felt that participation was non-obligatory. Although I attempted to stress my role as researcher when engaging in research activities, it was often difficult to distinguish between research and school based tasks because of the obvious overlap.

#### **The focal children's understandings of their right to participate and withdraw**

- ◆ **Beth:** 'I know I will not want to quit.'
- ◆ **Tariq:** 'I know that I can stop at any time but I don't want to.'
- ◆ **Roberto:** 'I want to take part in it and I know I can quit any time.'
- ◆ **Charlotte:** 'I would like to take part and I know I can stop taking part whenever.'
- ◆ **Isabel:** 'I want to take part but I can pull out of it at any time.'
- ◆ **Leanne:** 'I do know that I can stop taking part whenever if I am not interested anymore but I do wish to take part.'
- ◆ **Daniel:** 'I now that I can drop out of the group. But I want to stay.'
- ◆ **Jaleela:** 'I want to take part. I know that I can stop taking part.'

Indeed, the intricate nature of my dual role caused tensions for me throughout the academic year and would also cause some confusion amongst the children. As would later become apparent, several of the children, notably in class 6B, experienced problems managing the complexities of boundaries in our relationship. For example, as the research progressed and my relationships with the children developed, they became increasingly curious about my circumstances and activities, frequently asking questions about my personal life. I felt it was 'right' to share selected aspects of my own life with the focal children as I was exploring their lives in some depth. As I chose to engage with the children on a personal level, the sharing of my experiences led to new questions and of increasing intimacy; some of which I declined to answer.

One day in conversation with some of the children in 6B, I became aware that the two of the research children had created stories of my life from information I had shared, things they had seen and knowledge other children in the class provided, be it true or fantasy. For example, Roberto and Charlotte described a lifestyle where I lived with my partner in a contemporary house on a particular road and we spent our time walking our dog and

driving round in a yellow sports car (only one element of this was actually true!). In giving consideration to this situation, I increasingly became aware that my relationship with each of the children participating in the research differed to my relationships with the other children comprising Year 6. Not only did I relate to them differently in their dual role as pupil and participant but they also related to me differently, some perceiving me to have a threefold capacity as classroom assistant, researcher and friend. Indeed, due to the more traditional teacher-pupil relationship which existed between Mrs Brookes and her pupils, I was particularly mindful that none of the children in 6B would dare question their teacher about her life outside school. Perhaps it was because of my more informal role that the focal children in class 6B struggled most with negotiating the boundaries in our relationship.

The children's consent to participate was also affected by the feelings they experienced when I first approached them with regards to the research. Although a subsequent diary exercise rather than part of the informal discussion, the children's reactions were nonetheless illuminating.

#### **Being asked to participate: the focal children's feelings and reactions**

- ◆ **Tariq:** 'When Helen chose me I though I was special.'
- ◆ **Charlotte:** 'I was pleased when Helen picked me to do this because I get to miss assembly. Yes!!'
- ◆ **Jaleela:** 'When Helen picked me I was so surprised I was glad to be picked. Helen told me outside that she picked me and I came back in the classroom and everyone was asking me why you where outside. I liked to be picked because it was so surprized I couldn't believe my eyes.'

One child Isabel from class 6B, waited outside 6E's classroom for an opportunity to speak to me; she had made me a small handmade design which she had drawn with her 'special' gel ink pens (overleaf). From these works, it can be suggested than the children chose to participate and continue with the research throughout the academic year because they felt 'special.' As a consequence of being involved in the research, it was inevitable that the focal children received a greater proportion of my attention and time in comparison to those pupils not participating. This may have contributed to an increase in the children's confidence and self-belief.

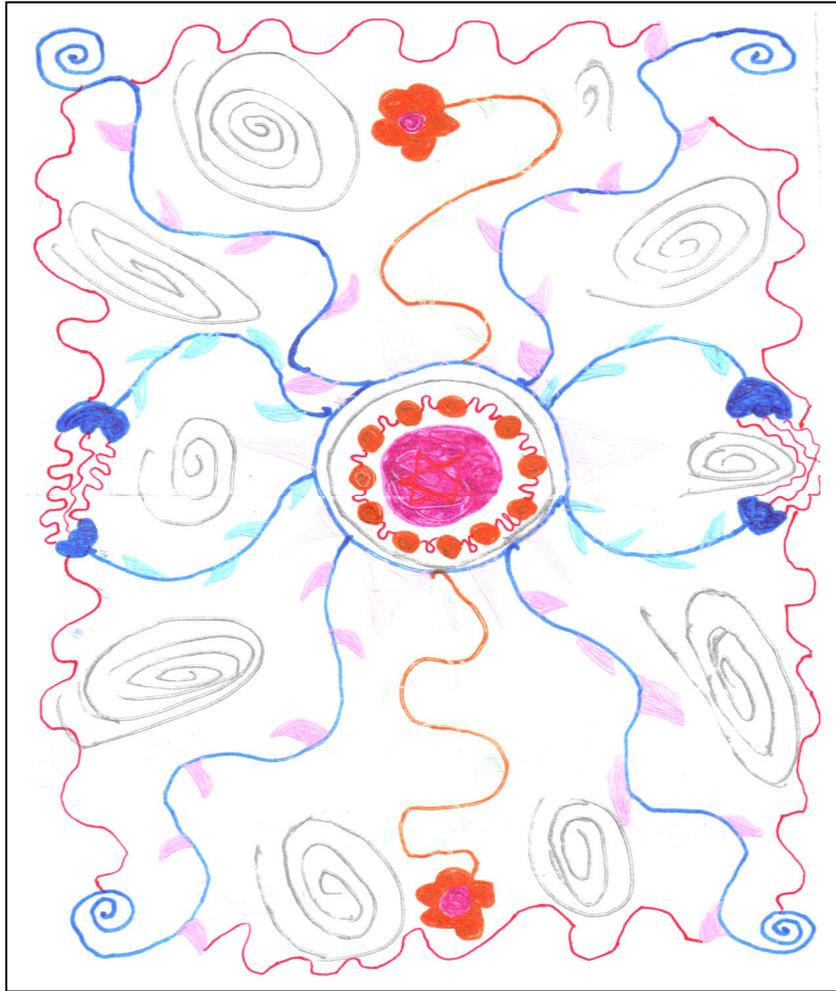
As the other children in the classes became aware of the research, some asked if they could also take part; I had to decline their offers, for some on multiple occasions. Although I explained there was a maximum limit and that the focal children's name had been drawn out of a hat at random, I sensed that some pupil's remained dejected. This in itself was an ethical issue. Despite my intentions not to hurt anyone, I sensed that a small handful of children felt rejected because they had been excluded from the research. Wishing to carry out a detailed study of a small number of lives the decision to include more children would have compromised my research aims, so I decided it was best to continue as planned and ride out the feelings of discomfort which this situation caused.

Of all the issues discussed, it was evident from the children's written work that *'limits to confidentiality and anonymity'* caused particular confusion (see figure 5.6). I wanted the children to have a clear understanding of how I intended to use the data which emerged during the course of the research. To facilitate their understanding I informed them I was writing a book about how children feel about school and how children learn. Whilst the learning stories of the eight children would comprise this book, I made a commitment to change the children's names as a means to disguise their identity. Several of the children were disappointed by this as they quite liked the idea of being recognised as stars of a book! Once in receipt of this information, a number of the children asked if they could chose their own pseudonym and although I agreed at that juncture, none of the children could decide on a name. Whilst the Year 6 teaching staff were aware of the identity of those children comprising my research group, I made a commitment to both parties, that I would not reveal any comments by name. This was a particular difficulty in Mrs Eastwood's class as she expressed ongoing curiosity with regards to what the children talked about and often sought to identify the children, initially explicitly. This was an uncomfortable situation and I found myself repeating in conversation that I could not reveal any comments by name; indeed, I found myself avoiding situations in which she pressed for information about the research.

It was explained to the children that whilst the above measures would be taken as a means to protect their identity, the material which emerged in my work with them could not be bound by confidentiality. I outlined that I intended to discuss it with my supervisory team at university and that it may be included in any verbal or written reports which emerged from the research such as the book mentioned previously. I explained that whilst I would endeavour to keep conversations private, I worked on the provision that I if I found out about any issues that worried me (for example, if they were being bullied) I would

discuss it with the child and my supervisors before initiating contact with other adult parties who could act upon the information appropriately. As Morrow and Richards (1996: 98) state, 'Researchers need to recognise their moral obligations as adults to protect children at risk even when this may mean losing access to, or the trust of, the children concerned if they do intervene.' The children's understanding of anonymity and the limits to confidentiality that would be maintained in this research is illustrated below.

Isabel's gift: 'to Helen, for being an excellent friend and assistant'



TO Helen  
For being an excellent  
friend and assistant  
from Isabel

### Issues of anonymity and limits to confidentiality: focal children's understanding

- ◆ **Jaleela:** 'I understand that Helen will not tell any one but her teacher. Helen will not tell my friends and family.'
- ◆ **Roberto:** 'I understand that Ms. Stivaros will talk to her teacher but will not use are names. when she finds out something that will worry her she will tell her teacher or are family.'
- ◆ **Charlotte:** 'I understand that Helen will talk to her teacher about us but will not use our real names. I understand that Helen will not tell our teachers or our family. If she finds information that worries her she will tell HER teachers.'
- ◆ **Isabel:** 'I understand that Helen will talk to her teacher if she is worried about me but won't use our names. Helen will not tell our family/friends/teachers.'
- ◆ **Leanne:** 'I know that if I talk to Helen in confidential that makes Helen worry she will tell someone but she will tell me if she does. She will not use my real name to tell them.'
- ◆ **Daniel:** 'I understand that if I get bullied? helen will talk to me and she will talk to her teachers about it and she will not tell other people.'
- ◆ **Beth:** 'I know if I tell Helen something personle she will ask if she can tell her teachers. I know she will tell her teachers what she learns.'
- ◆ **Tariq:** 'I understand that if I get bullied or get upset then she will talk to her teachers.'

Upon reviewing these, it was evident that both issues caused particular confusion amongst the group. Whilst the children expressed an understanding that I would share the emergent research material with my supervisory team at university, they made no reference to its inclusion in written and verbal research reports. In this respect, it may be suggested that the children had limited understanding of how the data gathered would be used, as they were unaware that I would rework and present their experiences for conference and journal papers etc. Secondly, there was confusion over which parties I would share information with if I found out something that I perceived might harm the children. Whilst all the children seemed to comprehend that I would discuss it with my supervisors, their understanding beyond this varied. Once I had collected in the children's written understandings of the issues discussed, I asked the children to fill out a consent form. We read it through together and I gave them the explicit opportunity to discuss any issues before asking them to sign the form. The children's only concern, was signing the form; a couple of them pointed out that they had never been asked to sign anything before and asked if they could practice their signature!

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am a full-time classroom assistant working alongside your child in Year 6 and I am also studying for a Ph.D. at the Manchester Metropolitan University. As you are aware, your child is involved in my research project exploring how children learn. The research project is guided and supervised by members of staff within the psychology department, at the university.

I would appreciate the opportunity to talk with you, regarding your thoughts and ideas as to how your child learns, both within the school and in their home environment. I am available to meet with you between Monday 17th June 2002 and Friday 19th July 2002 and it is envisaged the meeting will last approximately 20 to 30 minutes. The meetings can be either at school (during the afternoon between 2:00pm and 3:20pm) or at your home after school finishes. Please let me know which time and location are best suited to you.

As a participant you have the right to withdraw any consent given to participate in the research and can request for your data to be destroyed at any time. All information gathered will be confidential and anonymity will be guaranteed. If my research work is published it will not be identifiable as belonging to the school or yourself.

Should you have any queries or seek confirmation on any of the above issues, please do not hesitate to contact me at the school or my research supervisor at the university:

Jane Tobbell                      (0161) 247 2564  
Rebecca Lawthom              (0161) 247 2559

Yours sincerely,

Helen Stivaros

Dear Mrs. Mullen,

I am a full-time classroom assistant working alongside children in Year 6 and also studying for a Ph.D. at the Manchester Metropolitan University. My research project explores how children learn and is guided and supervised by members of staff within the psychology department, at the university.

I would appreciate the opportunity to talk with you regarding the role and function of the school governing body. I am available to meet with you between Wednesday 26th June 2002 and Friday 19th July 2002 and it is envisaged the meeting will last approximately half an hour. The meetings can be either at school (during the afternoon between 2:00pm and 3:20pm) or after school finishes. Please let me know which time is best suited to you.

As a participant you have the right to withdraw any consent given to participate in the research and can request for your data to be destroyed at any time. Given that my research will be available to those in the academic field, I cannot ensure confidentiality of the information imparted. However, every effort will be made to preserve your anonymity as a participant in the research. If my research work is published in the future, it will not be identifiable as belonging to the school or yourself.

Should you have any queries or seek confirmation on any of the above issues, please do not hesitate to contact me at the school or my research supervisors at the university:

Jane Tobbell                      (0161) 247 2564  
Rebecca Lawthorn              (0161) 247 2559

Yours sincerely,

Helen Stivaros

Due to reasons of confidence, I could not be given the name of the LEA representative who worked in conjunction with Roseberry Hill, instead I was asked to draft the letter below, which they would forward on my behalf.

Dear Sir or Madam

**Re: the LEA perspective**

I am a postgraduate student within the Psychology and Speech Pathology Department at the Manchester Metropolitan University. I am currently carrying out some research which explores the embedded context of children's learning. The focal school for my research has been Roseberry Hill. I feel the LEA perspective is vital to access a wider understanding of the learning journey.

To date within my current research I have gained insight into the experience and thoughts of eight, Year 6 children, their parents or carers, Year 6 teaching staff, the Head teacher and a school governing body representative. I would also appreciate the opportunity to talk with you as the LEA representative liaising with this primary school and gain a greater understanding of 'your story.' It is anticipated the interview will only take a short time.

Should you have any queries or seek confirmation on any of the above issues, please do not hesitate to contact me. I hope to hear from you in due course to arrange a suitable time, if you will are not able to participate in this research, please let me know as soon as possible.

Yours faithfully,

Helen Stivaros

*Practicalities of managing a dual role*

Immersed in the school community, I had responsibilities as a classroom assistant and as a researcher. At times, these dual role responsibilities seemed incompatible. For example, as an ethnographer incorporating the use of unstructured participant observation, I sought to record detailed field notes of that which I observed first-hand. However, the very task of taking down written notes compromised my role as classroom assistant. Demanding my attention and time, the activity served to limit the focus which I could bestow upon the children and moreover, restricted the 'here and now' input I was able to provide in my capacity as a classroom assistant. In the short-term, my actions could be perceived as potentially harmful to the children as they stifled rather than facilitated their understanding and learning. However, it was only in making detailed notes of the complexity of the teaching and learning relationship that my research could usefully shape in the long-term, future schooling practices and educational policy.

Weighing the benefits of my actions against the potential harm that may be caused, I reflected on the practice of recording notes in the field. I found that the frequency and richness of note-taking which I was able to engage in was shaped by multiple factors. For example:

- ◆ The Year 6 teacher I worked alongside
- ◆ The role I was assigned
- ◆ The subject and structure of the lesson
- ◆ The children I supported
- ◆ The activities I was required to carry out
- ◆ The time of day
- ◆ The mood I myself was in

Seeking a solution, I was aware I needed to negotiate between the demands of my classroom assistant role and those of my researcher role. These demands, both explicit and implicit, were shaped by my own personal expectations alongside those of others, including Year 6 colleagues and research supervisory team members.

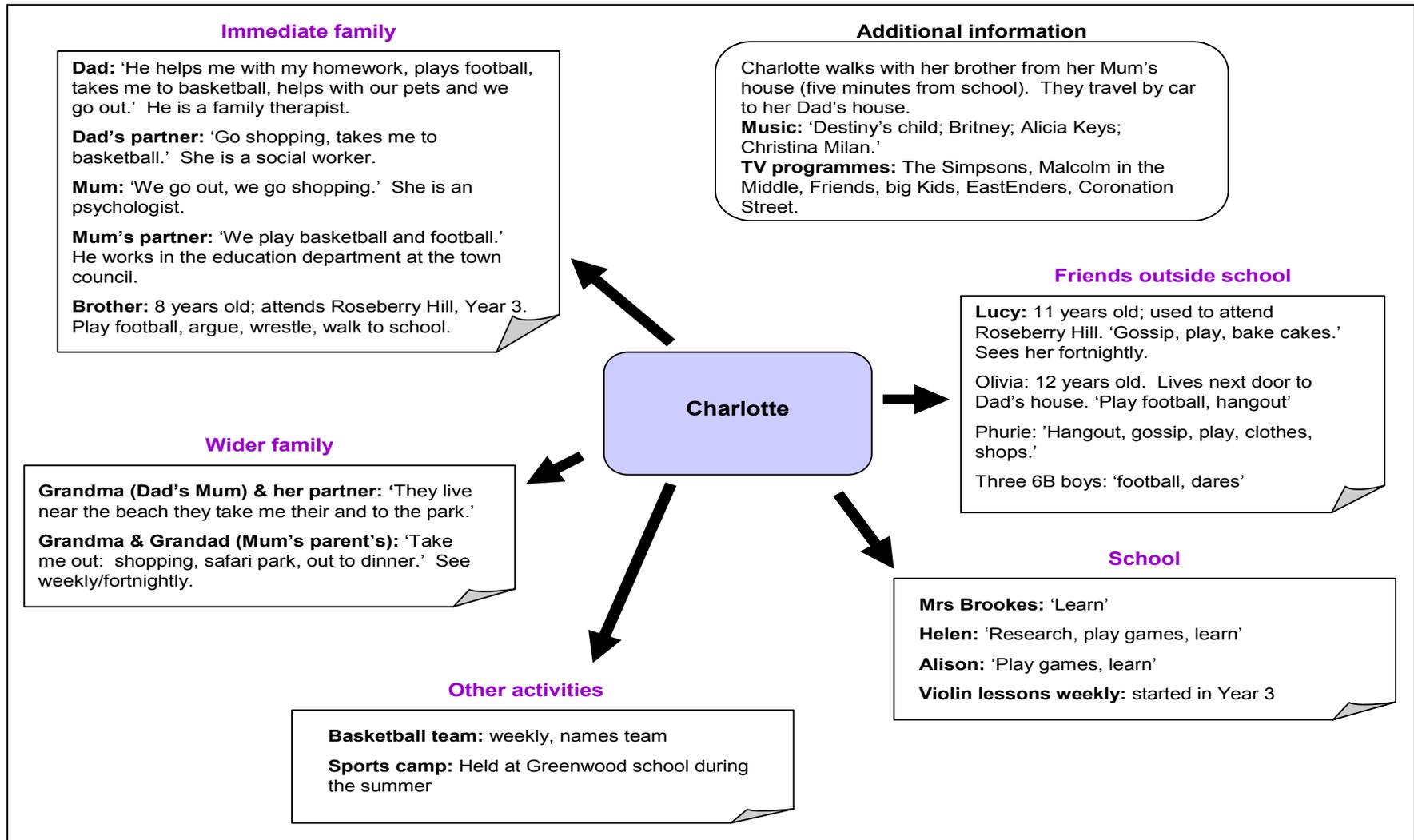
I began to recognise that I relied on different forms of data collection in response to the particularities of the situation and people involved. I observed that I was able to make more detailed notes during whole-class teacher directed periods, for example during the introduction to a literacy or numeracy lesson. In my capacity as classroom assistant, the teachers expressed an explicit expectation that I focus the children 'on task'; removing distractions to ensure they were listening and engaged in the lesson. In that this task primarily called for observation and listening skills, I was able to successfully combine it with my role as researcher. In teacher directed periods I listened to the introduction alongside the children, recording verbatim quotes and ensuring pupils were on task. Observation of the whole-class permitted me to make notes on general teaching-learning practices alongside specific notes of the focal children's behaviour: did they seem to be listening, did they put their hand up to answer or ask questions, were they playing with pencils, talking to friends, reading etc.

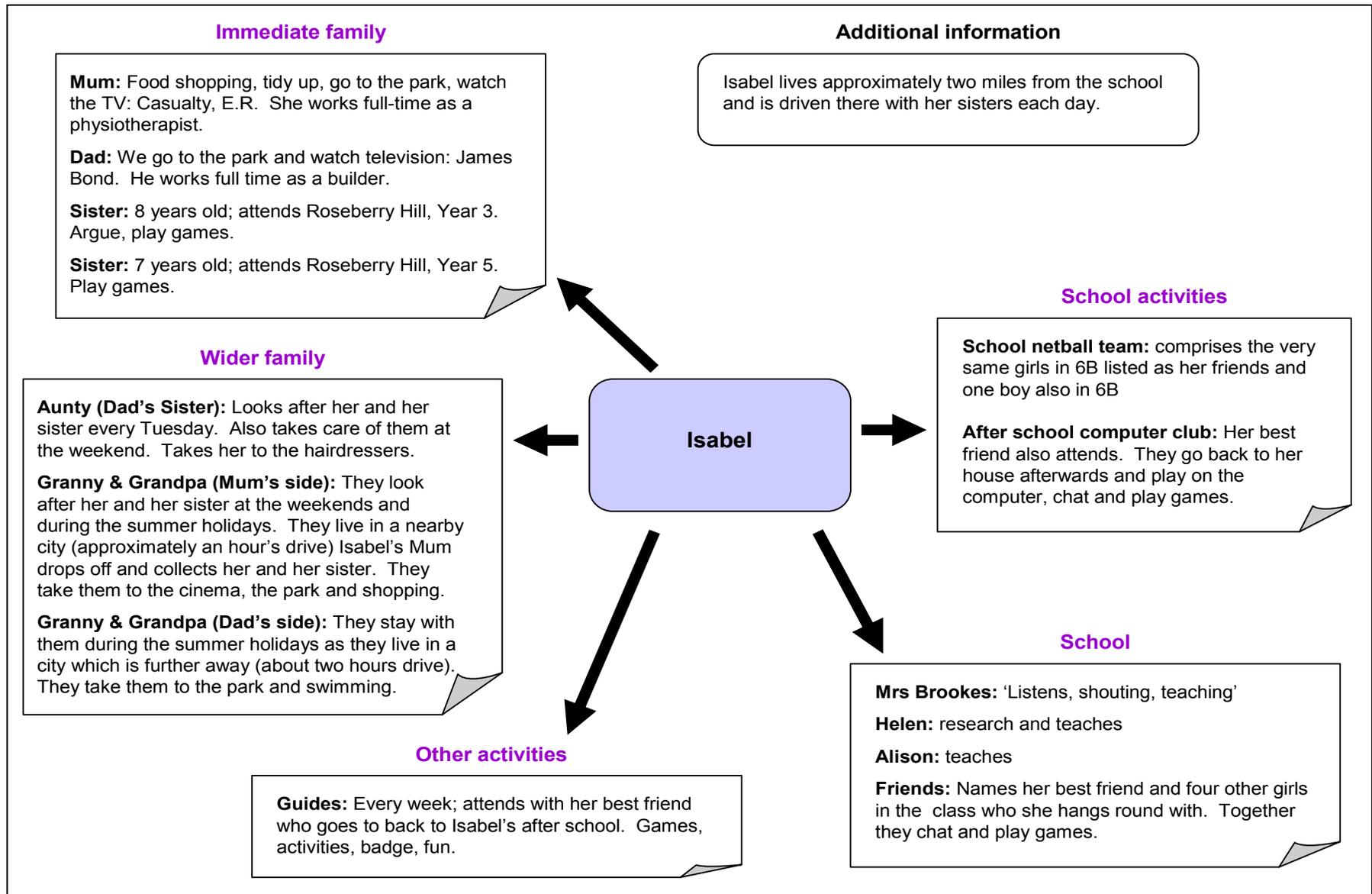
Whilst I perceived my classroom assistant and researcher roles to be most compatible during whole-class teaching periods, I experienced greatest difficulty balancing them when working with children on one-to-one or in small group situations. Whether I was implementing a teacher assigned activity or working in response to the particular needs of the children involved, these situations called for my undivided attention. Often thinking on my feet, I was sharing my expertise with the children, deconstructing tasks into parts which they could independently master and then encouraging them to have the confidence to go one step further. In these situations I utilised headnotes, which I subsequently wrote up in the form of fieldnotes when the first opportunity arose. Through adapting my methods of data collection and note-taking to suit the complexities of the classroom environment, I believe I did my best to effectively perform as both a classroom assistant and researcher.

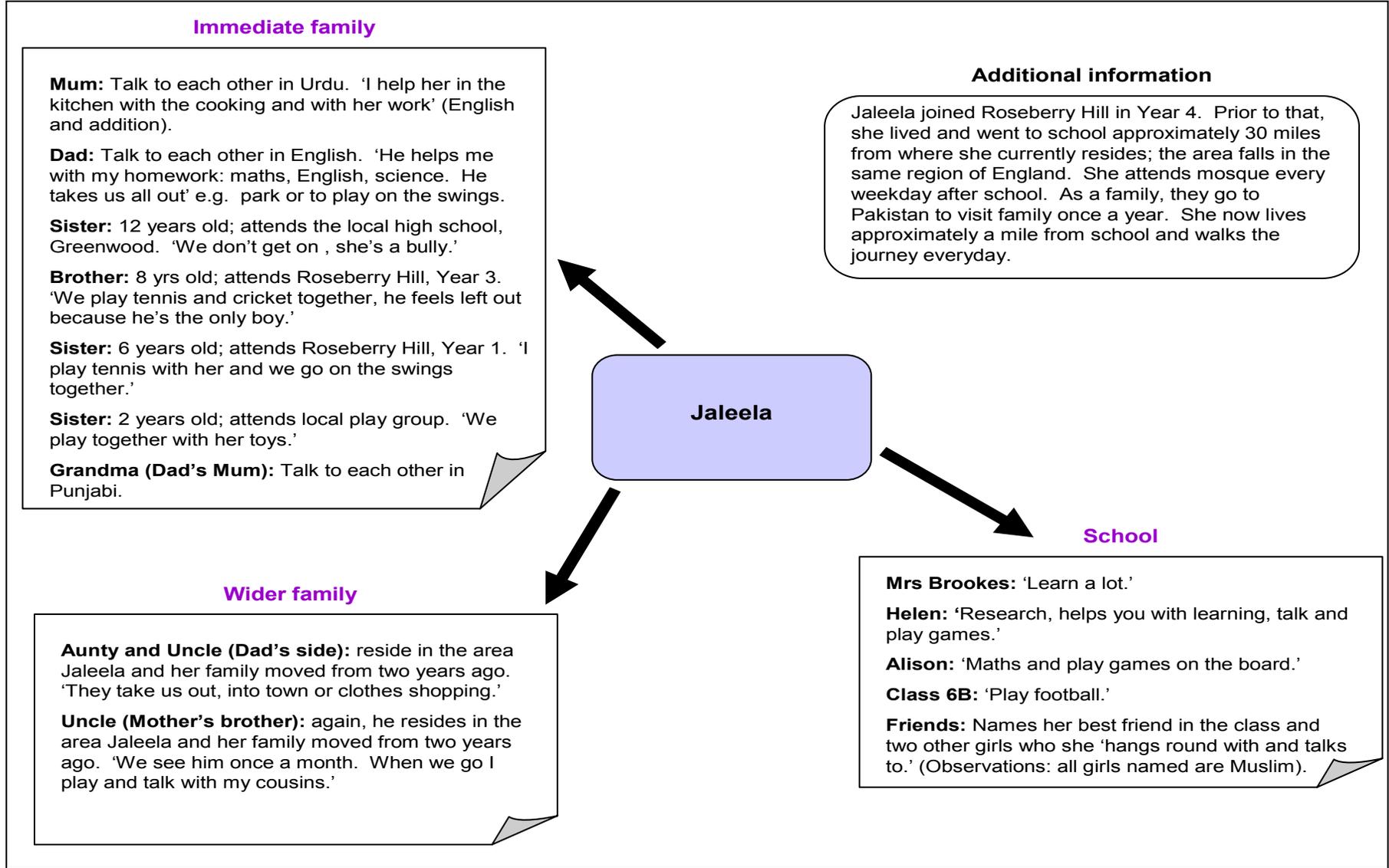
### *A battle of ethical obligations*

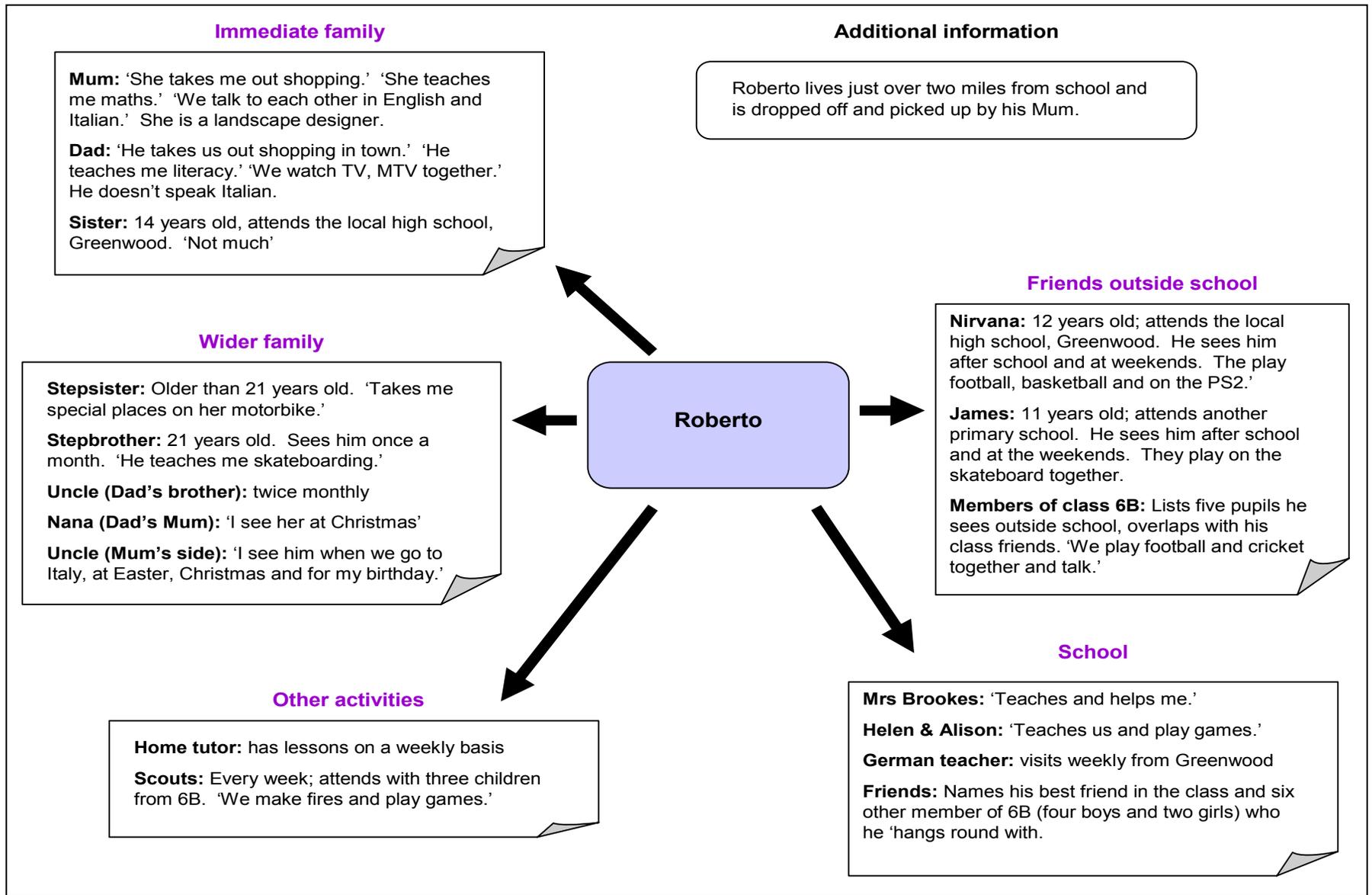
As outlined earlier, acting in accordance with the BPS ethical guidelines, all participants were given the opportunity to read through the transcripts of any interviews which they had been involved in and omit any information which they saw fit. All but the LEA Link Advisor declined this opportunity. Upon receiving the emailed transcription, she read through and amended the transcript, sending back an edited version. I noted that she had taken out some potentially controversial and thought-provoking statements and that the transcript now included what seemed like extracts from policy and job role documents. Although

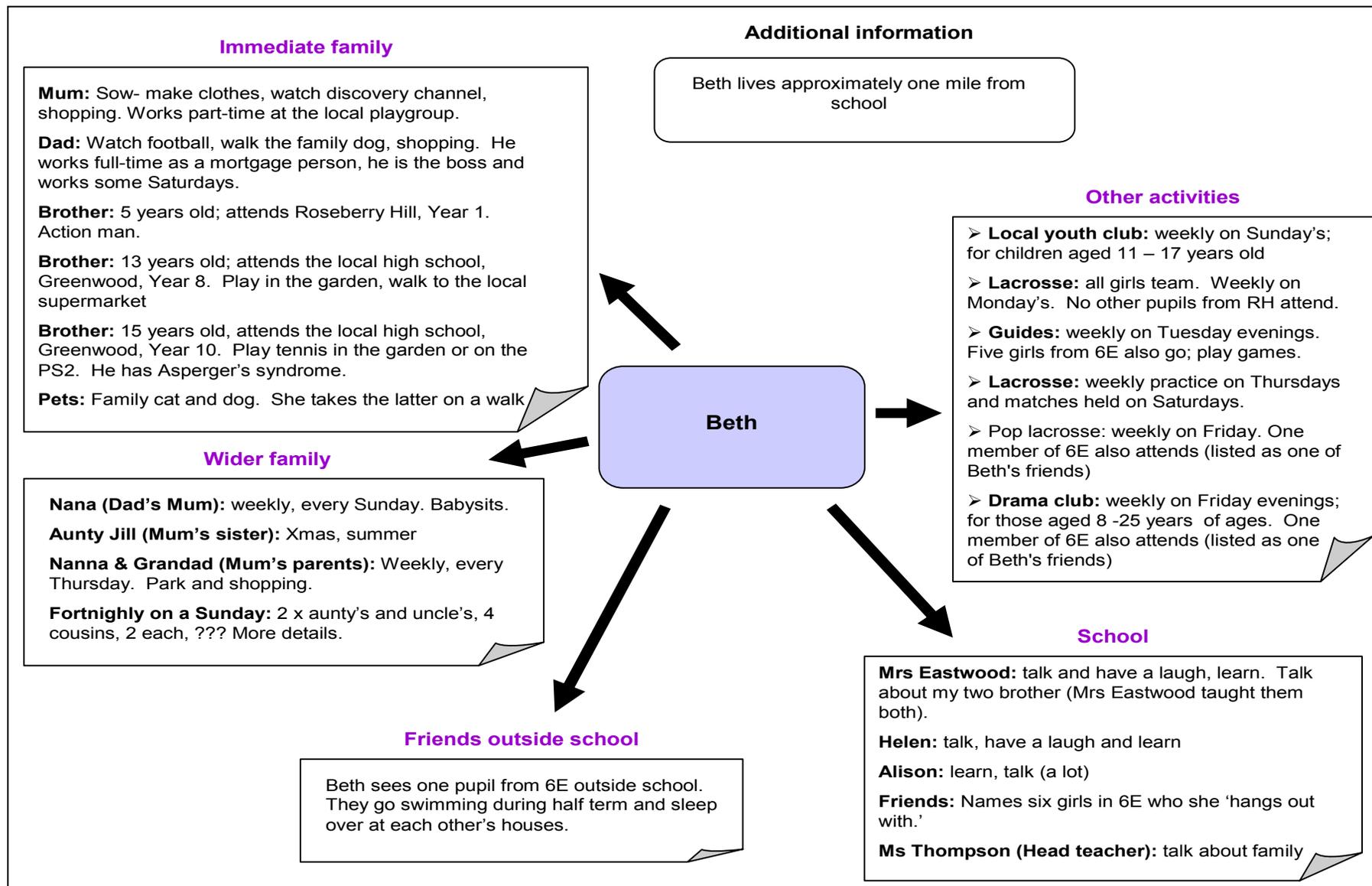
well within her rights as a participant, I felt disappointed. The newly amended version of the interview transcript portrayed a different perspective to the one I had ascertained in the interview. As a researcher, ethical responsibilities dictated that I would not cite the material which she had edited within my research write-up. But in terms of the ethical responsibility to my study, taking these actions meant I was compromising my research. Had the LEA representative not shared certain viewpoints in the original interview, I would have been none the wiser. However, armed with the knowledge that she had actively doctored the transcript to present herself in a more favourable light, her actions had placed me in a difficult position. Nonetheless, I felt that I had no choice; I was duty bound to follow her rights as a participant and use only the edited transcript. Whilst I had no obligation to use the material which she had subsequently inserted, I still felt that much of the meanings shared in the original interview had been compromised. This left me unenthusiastic to utilise much of what had been said and as such, I decided to limit the contributions of the LEA Link Advisor when constructing my stories.

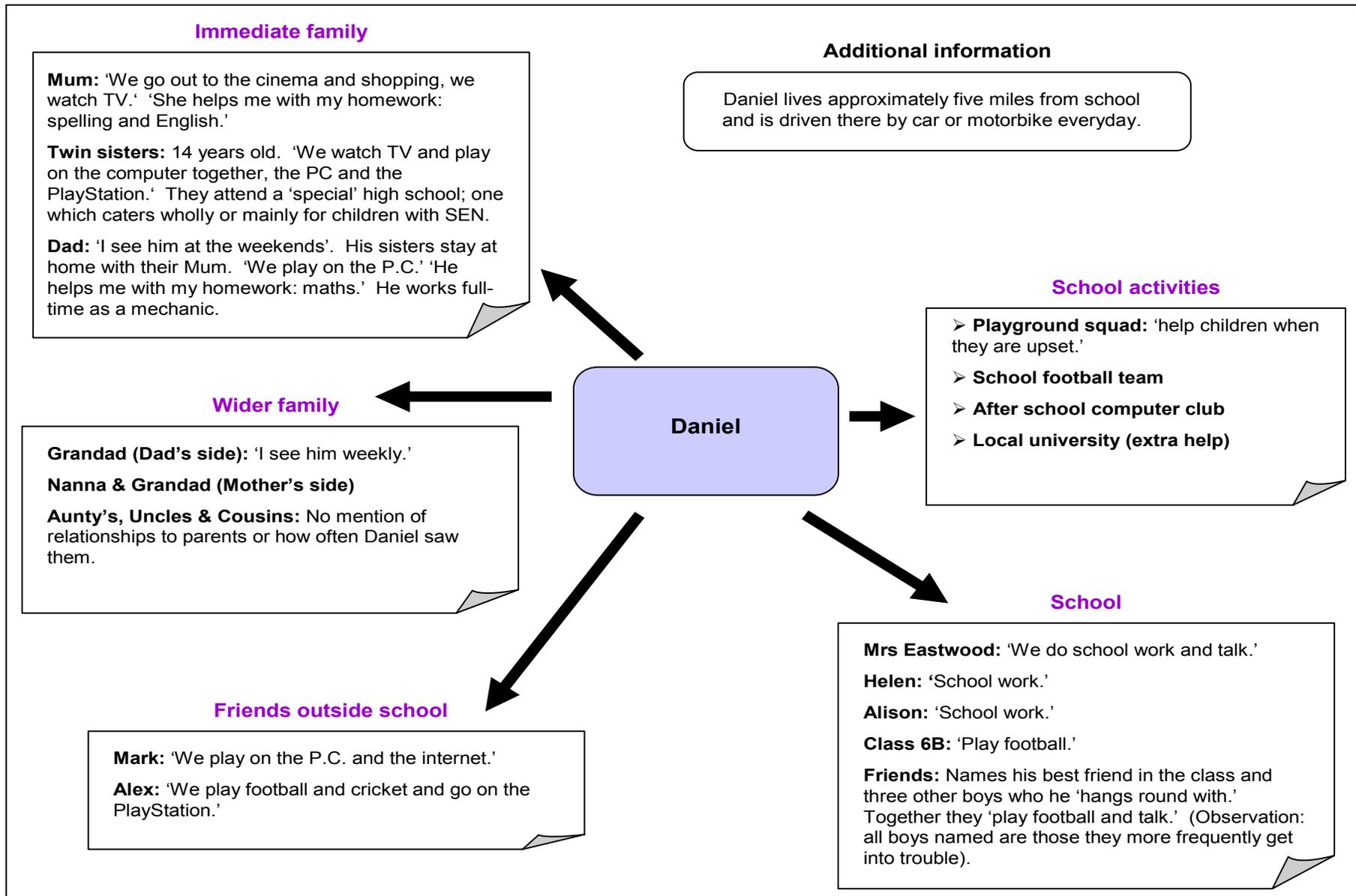


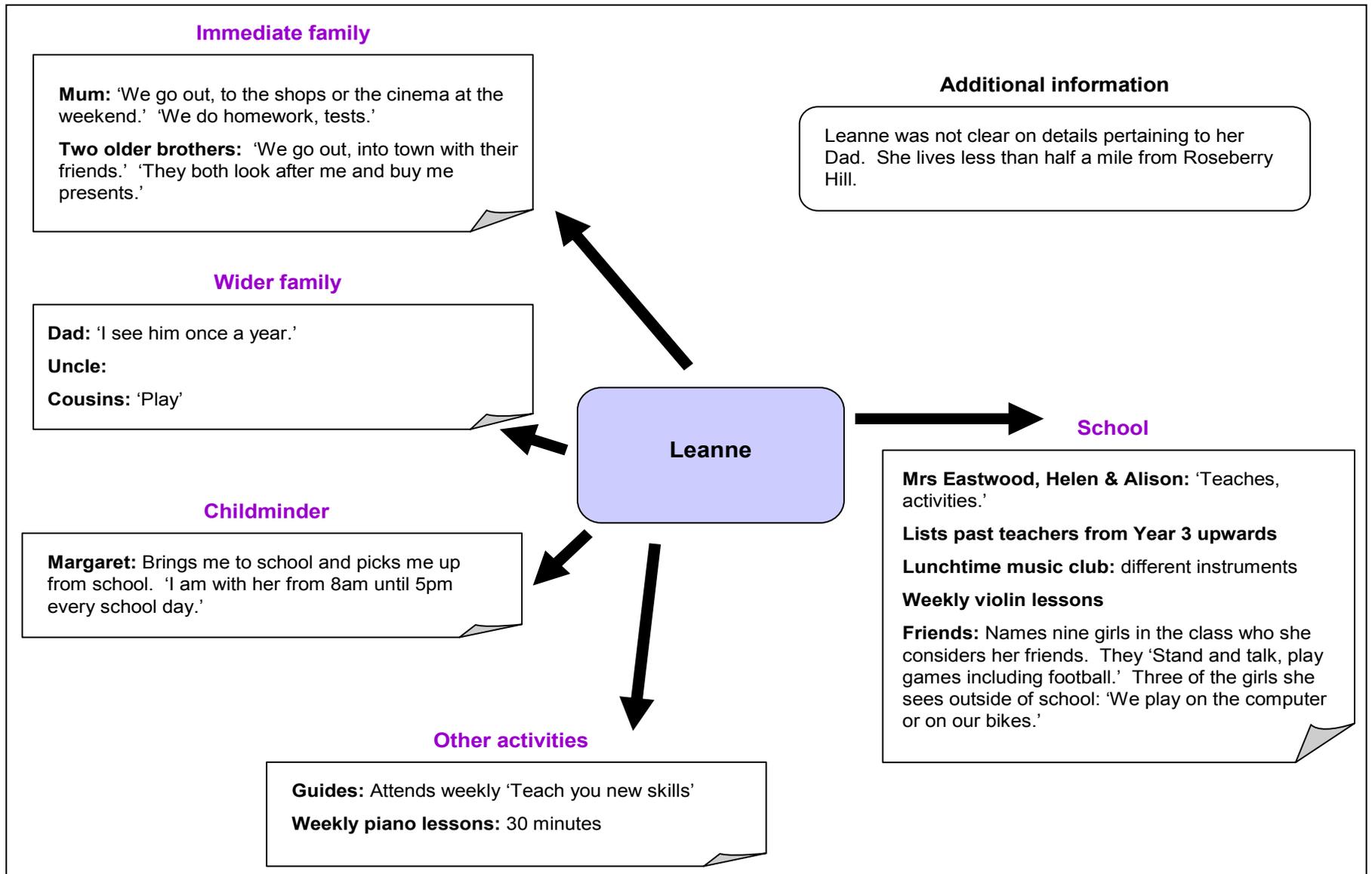


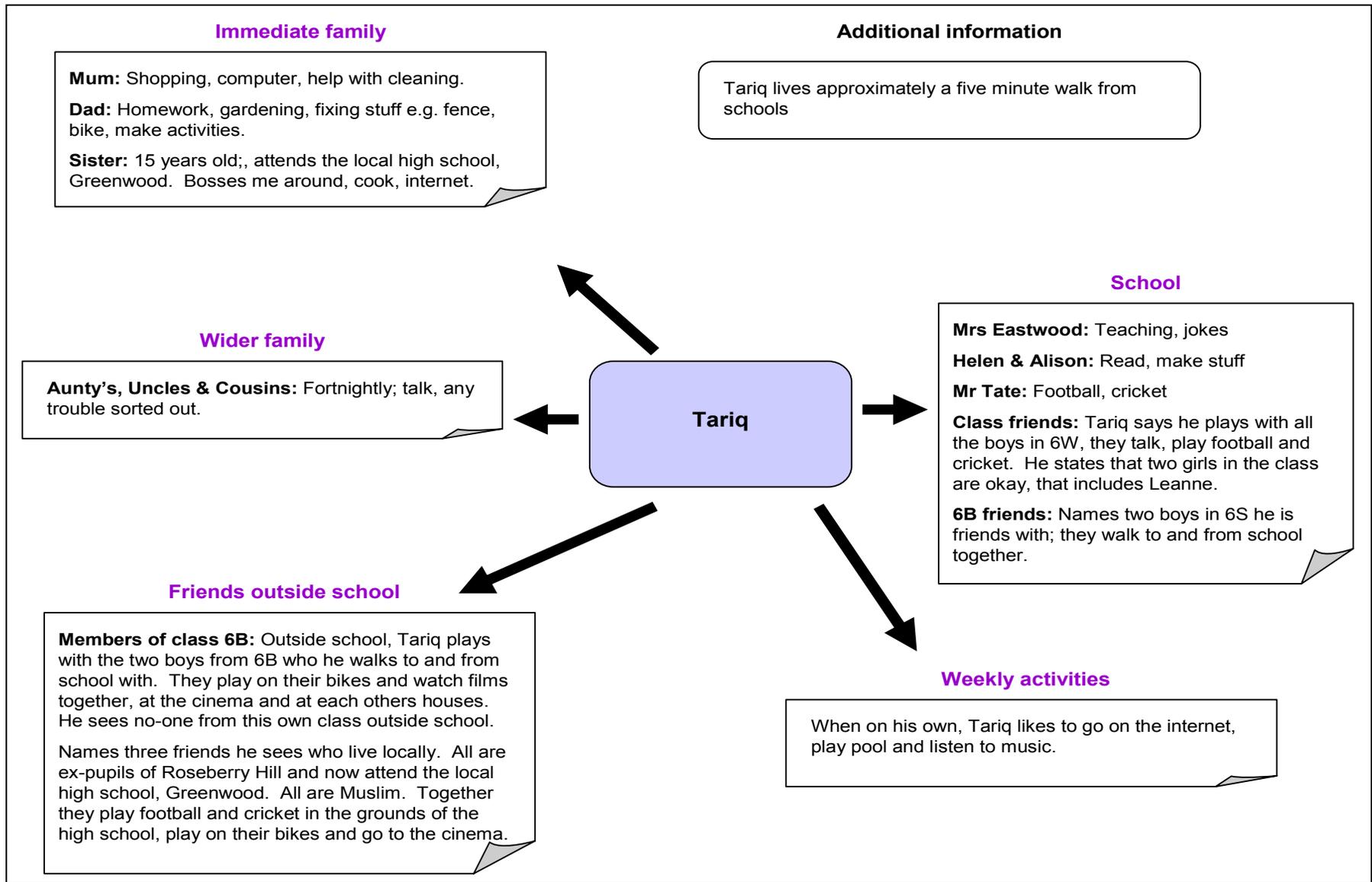












<b>Appendix 4.N</b>	<b>Observational field data: 6E</b>
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**TERM 2: WEEKS 1-6**

	Thursday 14/02	CCC visit: ICT (supply teacher)
<b>OBSERVATIONAL RECORD SHEET</b>		
	Friday 15/02	Extra numeracy session
<b>WEEK</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>LESSONS</b>
<b>K</b>		
One	Tuesday 08/01 – Wednesday 09/01	General comments: practice SAT'S
	Friday 11/01	Extra numeracy session
Two	Monday 14/01	Group reading
	Tuesday 15/01	Literacy
	Wednesday 16/01	Literacy
	Thursday 17/01	CCC visit: ICT and science
		After school ICT
	Friday 18/01	Music
		Group reading
		Extra numeracy session
		Homework group
		Pizza Hut visit
Three	Monday 21/01	Group reading
		Extra numeracy session
	Tuesday 22/01	Literacy
	Wednesday 23/01	ICT at school
	Thursday 24/01	CCC visit: ICT and science
		After school ICT
	Friday 25/01	Extra numeracy session
		Homework group
		Class meeting
Four	Thursday 31/01	CCC visit: ICT and science
		After school ICT
Five	Monday 04/02	Extra numeracy session
	Tuesday 05/02	Literacy
	Thursday 07/02	CCC visit: ICT and science
	Friday 08/02	Extra numeracy session
Six	Monday 11/02	Group reading
		Extra numeracy session

## Week One

### Tuesday 08/01/01 – Wednesday 09/01/02

- ❖ Practice SAT'S
- ❖ Combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time

Children sat in pairs according to register order. Class tables were set out in rows as opposed to tables.

Out of the whole class, Leanne was the only one to say "Hello Helen," as she came into the classroom.

As I administered the spelling test, I observed Daniel silently repeated each word I said aloud. It may be suggested this technique (sounding out) helped him with the spelling of the words he was required to write down.

Tariq brought in sweets for the class, as it had been his birthday over the Christmas holidays. He offered me one as I came out of the other classroom at the end of the day – I felt it was nice that he acknowledged I was part of his class.

### Friday 11/01/02 14:20 → 15:00

I worked with 1 focal child in a pair (staff room)

Extra numeracy session: number bonds

- ❖ Observation of work during the session, completed both independently and with assistance
- ❖ Combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time

### DANIEL

At the start of the lesson I explained to Daniel and Annela that we would be working together regularly every Friday afternoon. We would spend time going over numeracy areas that they perhaps didn't know so well and needed to practice. I asked them to also inform me of any areas or types of questions they would like help with.

At the beginning of the session, both children independently completed 30 addition and 30 subtraction sums. Both focused their attention to the task and used their fingers to help work out the answers. I timed how long it took for them to complete the sums, as they wanted to see if they could beat their time, the second time around (addition section completed again at the end of the session). Daniel was faster and scored slightly higher the first time around; he appeared very disappointed and said, "Argh." Perhaps his concentration had dwindled, as the session was quite long and his attention span seemed quite short.

I then gave both pupils questions individually. I asked them if they could talk me through the steps they took to work out the sum. I verbally and visually presented a number (coloured number cards) and asked how many more I would need to add to get to 10, 20, 30, 40. Etc.

Both counted backwards to find the answer

E.g. how many more do I need to add to 14 to get to 20?

⇒ They would count backwards on their fingers, 19, 18, 17, 16, 15, 14; count their fingers and then say = 6. Sometimes they would start with the original number and calculate the sum incorrectly (30, 29, 28, 27, 26, 25, 24 = 7)

I asked them to try a 'new' method to work out the answer to a sum, and count on instead. I talked them through a couple of examples, using my fingers as they did. Daniel caught on to this idea very quickly and used it successfully to work out the questions. Daniel successfully worked out how many more were needed to make 10 and 20; he struggled to a greater extent with the higher numbers (>30).

At the end of the session I swapped roles with the children, taking the role of pupil whilst they took it in turns to be the teacher (and write on the whiteboard which they liked). I gave Daniel a sum to write on the board, as he said he could not think of one. His task was to explain to us, how to work out the answer using the 'new' method. Daniel was able to talk through the steps needed to work out the take-away sum, using his fingers to count on.

## Week Two

**Monday 14/01/02 09:45 → 10:30**

Group reading: two focal children present in group of six (staff room)

❖ Notes made from head notes

### LEANNE

Leanne listened to fellow group members read and their answers to any questions I posed, without interruption (despite being interrupted herself). Her focus was excellent and she volunteered answers to the questions I asked throughout the session. She attempted to take part in group discussions, although two other group members felt the need to voice their opinion above everyone else's.

### BETH

No observations made

**Tuesday 15/01/02 09:45 → 10:30**

Mrs Eastwood: class sat in literacy groups (classroom)

Literacy text level: 'How to give a good answer in a comprehension'

- ❖ Observation of 'chalk and talk' introduction (teacher addressed the whole class for approx 20 minutes; 2 focal children present)
- ❖ The children were then set work to complete independently; some groups had assistance directed at them (classroom assistant/teacher sat with them.) I did not work with any of the focal children during this time.
- ❖ Combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time

### DANIEL

Daniel was sat facing the teacher and the board. At the beginning of the 'chalk and talk', Daniel appeared attentive, looking at teacher and at the board. He put his hand up and offered answers on a couple of occasions.

E.g. the text referred to a girl, whose eyes were red. When the teacher asked how this girl might be feeling using this evidence in the text, one child suggested she was sad and upset (which the teacher agreed with). Then Daniel offered his answer and posed it as a question "She might have had sore eyes or something." (The teacher replied it could have been that, but not on this occasion.) It may be suggested from this example Daniel was participating in the class discussion and demonstrating listening skills.

After this exchange, his attention began to drift (10 minutes or so into the intro): looking around the room, messing with pens, swinging on his chair, moving his body and looking backwards. I asked him to try and concentrate (× 2) and took the pens out of his hands (×1)

### BETH

Beth was not present for the literacy lesson, as she was attending the Indian music session. No observations made.

#### LEANNE

Leanne was sat facing the teacher and the board. Leanne put her hand up numerous times during the chalk and talk introduction, but was only chosen once to answer a question. Throughout the session she appeared attentive looking at the teacher as she moved round the room and pointed at the worksheets on the board.

#### TARIQ

Tariq was not present for the literacy lesson, as he was attending the Indian music session. The teacher remarked she was going to see about taking him out of these classes, as literacy was his worse subject.

#### **Wednesday 16/01/02 11:00 → 12:00**

Mrs Eastwood and myself: class sat in literacy groups (classroom)

Literacy text level: 'Personification'

- ❖ Observation of introduction and summary by the teacher (approx 5 minutes at either end of my work; 4 focal children present)
- ❖ Observation throughout my 'chalk and talk' session (20 mins)
- ❖ The children were then set work to complete independently (asking for assistance if required)
- ❖ Combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time

At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher reminded the class about 'personification' which they had discussed in the previous lesson and written group poems based on (they would be continuing from the same example). She told them that I (Helen) would be teaching them for most of the lesson and that she would be observing them. I did a 'chalk and talk' session asking all children to suggest an object and a sound it could make, if it spoke, in one of four places: bedroom, bathroom, kitchen and outside. I drew these four heading on the board and wrote down their suggestions to create a class list; giving them an example to start them off 'the leaves rustled'. I emphasised I wanted everyone's hand up so they needed to be thinking about it and listening to fellow class members for ideas. Everyone gave at least one suggestion, which was great as usually it is only part of the class who takes part in such activities. I told the class that they could use the list for ideas when they wrote their poems or use any other examples they could think of that we had not written down. At the end of my session, the teacher briefly mentioned the layout of the poem and handed out a copy of several verses to indicate the required format of the poem. The children then began writing their individual poems.

#### DANIEL

Daniel's listening skills during my 'chalk and talk' session were v.good. He put his hand up and made suggestions several times demonstrating he was actively involved in the session. His concentration had deteriorated by the time Mrs Eastwood briefly mentioned the format of the poem. Daniel wrote a poem containing some of his own ideas and several of the examples we had written on the board; the content of the poem was v.good. He said he had not looked at how the poem was written on the handout. So we began to write his original poem out again in the desired layout.

#### BETH

No observations made.

#### LEANNE

Leanne put up her hand to add a suggestion to the class list. After the lesson, when I asked her if she had found the activity useful, she replied, "The class list was helpful if you got stuck. You could look at it and pick out an adjective, like creaked or something."

#### TARIQ

Tariq put up his hand to volunteer answers more than once; demonstrating he listened and understood the personification activity.

Comment:

At the end of the lesson, the teacher mentioned she should have taken more time to explain the layout of the poem, especially the punctuation. She said quite a few people (generally on the table who receive most literacy support) had struggled with it and that it could have been made clearer.

**Thursday 17/01/02 09:15 → 12:00**

Visit to CCC: science incorporating ICT skills

- ❖ Observation of class during introduction by CCC manager; independent work by the computer (crocodile clips and publisher) and again being addressed by Mr Watson (4 focal children present)
- ❖ Combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time

Context: There were 30 computers in the one room (very £ looking); each child had access to a computer of their own and a swinging chair. In ICT lessons in school, there are two children to one computer and they attend the lessons in two halves. Mr Watson emphasised several times, for the children to work independently and at their own pace, they were not to worry if someone else was working much faster in comparison.

**DANIEL**

During the introduction, Daniel appeared attentive towards the 'new teacher.' At the computer Daniel worked slowly and didn't seem bothered that he worked at a slower pace compared to the majority. Perhaps he was not aware as his friend sat next to him, was also working at a similar pace. It was evident to me, he was not as confident at using the computer compared with most children in the class and he struggled with some of the science questions. When I walked near him, he would say he did not understand a particular question and ask me "What does it mean?" Daniel appeared excited when he realised he had answered all the questions correctly; a large grin appeared on his face and he was insistent on telling Mrs Eastwood, who was too busy seeing to someone else (he was not aware all the children had achieved this). In the second talk session, Daniel lacked focus and was messing with the computer mouse. When the teacher asked him to sit on the floor, he seemed preoccupied and looked around the room. On the way home, I asked him if he had enjoyed himself and he replied he had liked it at the CCC.

**BETH**

No observations made.

**LEANNE**

Leanne was sat facing the new teacher and the projector board during the intro and second 'get together'. She wasn't quite right with the first answer she volunteered, and the teacher remarked, "Yes, you're nearly there." This may have encouraged Leanne in this unfamiliar context, as she continued to put her hand up and volunteer answers on a couple of occasions. Throughout the session she appeared attentive looking at the teacher as he spoke. No observations were made during her time at the computer, as she worked independently.

**TARIQ**

Tariq had to share a computer with another class member as the one he was originally sat at, was not working. He worked with the pupil to answer the questions, although it seemed Tariq did as he was told, as the other pupil made the decisions and took the vocal role. Tariq did not appear to be confident working with this fellow class member.

**Thursday 17/01/02 15:30 → 16:30**

Mr West: after school ICT session (computer room)

Using the internet to search for answers

(1 focal child present in a group of six)

- ❖ Observation of ongoing verbal and practical assistance throughout session
- ❖ Drawing on head notes

This was the first ICT after school session. Pupils went onto the internet and used the search option to look up answers to a list of questions, the teacher had drawn up.

E.g. What is the height of Mount Everest?; What is the diameter of the earth?

#### DANIEL

Daniel did not appear confident in his computer skills. He required assistance all the time, as he was scared to 'experiment' with the tabs on the computer screen etc. He listened to and followed the instructions. He did not always ask for assistance when he needed it; but when I asked if he was alright, he would say "How do you do this...?"

He was not aware of the 'Ask Jeeves' website and asked what it was, when other members mentioned it. He said at the end "I wish I had a computer." I told him he would have plenty of opportunity to do ICT during school time. This comment was meant to reassure him, as I was aware this did not compensate for having access to a computer of his own.

**Friday 18/01/02 11:00 → 12.00**

Mrs Brookes: class sat in colour groups (6E classroom)

Music: 'Rhythm and beats'

- ❖ Observation of teacher addressing class for one hour; intermittent with tasks where children were required to copy the teacher's clapping or verse (4 focal children present)
- ❖ Combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time

#### DANIEL

Initially Daniel was sat partly facing the teacher. He did not appear to be listening during the introductory talk, as he had his head between his hands whilst lounging on the desk. Daniel turned so he wasn't facing the teacher, as he rolled up and peering through a certificate he had just been given from Alison and myself. (Did this certificate mean anything to him?) When the teacher began clapping, his attention shifted onto what she was doing; he looked at the teacher and began counting on his fingers how many beats there were in her example. When he received a positive comment from the teacher (Do you play a musical instrument as you are v.good at this). He looked surprised to be picked out from all of the class, and remarked "Who, me?" Daniel looked embarrassed as he smiled. When the teacher began to talk, he began to mess with his certificate again; which I told him to put down on the desk. He took part in the clapping exercises as demonstrated by the teacher.

The teacher remarked afterwards, that children like that, were usually good in areas such as music. When I asked what children she was referring to, she replied those children who were poor in subjects such as literacy and numeracy and preceded to give me a few examples of other pupils – seeking confirmation off Alison sat nearby "Don't you think so, Alison". Alison agreed those pupils named had been good at music.

#### BETH

No observations made.

#### LEANNE

Leanne was sat facing the teacher. She put her hand up and offered an answer, to be told by the teacher "No, no". She continued to put her hand up and offer answers after this, demonstrating she was not discouraged. She appeared to be engaged throughout the lesson, and participated when the teacher demonstrated clapping rhythms to be copied.

#### TARIQ

Tariq was sat up partly facing the teacher. He put his hand up to volunteer an answer, to be told it wasn't quite right by the teacher. Tariq appeared to become disinterested, lounging on the desk and putting his head in his hands. He began to fidget and pretended to play the drums with several pens from the pots in front of him on the desk – he was asked to stop by another classroom assistant (Alison), who took the pens of him and put them back in the pot. His head went back into his hands as he leaned on the desk. Once the clapping demonstrations began, he sat up again and joined in copying the teacher's example of rhythm; as part of the class and as part of his group. When his group were asked to repeat their example several minutes later after the other groups had performed, he, like his fellow group members, had difficulty remembering.

**Friday 18/01/2014:15 → 14.30**

Reading group: (staff room)

Introduction of new group and reading book

- ❖ Observation of both children during our time together (1 focal child present in group of 6)
- ❖ Combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time

**DANIEL**

Daniel lacked focus when I explained to the group we would be starting a new book (mentioning title, author, publisher). Daniel had just returned from the pizza party at Pizza Hut, where he had gone in return for demonstrating good behaviour over the last term (via the amalgamation of green cards), and was quite excitable. He settled down and listened to the others reading, interjecting with some relevant but inappropriate points. He read well at his own pace and volunteered answers (even when he was not sure) when I queried unfamiliar vocabulary. He complained at always being the last to read in the group after Saleema had complained about the very same thing.

**Friday 18/01/2014:30 → 14.45**

I took Daniel to do some work on number bonds (staff room)

Focus:  $3 \times$  table

- ❖ Observation of Daniel during our time together (1 focal child present in a pair)
- ❖ Combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time

This was the second week I had been timetabled to work with Daniel (and fellow pupil). We had previously worked for an hour but our time was limited for several reasons. Daniel had just returned from the pizza party at Pizza Hut, where he had gone in return for demonstrating good behaviour over the last term (via the amalgamation of green cards). I wanted to do some more work on number bonds with them, but I had set them the task last week, of learning the  $3 \times$  table. So I had to follow up on this by giving them a test to complete independently. In the few minutes we had left, I gave each child a few sums to work out using the subtraction method we learnt last week, to see if they could remember.

**DANIEL**

Daniel got most of his  $3 \times$  table questions correct. He remarked I confused him as they were all muddled up and he had learnt the  $3 \times$  table with his mum in the right order. He needed a long time to answer each question and used his fingers. Daniel got his subtraction sums correct using the method from last week. I asked him to talk Saleema and I through what was going on in his head, and he used his fingers to count:

E.g.  $21 - 17 =$  "You count on... so 18, 19, 20, 21." He looked at his fingers and said "So its four." His target for next week was to learn the  $3 \times$  table 'mixed up' which I would test him on. He received a chocolate treat for remembering and applying the new method of taking away.

**Friday 18/01/2014:45 → 15.10**

Homework group: (staff room)

Explanation of homework: spellings and maths

- ❖ Observation of both children during our time together (1 focal child present in group of 6)
- ❖ Combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time

Context: I told the whole group they had done extremely well with the spellings from last week (I had told them individually during the week.)

#### DANIEL

Daniel listened to the explanation of the spellings homework; adding 'er' and 'est' to words. I used an example of small, asking two other boys to stand up by me. Daniel said he understood when I asked him.

I kept Daniel behind alongside two other pupils to do a little extra work on the magic square. He didn't seem to understand in what order the square needed to be completed although he knew how to calculate the answers. I explained to the three boys, I had provided an unclear explanation of how the magic square worked and that I would try again to explain it. If Daniel wasn't getting my undivided attention his attention drifted.

#### Friday 18/01/02 lunchtime

Pizza party (Pizza Hut)

- ❖ I asked Alison to observe two children who were attending this party from 6E
- ❖ She referred to head notes when she discussed it with me

At lunchtime children receive green cards for good behaviour, politeness or for helping etc. off lunchtime organisers.

#### DANIEL

Daniel walked with a friend from his class. He chose to sit with his fellow class members once at the Pizza Hut, and a year 4 pupil was also sat with them. They were sat close to the head teacher and the classroom assistant; Alison remarked, they were an excellently behaved table. Alison mentioned the year 4 boy could be a bit of a handful at times and began to mess about and became noisy, but the year 6 boys 'sorted him out.'

#### LEANNE

The head teacher asked Leanne to walk with a girl from another year, as she did not have a partner. Once at Pizza Hut, Leanne was sat with Year 5 pupils, as she was walking at the back of the line and was positioned there by the head teacher. The table was huge, with both boys and girls sat around it. She remarked Leanne didn't complain and seemed quite happy with the situation, adding she joined in with the conversation around her etc.

### Week Three

**Monday 21/01/02 13:15 - 14.00**

Group reading: 1 focal child present (staff room)

- ❖ Observation of one focal child during session
- ❖ Combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time

#### BETH

Beth was off school ill today.

#### LEANNE

Whilst reading about a certain event, Leanne sought clarification regarding the outcome, "So is the dog dead?" I had not been paying full attention to the story as I was attempting to mark their summaries, which they had completed for homework. I asked to borrow the book and so I could read about the incident. What began as a discussion within the group regarding the outcome, turned into an argument between Leanne and another pupil. The other pupil attempted to belittle Leanne by repeating part of the text, raising his voice and remarking "Don't you understand it?" She replied, "You think you are always right." He went on to mention two members that had not

contributed to the debate all at (even though I had repeatedly told him, this was a discussion not a debate). Leanne replied it was because they couldn't get a word in edgeways.

At the end of the session, I clarified the rules of the group reading session and whether they thought they had been followed (listening to others without interruption, putting your hand up to speak). Moreover, I asked the group, how they thought they had communicated and co-operated today. As the other pupil said he thought they had got on very well and discussed matters sensibly, Leanne had an expression of disbelief on her face; adding that he had shouted at her. I have never seen Leanne get so worked up about anything, in class she is usually a placid girl who is polite and considerate towards others.

I believed the matter had not been resolved and would discuss it further with Mrs Eastwood. The teacher initially remarked I should not have let the matter escalate and let it interfere with the reading time. When we discussed it again at a more appropriate time (after school rather than during a lesson) she said she had not really listened to me, as she had a lot of things on her mind. She had made a snap judgement and that was wrong, but she would bring the matter up at the next class meeting; although she did not fully listen to my explanation of what had occurred during group reading.

<p><b>Monday 21/01/02      15:00 - 15.15</b>          Numeracy: Use of vocabulary meaning 'subtraction' and 'addition'          (1 focal children present in a pair: staff room)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Observation of Daniel during session</li> <li>❖ Combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time</li> </ul>
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I gave Daniel and Saleema an informal verbal test to gauge the extent to which they were familiar with the array of vocabulary meaning ( and (. For example:

<b>Subtraction</b>	<b>Addition</b>
What is 6 less than 14?	Increase 13 by 5
What is 17 minus 11	What is the sum of 20, 40, 15 and 25?
How much do I need to add to 14 to make 20	What is 6 more than 25?

**DANIEL**

Daniel was not familiar with the different expressions that can be used to mean 'take-away' (his preferred terminology for subtraction). Once he understood if the question required him to + or – he was able to have a go at answering the question. He used the new method of subtraction automatically to work out the sum. He struggled with adding a string of two-digit numbers together.

<p><b>Tuesday 22/01/02      09:40 ( 10.30</b>          Literacy: instructional writing (class room)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Reading time build into lesson at the start, just before the intro</li> <li>❖ Observation of class during intro (Teacher addressed whole class for approx 10 mins)</li> <li>❖ Observation during independent work (I assisted one group containing 1 focal child in a group of 5)</li> <li>❖ Combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time</li> </ul>
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**TARIQ**

Tariq was messing with a pen pot on his table during the introduction and talking to the boy sat next to him. I took the pen pot out of his hands and asked him to listen. He volunteered answers on several occasions when the teacher asked questions. Tariq was selected to answer once by the teacher, as she seemed to focus on the literacy table that needed most help. He was able to elaborate upon another pupil's answer when asked to, by the teacher. This indicates he was listening during the intro.

Within the group, I told the group to work individually and ask for assistance if they needed it. I went over some of the vocabulary within the text and questions before they began. Tariq sought clarification that his answers were okay. He asked for help with one or two questions. I noticed the answer to these questions within the text, contained words he was unfamiliar with and ( had difficulty understanding.

#### **DANIEL**

Daniel turned to face the teacher during the introduction. He did not put up his hand to volunteer an answer but he did answer the teacher when a question was directed at him.

#### **BETH**

No observations made

#### **LEANNE**

Leanne turned to face the teacher during the introduction. She put up her hand to volunteer answers on several occasions but was chosen only once by the teacher, who seemed to focus on the participation of the literacy table who require most help. During the independent work, I observed Leanne discussing a question with fellow group members; she took quite a vocal role and appeared confident within this group to say what she thought.

#### **Wednesday 23/01/02 09:30 - 10:30**

Alison and myself: A group were selected by Mrs Eastwood to attend ICT session (computer room)

ICT: 'Late poem'

- ❖ Observation of:
  - Listening skills during introductory talk: accessing program (5 minutes approx. 2 focal children present in group of 14?)
  - Working with another at the computer (50 minutes approximately)
- ❖ Drawing on a combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time

#### **LEANNE**

Leanne worked v.well with her partner; they listened to each other and gave each other a chance to have a go at working on the computer. I demonstrated how to 'copy and paste' their work at the beginning of the session. I went back to them near the end of the session and asked if they could show me how to do it, they were able to remember it between them. Although I noticed they had not used this method during the ICT lesson, preferring to type the same sentence out again, within each verse.

#### **TARIQ**

Tariq and his partner got v.little work done during the lesson; they lacked focus and appeared to 'mess about'. His listening skills were poor during the time when I stopped the class to listen to and follow my instructions. I did not make any observations during the ICT lesson.

#### **Thursday 24/01/02 09:40 - 12.00**

Visit to CCC: science incorporating ICT skills (same room)

(4 focal children present)

- ❖ Observation of class during 1st introduction by CCC manager (copying and pasting from crocodile clips to a word document: approx. 15 mins)
- ❖ Observation of class during 1<sup>st</sup> independent work by the computer
  - 10 minute break outside (no observations made)
- ❖ Observation of class during 2<sup>nd</sup> intro. by CCC manager (changing the font style: approx. 10 mins)
- ❖ Observation of class during 2<sup>nd</sup> session of independent work by the computer
- ❖ Combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time

The manager said, due to technical difficulties, he was unable to print out the work the children had completed last week on the publisher program. Consequently the children had to begin their work again using a word document. They had to insert a table and copy into it objects from the crocodile clips programme. The aim was to insert 6 different pictures, their corresponding symbols and 1-2 sentences describing what each component did.

#### DANIEL

During the introduction, Daniel looked at the direction of the projected computer screen. He did not put his hand up to answer any questions posed by the teacher. He was selected by Mr Watson to say how to find a battery on the crocodile clips program. Daniel paused and said, "I can't remember."

He struggled to remember information accessed and processes used from last week at the CCC (some of which had been gone over in today's intro.). This included how to access programs; the name of components; corresponding symbols; and the components job in an electrical circuit. He worked at a similar pace to his friend, whom he was sat next to. Both received a lot of assistance of Mrs Eastwood and myself throughout the lesson. When I worked with him I observed he could not remember which component (or symbol) was a motor or a buzzer. He would tell me what he wanted to do and ask how to do it?

Some of the tasks Daniel had been shown approx. 10 previously, but he couldn't remember the steps to follow to get there. The aim was to provide a summary of the function of each symbol; with me typing we only just managed to include the name. Daniel was v.pleased with his finished piece of work representing 6 components, their corresponding symbols and a brief description. Teacher commented, "I must remember to move them next time and sit them near someone who knows what they are doing." Thus splitting up those who struggled with remembering and implementing the steps and sitting them with the more able (Vygotsky - ZPD).

#### BETH

No observations made.

#### LEANNE

She turned to face the teacher and the projector board during the intro. Nataile raised her hand several times during the intro and answered 2 questions. This indicates she was listening and engaged in the introductory talk. Leanne worked at a fast pace and gave a detailed summary about each of the six symbols. She was the only one to find the symbol for the motor independently. The teacher said it was a v.complicated process and had to describe how to do for the rest of the class. When I asked her how she did it, she replied, "I just tried everything."

During the second intro. after break, the teacher addressed 'font' Leanne did not raise her hand at all. She produced a lovely piece of work, which she seemed v.pleased with. The teacher said what an excellent piece of work it was and she smiled in reply.

#### TARIQ

Tariq did not have access to his own computer last week. He put his hand up on numerous occasions throughout the introductory talk; indicating he was engaged in the talk and listening. He got his first answer wrong, although it would seem this did not discourage him. During the intro his attention seemed divided by his own computer screen and the teacher. He would be looking at his screen and pressing the mouse etc. rather than looking the projected computer screen.

He worked v.well and needed little assistance. I recall he asked me for assistance on only one occasion; to help find the symbol for a push button (I conferred with another pupil to find out!).

When Mrs Eastwood remarked she would split up those who struggled and sit them with the ones who knew what she was doing, she mentioned Tariq as an example

**Thursday 24/01/02 15:30 - 16:30**

Myself (Mr West was off): after school ICT session (computer room)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk> Revisewise website

(1 focal child present in a group of six)

❖ Observation of:

➤ Initial 10 minutes: independent investigation of the word 'volcano' on the internet. All

- children had to draw on their knowledge of the previous session incorporating a trial and error method.
- Ongoing verbal and practical assistance throughout session
- ❖ Drawing on head notes

The initial task was sent round in the register to be read out to members of after school ICT session. They had to log on to the computer as 'club', log onto the internet and search for this weeks 'web warm-up' which is 'volcano.' "Try to find one interesting fact or unusual piece of information related to his word or topic." The progress of each member would be discussed at 15:40. Thereafter pupils visited the revisewise website and created their own username and password before beginning the science activities.

#### DANIEL

Daniel like the rest of the group attending this session, had difficulty remembering the password and username. He needed assistance with getting onto the internet and beginning a search. I spelt the word 'volcano' aloud to help those who needed it. A list of websites containing the word 'volcano' came up but he did not know what to do next. He was not able to draw upon the knowledge he developed or the work he covered in the last session. No one had found out an interesting fact about a volcano, so all members were at similar levels.

As there was only one teacher (myself), I found it difficult to provide the assistance each person required. Only one pupil would have a go at 'trying to work it out' whilst waiting for me; Daniel would not do anything without me standing with him. He tried to have a go himself on the next activity, to begin work on revisewise science. The aim of this, was the development of ICT skills alongside science revision; the latter in preparation for the SAT's. Daniel followed instructions about how to log on and obtain their personal username and password. This was quite a lengthy process and required children to focus, listen, follow instructions and be patience. Daniel had difficulty with this and pressed the mouse button numerous times, taking him ahead of the rest of the group – only to go back again as he had bypassed creating his own password and username.

Once on revisewise science, children worked through different science topics at their own pace (activity, fact sheet, test). Daniel completed the first topic and scored 12/15. He completed it again and obtained a similar score, which annoyed him. The review sheet went over why the answers he selected were wrong, rather than, informing him of the correct ones. We went through it together and he received full marks which he was v.happy with. He observed other members were doing different science topics and asked to go onto another one; but he soon got bored.

#### Friday 25/01/02 13:35 - 14.10

1 focal children present in a pair (staff room)

Numeracy:

- Adding 10, 20, 30 etc. to given number
- 3 and 4 (tables)
- ❖ Observation of Daniel during session
- ❖ Combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time

#### DANIEL

I tested Daniel on the 3x table 'mixed-up', presenting questions verbally and visually ((table cards). Daniel got all the questions right, using his fingers and counting aloud to work some out. I told him, he would become faster with more practice and that he had done excellently, rewarding him with personal points. He cut up his copy of 4( table for next week as I worked with his fellow pupil

#### WORKING TOGETHER

They told me they had been practicing together. Daniel had asked the other pupil during reading time just before our session together, to write out the 3x table questions 'jumbled up'. He had completed them and she had then marked them, he had got 12/15. This indicates Daniel was motivated to do well and had been practicing; his fellow pupil was willing to help him learn his 3x table. They are beginning to develop an effective learning and working relationship. Daniel would be very embarrassed doing the work we do with the majority of fellow class members.

As we worked together throughout the session, it became apparent the learning was occurring between the two children and the children and myself. As such it is difficult to list the observations and outcomes separately for Daniel and the other pupil.

I then went on to explain the next task. I would show them a number (e.g. 23) and ask them to add 10 to it but they were not allowed to use their fingers (which I had to reiterate to Daniel several times). Initially they could not do this, so we identified which column was the units and which column was the tens (they were unsure). I explained there were 2 tens and we needed to add another ten, making it 33. Once they understood this they progressively got faster and individually answered questions within the range 0-25. We then went on to adding 20. They said they were bored so I changed it so I could add any number from 10-80; which they saw, as more of a challenge. They started off well and then the other pupil forgot what method she had been using. Daniel answered one question and explained how he had done it, but the other pupil did not understand his explanation. I went through his example again slowly and she said she remembered what to do.

As they did so well we moved on to adding a range of numbers E.g.  $11 + 65 = ?$  Neither knew what to do, so I explained the number 11 could be ( 10 and 1. This confused them so we went back to adding 10, 20, 30 etc. But Daniel had forgotten what to do. We went through it again briefly. When I asked which sums they found harder, Daniel said the ones with bigger numbers and when they had to add 11 or something like that. I said we would go over it next time. Daniel got a treat (individual to them: a gel pen)for excellent focus and trying hard throughout the session.

At the end of the session, when I asked how they thought it had gone, Daniel commented he wanted to come everyday. As we walked up to the classroom, the other pupil commented she got more sums right in her mental maths, Daniel adding, he got more sums right and he finished the test in a faster time.

Comment: Daniel is developing confidence and developing new strategies to work sums out. He is not embarrassed in front of the other pupil at having a go at answering questions if he is unsure, or using his fingers to help add/subtract. They are developing an effective learning relationship.

**Friday 25/01/2014:15 - 14.30**

Homework group: (staff room)

Explanation of homework: spellings and maths

- ❖ Observation of both children during our time together (1 focal child present in group of 6)
- ❖ Combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time

Context: Some of the group had already gone over the maths homework (area and perimeter) so we went over the spellings and I kept Daniel and Saleema behind to go over the maths separately. I mentioned that last week Saleema had mentioned her sister got the same spellings. I explained that the spelling rules were from year 3 and that we were using them as revision (as told to by Mrs Eastwood). This weeks rule was about adding 'er' and 'est' to words ending in 'y', E.g. happy. I asked what they thought the rule was and as none of them could explain it to me, I reiterated that we were going over this work as they couldn't remember the rules.

**DANIEL**

Daniel appeared to be listening to the explanation of the spellings homework; adding 'er' and 'est' to words ending in 'y', E.g. happy. I told them the 'y' changes to an 'i' and then you add the 'er' or 'est'. I asked all group members including Daniel to spell aloud several examples without access to the rule written down. He was able to do this without help from me. I explained briefly the format of the homework, as it was the same each week.

I then went over the numeracy homework: area and perimeter. I asked them if they could describe to me in their words what each of these was, and Saleema said that perimeter was the outside of a

shape, and area was the inside; Daniel appeared unsure. We went through some examples, counting the squares within a shape (area) and counting the sides of the shapes in 1cm squares (perimeter). Both completed an example independently and said they understood the homework. We discussed the units each is measures in, and this information was also provided on the worksheet.

When I looked at their magic square homework from last week, Daniel said he had done some magic squares, but then got stuck.

**Friday 25/01/02 15:00 - 15:20**

4 focal children present (classroom)

Class meeting

- ❖ Observation of focal children during the meeting
- ❖ Combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time

The class meetings are usually weekly. Issues are brought to the attention of the teacher before the class meeting (issues brought by pupils, classroom assistants, LO or the teacher). Each is Gillian is dealt with in turn and the children have the opportunity to have their say and suggest solutions to any of the problems, which arise. The names of those involved in the said incident and those who bring the issues forward are not mentioned within the meeting.

**DANIEL**

In response to the issues of 'What do you suggest we do about those children who throw things around the classroom – in this case a marble had hit someone on the head. Previously the issues had arisen numerous times, regarding the throwing of felt- tip pens around the classroom and at people. Daniel said the children involved should be band from going on all class trips.

The teacher picked a few children out and said you have previously been involved in similar incidents to this one. She asked, "How would you like it, if I stood on your gel pens and cracked them?" Daniel's response was silence. The teacher went on, "Would you like me to teach you after I had done something like that?" and Daniel replied "No."

**BETH**

No observations made.

**LEANNE**

In response to the issues of 'What do you suggest we do about those children who throw things around the classroom – in this case a marble had hit someone on the head. Previously the issues had arisen numerous times, regarding the throwing of felt- tip pens around the classroom and at people.

Leanne suggested people who did it, meant it as a joke. She added those children could be excluded from having access to wet play activities and have to sit outside the head teacher's room.

In another issues (brought forward by myself in relation to an incident in a reading group) the teacher asked the class the difference between a discussion and an argument. Leanne suggested that in an argument, people did not give reasons to back up what they were saying; which they did give in a discussion. She gave the example of choosing colours to colour a picture in. Unfortunately, a key figure in the incident was not in school that day, although Leanne had been involved. I think perhaps it would have been more appropriate to discuss the issues when all those involved were present and had the opportunity to state there opinion.

**TARIQ**

Tariq didn't put his hand up during the class meeting.

## Week Four

**Thursday 31/01/02 09:40 - 12.00**

Visit to CCC: science incorporating ICT skills (same room)  
(4 focal children present)

- ❖ Observation of class during 1st introduction by CCC manager (creating a series and parallel circuit using a word document: approx. 15 mins)
- ❖ Observation of class during 1st independent work by the computer
  - 10 minute break outside (no observations made)
- ❖ Observation of class during 2nd intro. by CCC manager (creating a wordsearch: approx. 10 mins)
- ❖ Observation of class during 2nd session of independent work by the computer
- ❖ Combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time

The manager demonstrated what a series and parallel circuit was, using children from the class as objects (bulb, battery, switch and their arms as represented the wires). He stated the task of today was for each child to create their own series and parallel circuit using pictures initially and symbols if they got that far. Alongside the circuit, children had to write a description of each circuit. Every child printed out a copy of at least a series circuit; a number of children were confused about how the components in a parallel circuit were arranged. I too was unsure about the parallel circuit and was apprehensive about helping a pupil with this and asked Mrs Eastwood to have a look.

After break, the second task was to produce a word search, again using the publisher program. He emphasised the importance of correct spellings.

### DANIEL

During the introduction, Daniel looked at the direction of the projected computer screen and appeared to be listening. He did not put his hand up to answer any questions posed by the teacher. He produced a diagram of a series circuit, and needed help with writing the associated text. I reminded that a series circuit was similar to a daisy chain, where the components were arranged one after the other. He did not work fast enough to create a parallel circuit.

During the second introduction, Daniel looked at the direction of the projected computer screen where the teacher was demonstrating the next task. He appeared to be listening although he did not put his hand up to answer any questions. AT the computer, he managed to create the table himself without help. He asked me "How do you spell chemical?" I responded, "Do you mean chemical as in chemical energy, that is stored in the battery?" (I wanted to remind him how the word was associated with the work on circuits). He replied, "Yes." I suggested I could write a list of words for him with the correct spellings, if he told me the words he wanted to include in the word search. He agreed and we drew up a list together, he couldn't recall the names of all the components and needed a couple of prompts. E.g. He could not remember the name of the component that is associated with movement (motor). But I asked him "Can you remember the name of the thing that makes a sound?" And he responded "A buzzer." He appeared to enjoy this exercise.

He asked me for further help if I was near to him, especially if I was assisting his friend whom he sat next to. (The teacher did not split them up). E.g. he would say, he needed more boxes if his words didn't fit and we inserted new columns and rows. (Vygotsky - ZPD).

Daniel came to me as soon as he got in today, to say he had done his reading and showed me his comment book, which his mother had written in. I no longer read with Daniel's group, although I gave him personal points and positive feedback. He also held the door open for me as most of the class had already gone through the door whilst I was stood struggling with two hot drinks – v.considerate.

#### BETH

Beth sat and faced the projector board at the beginning of the intro. She was asked to be a bulb in practical demonstration, both as part of a series and parallel circuit. She looked extremely embarrassed and as her hands were representing wires, she had to hold two boys hands – which she was v.uncomfortable in. The manager turned it into a joke and asked if she would take this boy's hand in marriage – her face went red, she smiled and loudly stated “No!”

Beth was not in last week, neither was her friend who she was sat next to. The teacher asked them to move places so she was sat next to someone who was in the previous week (and were confident in their use of computer skills). Beth worked well and produced a series circuit (what else?). She asked for assistance off me when and as, she required it. Beth was quite confident in her use of computer skills.

During the second introduction, Beth put her hand up and volunteered an answer on one occasion. She began her word search and seemed to enjoy herself at the CCC.

#### LEANNE

She turned to face the teacher and the projector board during the intro. Leanne raised her hand once during the first introduction but did not answer any questions. She appeared to be listening. Leanne worked very fast and produced a series and parallel circuit with symbols. Moreover she produced some lovely descriptive text: the current is like a round about, it goes round and round the circuit. (Check –series circuit). The manager read this aloud and remarked what a lovely piece of work it was. Leanne also produced a series circuit using symbols. She needed very little help. During the second introduction, Leanne put her hand up several times and answered 2 questions.

Leanne asked me how I was as soon as she came in and whether I was feeling better; which was lovely!

#### TARIQ

Tariq did not put his hand throughout the first introductory talk. He looked in the direction of the board and appeared to be listening. He got on with his work and produced a series circuit,; he needed assistance to write the associated text. When I asked him to describe the circuit he had designed, he quietly said it's just a circuit. He said he did not know the difference between a parallel and series circuit; which I attempted to explain (not v.confidently). When he designed the parallel circuit, it was evident he still didn't understand. I asked him to go onto the word search and we would go over it in class.

Tariq volunteered an answer in the second introductory talk after break.

I have noticed Tariq is quite cheeky to the teacher and assistants – quiet comments whilst the teacher is talking or after requests etc.

**Thursday 31/01/02 15:30 → 16:30**

Mrs Edwards and myself (Mr West was off): after school ICT session (computer room)

Word art and clip art

(1 focal child present in a group of six)

- ❖ Observation of:
  - Use of computer skills throughout skills and assistance
- ❖ Listening skills (instructions)
- ❖ Drawing on head notes

Each child was asked to write a few sentences about themselves, including their name as this teacher was new to the class. The teacher then introduced them to word art and each pupil was allowed to print out their piece of work in colour.

## DANIEL

When Daniel sat down he remember the username and password, but wrote them in the wrong order initially. He went onto a word document and wrote his name etc. He listened to and followed the teacher's instructions and proceeded onto word art, where he wrote his name and 'So Solid Crew' (which he has mentioned to me in a previous ICT session) in fancy writing. He decided to take his name out, so only the music group's name was written. When he asked if he could print it out, I asked if he would he like to change the layout of the paper so that it was landscape instead of portrait (indicating with my hands what I meant). I suggested he could then put it, for example on a file or on his bedroom door. He was pleased with the landscape format and I asked if it would be best to make it bigger so it fit the page. He did this without assistance (he might have remembered this from the ICT session at the CCC that morning).

Once he had completed that, he asked if he could go onto clip art. I heard him ask his friend how to type the words in, his friend came over and did it for him. I went over to Daniel and told him that he needed to click the search button. He got quite carried away and printed out two cars, enlarging them to fill the page. The teacher remarked that he along with the other children should have only printed one picture out and that they were wasting her ink! Daniel had a big grin on his face and appeared v.happy with the work he had done in the session.

## Week Five

**Monday 04/02/02 14:00 → 14.15**

Numeracy: 4× table

(1 focal children present in a pair: staff room)

- ❖ Observation of Daniel during session
- ❖ Combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time

## DANIEL

Daniel's target from the previous time we had worked together, was to learn the 4× table. Thus I tested him on his 4× table 'mixed up'. I asked Daniel if he would prefer me to say aloud and show him the question (4× table cards) or just say it. I did this as I had previously observed he sometimes forgot the question when he tried to keep it in his head. He said he would prefer to 'see it' so I said it aloud simultaneously as I presented it. Daniel needed time to work out the questions I asked him and he used his fingers a lot to 'count on'; especially with the larger numbers e.g. 7×4.

I told him he had done v.well and asked him if he thought he could do it faster, he replied he didn't know. I told him his target for Friday was to learn the 4× table, so he could answer the questions faster. He said okay but said he wanted to do his 5× table (as I was testing his fellow pupil on the 6× table on Friday and I think he thought he was falling behind.) I felt it was important to master the lower tables before trying the higher tables.

**Tuesday 05/02/02 09:40 ( 10.30**

Literacy: instructional writing (classroom)

Mrs Eastwood, Mrs Patel (extra support) and Helen

- ❖ Teacher read through the text with the class (selecting children to read)
- ❖ Observation of class during intro (Teacher addressed whole class for approx 15 mins)
- ❖ Combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time

The teacher asked the children to underline any words within the text ('making pancakes') that they were unsure of (i.e. did not understand.) The teacher explained she would give them the opportunity to ask what they meant after they had read through the text. The teacher asked the children to answer other pupils questions and her own i.e. explaining/clarifying vocabulary. E.g. if a pupil asked what the word 'quantity' meant, the teacher would ask the class and select somebody with their hand up to explain it.

I observed those children who speak English as their second language, particularly struggled with the vocabulary within this text. Mrs Eastwood had asked Mrs Patel to explain to children in their own language, those who had difficulty understanding any text or vocabulary. The comprehension was started in the lesson and finished off for homework.

#### **TARIQ**

Tariq put his hand up to ask the meaning of a few words within the text, e.g. what does 'batter' mean?

He put his hand up and was selected to explain the meaning of 'tossing' and drew on the board what a 'spatula' looked like.

He appeared to lose his concentration and began curling up the ends of the comprehension paper ('making pancakes') as other pupils explained the meaning of words within the text.

Tariq listened and laughed with the teacher, as she explained several 'pancake incidents' she had experienced.

#### **DANIEL**

Daniel was selected to read aloud part of the text, which he did without any problems. He put his hand up once at the end of the intro. to explain what 'pinch of salt' meant.

When I gave the literacy books out, Daniel's was not in the pile. He said he thought had given it in and couldn't remember when he had it last. I gave him a piece of lined paper to write on, but he then found it in his tray.

#### **BETH**

Beth was not present in the literacy lesson, as she attended the Indian music session.

#### **LEANNE**

Leanne put her hand up quite a lot in response to the questions asked, although she was not selected to explain any of the vocab. When the teacher asked how the method to make pancakes could be made clearer, Leanne volunteered you could use bullet points or numbers.

I asked Leanne if I could look at her work at the end of the session, she commented, her work from last week was better than today's. So I asked her why she thought this and she said "well, because its neater...the words are equal, but maybe I rushed it a bit today."

#### **Thursday 07/02/02 09:40 → 12.00**

Visit to CCC: science incorporating ICT skills (same room)

(4 focal children present)

- ❖ Observation of class during 1<sup>st</sup> introduction by CCC manager (revision of how to create a wordsearch approx. 15 mins)
- ❖ Observation of class during 1<sup>st</sup> independent work by the computer
- ❖ Observation of class during 2nd introduction by CCC manager (utilising wordart within titles 10 mins)
- ❖ Observation of class during 2nd independent work by the computer
  - 10 minute break outside (no observations made)
- ❖ Observation of class during 3<sup>rd</sup> intro. by Mrs. Eastwood (creating a front cover using Microsoft publisher) approx. 10 mins)
- ❖ Observation of class during 3<sup>rd</sup> session of independent work by the computer
- ❖ Combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time

The manager briefly addressed how to create a wordsearch on the word program. For the majority of the class, it was revision and some children remembered key steps in the process. Each child continued with the work saved from the previous session. The manager introduced wordart to the class, which they could use when they wrote the title. Every pupil printed out the wordsearch they had created.

After break Mrs Eastwood said each pupil was going to produce a front cover for the work they had produced at the CCC (city learning centre). They only had 30 mins to finish this work and print it off. The teacher drew on the existing knowledge of the children in their use of publisher, emphasising

the need for their name, class and title. Everyone printed a front cover out, although they were printed out at different stages (several children had not finished)

#### **DANIEL**

I did not work with Daniel today, although he did receive assistance off Mrs Eastwood throughout the session.

During the first introduction, Daniel turned in his chair and looked at the direction of the projected computer screen and appeared to be listening. He put his hand up to answer questions on a several occasions when he was sure not to be selected (when someone else had been selected to answer.)

During the second introduction, Daniel looked at the direction of the projected computer screen. Again, he put his hand up to answer questions posed by the teacher when he was sure not to be selected (when someone else had been selected to answer.) On the occasion he was selected to answer a question (what does the little yellow arrow do?), he guessed that it the arrow made it bigger and the manager replied "Nearly."

During the third introduction, Mrs Eastwood used Daniel's work to illustrate how to use publisher and insert borders.

At the end of the session, Daniel shouted out to me, that he had finished his work and smiled a large grin.

Daniel completed a wordsearch and a front cover

#### **BETH**

Beth sat and faced the projector board at the beginning of the intro. She sat on her feet kneeling up, which she always tends to do when sat on the floor. She appeared to be listening as she put up her hand several times in response to questions posed throughout each of the introductions. I assisted Beth with the creation of the front cover and utilising wordart. I demonstrated how to alter the writing several times before Beth could remember the steps to follow. When I went to help other pupils, she would call me out and ask to look at her work E.g. if she wanted to show me a electricity picture she had found.

Beth completed a wordsearch and a front cover

#### **LEANNE**

She turned to face the teacher and the projector board during the intro. Leanne raised her hand several times during the first introduction but did not answer any questions. She appeared to be listening. Leanne demonstrated to me how to insert wordart As she created the wordsearch I showed Leanne how to insert bullets next to her list of words, which she was v.impressed on. I asked her to show another pupil, although she couldn't remember the buttons to follow etc. SO she watched me again as I showed the other pupil.

During the second introduction, Leanne again raised her hand on a couple of occasions. She described to the class the steps to follow to create a title for their work using wordart.

During the third intro she raised her hand once.

Leanne worked fast and produced two lovely pieces of work: wordsearch and front cover.

Leanne asked me how I was as soon as she came in and whether I was feeling better - which was lovely!

#### **TARIQ**

Tariq did not put his hand throughout the first introductory talk. He looked in the direction of the board and appeared to be listening. He got on with his work and produced a series circuit,; he needed assistance to write the associated text. When I asked him to describe the circuit he had designed, he quietly said it's just a circuit. He said he did not know the difference between a parallel and series circuit; which I attempted to explain (not v.confidently). When he designed the parallel circuit, it was evident he still didn't understand. I asked him to go onto the word search and we would go over it in class.

Tariq volunteered an answer in the second introductory talk after break.

I have noticed Tariq is quite cheeky to the teacher and assistants – quiet comments whilst the teacher is talking or after requests etc.

**Friday 08/02/02 13:30 → 14.00**

1 focal children present in a pair (staff room)

Numeracy:

- 4 ×table
  - 3 ×table problems
  - Knowledge of and ordering numbers (Th, H, T, U.)
  - Counting back in 10's
  - 'Adding 1 and 2 digit numbers' exercise sheet
- ❖ Observation of Daniel during session
  - ❖ Combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time

**DANIEL**

*4x table*

I tested Daniel on the 4( table 'mixed-up', presenting questions verbally first and then visually once Daniel had written the questions down ((table cards). As I thought this would be good practice for the mental maths tests he has to complete. Daniel used his fingers and counted quietly but aloud. Daniel got all but two questions correct (one out on both occasions) and I asked him to look at them again. He recounted and I told him they must end in an even number rather than an odd number. We reviewed what these words meant as he seemed unsure. He redid the questions and I asked his fellow pupil to mark them, Daniel got all the sums correct. He was quicker than last time, although he still needed time to work out the sums

*3x table problems*

- Daniel struggled with the 3 (table problems I gave him verbally. E.g. what is 15 divided by 3? At first he seemed to have forgotten his 3 (table; he took a long time to answer questions and he often gave an incorrect answer. Perhaps as he thought he had to give an answer. I said to him, it was okay to say he didn't know and so he did!
- I asked him how do we write down divide and he wrote ( (times). So we went over the symbols and alternative terminology for division (share between) and times (multiplication). His understanding of my terminology was incorrect and thus hindered him.
- Daniel still struggled so I rephrased the question: 'How many three's are in fifteen?' A soon as I said this, Daniel said "Ahh, that's easy." He counted on his fingers and said "Five."

The terminology I had used had affected his understanding of the maths problems. I asked him to write it down and said I would use the both terms from now on (i.e. divide and how many). I thought it was important for him to understand the range of possible terminology that could be used in maths problems.

- Daniel struggled with some questions inc. 21 ( 3 and 24 ( 3 and I thought it was important for him to revisit the 3 (table. Consequently I asked him to review the 3 and 4 (tables for next week. Again he said, he wanted to do the 5 (table so I will ask him to do that next week (I think it might be easier for him.)

*Knowledge of and ordering numbers (Th, H, T, U.)*

Daniel had no trouble saying aloud and writing down the numbers I visually presented to him

E.g. 6768 = six thousand, seven hundred and sixty eight.

826 = eight hundred and twenty six

He was also able to tell me which numbers were bigger and smaller, thus he has knowledge of ordering.

### *Counting back in 10's*

I asked Daniel to count back in tens from 43 and he replied, "You can't." So I did it, as an example: 43, 33, 23, 13, 3, and told him you wouldn't get to 0 as there would be some left over. I asked him to repeat it to me, which he did without any problems. Once he got the hang of this, he became v.fast and it became automatic.

### *Adding 1 and 2 digit numbers' exercise sheet*

Daniel began to ask me a question about the sheet and I asked him if he would have a go at completing the sheet without any help from me. Daniel completed the sheet v.fast and used his fingers to work out the answers. He got all the questions correct.

## Week Six

**Monday 11/02/02 13:25 → 13.45**

Group reading

(2 focal children present in a group of five: staff room)

- ❖ Observation of two focal children
- ❖ Combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time

### LEANNE

Leanne had completed her homework (a short summary of the main events that had occurred in the reading homework.) She met the target set for the group the previous group (putting her hand up and waiting to speak, rather than interrupting others). She read aloud well and appeared quite confident within this group.

### BETH

Beth had completed her homework (a short summary of the main events that had occurred in the reading homework.) Beth met the target set for the group the previous group (putting her hand up and waiting to speak, rather than interrupting others). I observed other members only interrupted, when Beth was reading or asking a question – this was on a couple of occasions. She hesitated when she came across unfamiliar words. Beth would ask myself or other group members, "How do you say that?" A couple of members were v.confident in their ability to read the vocabulary and corrected Beth's pronunciation on several occasions. I asked the group not to interrupt and told Beth to have a go at reading aloud the unfamiliar words. She attempted the unfamiliar words from then on. When she had finished her reading, I noticed she gave the pupil, who corrected her most, a prolonged look (although he did not see).

**Monday 11/02/02 15:00 → 15.15**

Numeracy: 3× table problems using division

Counting back in 10's

(1 focal children present in a pair: staff room)

- ❖ Observation of Daniel during session
- ❖ Combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time

### DANIEL

I gave Daniel and the other pupil several 3× table problems to solve, using counters (shiny stones) I had brought to the session. The aim was to introduce the relationship between division and multiplication.

E.g. I asked Daniel (verbal presentation only) 'how many three's are there in twelve?' I used the terminology Daniel was familiar with from the last session as I did not want to confuse him. I asked him to work it out in his head first (Daniel said 'four'), and then use the counters to check his answer. He was not sure how to check his answer; so I asked him to put the counters in groups of three. After he had done this, I asked him to count the number of groups '1,2, 3, 4' and I said to him, "That's the same as you worked out, isn't it?" Daniel looked confused. So we did a several more examples using the 3× table and he was successful grouping the counters with assistance. He aided the other pupil, whom although knows her tables quite well, struggled with dividing the groups into counters.

Daniel counted back in tens from several different numbers (63, 99, 47, 71) without any difficulty. I asked the other pupil if she had been practicing at home, as she struggled last lesson. As she replied no, Daniel said he had.

We briefly went over different terminology for addition and subtraction. When I asked if they knew any other words for take away (their preferred terminology), they drew a blank. When I suggested minus, subtraction, less than etc. – Daniel said “Oh, yeah.”

When I asked if they could tell me any different words for addition, between them, they had remembered “Total, plus, more than.”

I reminded each pupil of their target for our session on Friday and to bring in their homework; and I said I would bring the pens and chocolate.

**Thursday 14/02/02 09:45 → 12.00**

Visit to CCC: Microsoft power point ‘about me’ (Mark Hepworth)

(4 focal children present: upstairs room)

- ❖ Observation of focal children during session
- ❖ Combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time

The class had a different CCC teacher today and their normal class teacher was away, so a supply teacher was present. She had been with them all week and had remarked she had found it v.difficult working with this class. She commented they were rude, especially the Asian boys (e.g. talking to each other whilst she was trying to address the class). There had been several incidents with between the teacher and a number of children the class; and the supply teacher had experienced difficulty, maintaining control – she frequently sought assistance off either Alison or myself. Mrs Eastwood had made written notes for the teacher regarding the visit, stating I would go at the front of the line on the walk to the CCC and the class would follow my instructions. Thankfully Alison (part-time classroom assistant also accompanied us on the visit.) I was quite strict with the children and adopted a role as the main teacher, although this wasn’t made explicit.

The CCC teacher (Mark Hepworth) introduced the power point program to the class, which most had never heard of or used. The aim of the session was for each pupil in the class to create a power point presentation ‘about me’ (4/5 slides maximum). The initial introduction was quite long (approx 30 mins) and the children grew restless. Within the first introduction, the children were showed: how to get onto the program; the different types of presentation slides to choose from; how to change the text; the importance of brief statements incorporating the use of bullet points; how to insert new slides etc.

Mark Hepworth stopped the children several times during their time at the computer to demonstrate how to change the slide background; the use if word art; changing the format of the slide presentation and inserting clip art. At the end of the session, the teacher asked me to select a few children’s examples to present to the rest of the class. We were due to leave at 11.30am and ended up leaving at 11.40, as the children were so enthusiastic to show and look at other children’s presentations.

The CCC teacher told the class, that this session was for the children to ‘experiment’ with the program and to get some ideas; as next week they would make a new one. They could incorporate pictures and text, but the aim was to keep it simple. they would not have the opportunity to print out their work, as the idea was to give a power point presentation to fellow class members. This teacher initially asked the supply teacher what she thought of his introduction to power point. As she had worked with the children only four days, she informed him to ask either of the classroom assistants, as we were more familiar with the work and the children. Mark Hepworth sought feedback regarding the pace of his session and the material covered etc. as he was new to addressing primary school children. The 30 in introduction session was too long for the children and the majority had difficulty keeping still – there was a lot of information to absorb and some children began to mess about after 10 min or so. Moreover he incorporated vocabulary that most children were unfamiliar with, thus

only a few children could answer his questions, i.e. those familiar with computer terminology, this particular computer programme and those who felt confident to have a go. The same few children appeared to put their hands up in response to his questions.

At the end of the session, Mr Hepworth said he thought the class had produced some lovely work and that they would keep it, instead of starting new ones. I said it was a shame that we did not have the time to look at everyone's presentations, but that we would make time on the future. Mr Hepworth said he would save them all on disk and provide us with a copy to take to school, so we could look at them – the children were very pleased.

#### **DANIEL**

The class are usually asked to move to the carpet to view the projected screen. Mr Hepworth said the children could move onto the carpet if they couldn't see the screen. I moved Daniel onto the floor at the beginning of the session as I observed he was talking and messing with his computer and chair whilst the teacher talked. I also moved his friend. Neither were v.happy about this; I felt it was best in terms of getting them to listen and engage in the lesson. After 10 mins or so, he began to talk and mess with his friend, and he told me he thought I was 'boring' - they did not appear to be listening.

Daniel raised his hand to answer questions several times during the introduction, but when he was selected to talk, he did not have an answer; he would quietly say "I don't know" or smile and shrug his shoulders. His friend sat with him on the floor, laughed when Daniel put his hand up to answer questions. In response to one question, Daniel quietly said "You highlight it" looking at me for confirmation – I told him to put up his hand – he grinned when someone else said his answer and got it right.

I also moved Daniel and his friend, so they were sat next to someone who could assist them if they needed help. Generally, I have observed children have to wait for assistance off the adults in the room and this infringes on their time at the computer; they could also seek assistance off the children sat next to them.

I spent quite a lot of time with Daniel, as he could not remember things gone over in the introduction. e.g. how to find Microsoft power point, how to select a slide format etc. He was able to delete and write text without assistance; and once shown how to insert clip art and search for relevant pictures, he remembered the steps. I asked those sat near each other to help each other if they could not remember what to do. The boy sat next to Daniel, helped him on several occasions. I showed Daniel how use several tools within in his slides: how to insert word art, motion clips, bullet points; how to change the colour of text and the background. Daniel had difficulty with spelling some of his words, writing them as they sounded  
e.g. enough → anuth

Daniel was the first to present his to the class; he had slides describing his hobbies and his family (with a motion clip of his mother). The class were impressed and Daniel smiled and the class gave him a clap. Several children wanted to know how he had got the pictures moving i.e. the cartoon mum. Little did they know it I had tried it on Daniel as an experiment after watching several other children doing it, and that he could rid of it if it didn't work or if he didn't like it. We had also set the slides on a timer, which I had learnt at the Monday lesson.

#### **BETH**

Beth turned in her chair and faced the projector board at the beginning of the intro. She appeared to be listening as she put up her hand several times in response to questions throughout the introduction. Beth worked quite independently, but liked to show me what she had found or her presentation so far (but she only put her hand up if I was near to her). As Beth could not remember how to change the background of the slide, she asked me to assist her. We went through several examples, and Beth selected the background he liked best.

Beth showed her presentation to the class, her slides covered her hobbies, her family and a physical description of herself (including inserted motion clips of eyes and lips). She smiled when

the class gave her a clap. On the way home, she told me she felt embarrassed about her physical description slide, as she had written I have lovely blue eyes and red lips.

#### LEANNE

She turned to face the teacher and the projector board during the intro. Leanne raised her hand numerous times during the first introduction and answered several questions. Thus indicating she was listening as she was engaged in the lesson. E.g. she talked the class through how to get onto the Microsoft PowerPoint program (you go onto start, programs, then PowerPoint). When Mr Hepworth asked how she knew this information, Leanne replied, "Most programs on the computer are on the start button" (drawing on previous knowledge). Throughout the introduction, Leanne frowned when the teacher used terminology she was not familiar with.

Leanne asked me to show her how to insert bullet points, like the ones from the last lesson. I also showed her how to insert clip art. When the children have previously used clip art, they draw a picture box and then insert the clip art. Within this program no tool was available to draw the box and thus Leanne was hesitant to try inserting clip art. I assured her it was okay and showed her an example, undoing it, so she could do it herself. She remembered the procedure without any problems.

Leanne showed her presentation to the class, and she had motion clips of butterflies throughout her slides (which I had inserted unknowingly as an example of a picture). We also set her presentation on a timer; she smiled when the class gave her a clap.

#### TARIQ

I did not work with Tariq today. He took off his shoes once he got into the CCC and put them under the desk. I have observed only one other boy do this on a regular basis at the CCC and he was sat next to Tariq.

Tariq put his hand up once throughout the introductory talk, stating to get rid of words, you highlighted and deleted them. He shouted out answers on several occasions, sometimes by himself, other times with the rest of the class. He looked in the direction of the board and appeared to be listening. He occasionally turned to look at his computer or to talk to the boy sat next to him.

#### Friday 15/02/02 14:00 → 14.45

Numeracy: 3x table problems; counting back in 10's; addition and subtraction vocabulary; addition and subtraction facts to 20

(1 focal children present in a pair: staff room)

- ❖ Observation of Daniel during session
- ❖ Combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time

#### DANIEL

I tested Daniel on his 3x and he was much faster working out the answers compared to previous attempts (I only asked questions verbally, telling both pupils it was good practice for the mental maths). He got 10/11 (he wrote  $4 \times 3 = 13$ ). I tested Daniel on his 4x table with the assistance of the other pupil present. I swapped round the numbers in the questions, to see if Daniel was aware that this didn't change the sum - Daniel had no problems with this indicating prior knowledge.

E.g.  $4 \times 6 =$   
 $8 (4 =$

We also tested Daniel up to 12 (4, (he had learnt up to 10 (4) and he counted on, getting the sums correct and looking v. pleased with himself (getting 13/13). I did this as the other pupil asks to be tested up to 12 (whatever, and so I tried it with Daniel. His target for the next session was his 5 (table; which he was pleased about, so he could catch up to the other pupil.

#### 3x table problems

I directed several 3( tables problems to each pupil, asking them first to work out the sums in their head and then with the counters. E.g. "If there were three children and fifteen sweets, how many sweets would each child get?" They could work out the answer mentally with little problem, but would need several prompts to guide them in using the counters to help work the sums out.

*Counting back in tens – two digit numbers:*

Daniel had no problems with this and was v. quick to count back from a given number e.g. 67; we did this exercise several times using different numbers. As this did not appear to present a challenge for Daniel, I asked if he would like to try using a number over 100 and he agreed  
E.g. 130 Daniel struggled with this in terms of counting back from 130 to 100 in tens ('130, 100' no..er.. 130, 120, 100') counting from 100 posed no problems for him.

*Addition and subtraction vocabulary.*

I verbally presented five questions, asking both children to:

- Write down the question using numbers and signs (to check their understanding)
- Work the answer out.

E.g. Seventeen minus six  
Two more than thirteen

I asked to see how they had written down the question and asked them in turn for their answer. Daniel wrote down the ( sign each time I said 'minus' and I told him on two occasions that it meant 'take away.' After several questions incorporating 'minus' Daniel began to write down the correct corresponding sign to minus; I observed he quietly said to himself 'takeaway' as I said minus, or 'add' when I said plus. We discussed how we could learn the different words for 'add' and 'take away.' I suggested I could make some cards similar to the (table ones, with words on one side and the corresponding maths sign on the other; we they though would be good. At the end of this session I asked them to tell me some different words for ( and ( and between them, they came up with the all the ones I had just incorporated into their questions.

Andre and the other pupil present, had difficulty mentally working out addition and subtraction facts to twenty. Daniel also used the 'counting back' method he had used in the v.first session. I asked him if he remembered the 'counting on' method, Daniel replied he did, and you 'add on', but he only uses it for 'big numbers.' I asked him if he could try on use it for these questions in the next session we had together after the holidays.

*Writing and ordering whole numbers*

I verbally stated several numbers, which both children were asked to write down, using digits.

E.g. One thousand, six hundred and six  
Two hundred and three  
Ninety-nine.

Both children had a problem writing the first number down (perhaps I had chosen a number that was too big.) thus I asked them to write down the order of columns (Th.; H; T; U) after writing this down and using it to guide him, Daniel had no problems writing down any preceding numbers. If I asked him which was the biggest or smallest, he had no problem pointing to the correct one. When I asked how he knew, he said because there is only two numbers in that one (and point e.g.99) and three in that one (e.g. 203). He was much more confident with this, in comparison to the other pupil present.

Both children had forgotten their homework and I asked them to bring it in for the next session (Maybe to remember to bring in homework from a week ago is too long ago; as usually they have to bring it in the next day.) The other pupil asked if they could do timed tests in the sessions. Both children said they enjoyed doing the tests when I enquired – thus I will try to reintroduce them, into some of the sessions.

Comment: It has been difficult to make written notes this past week, as there as been a supply teacher in all week. The teacher found it difficult to manage the children's behaviour and this meant it fell to Alison and me. They talked when she attempted to address the class and this meant it took a long time to do the lesson introduction and the children therefore had less time to complete their work. The supply teacher experienced most difficulties in the afternoon sessions, particularly when I wasn't present. She chose not to seek support off Mrs Brookes, myself or the Head Teacher despite been asked to on numerous occasions. Her relationship with the children impacted on their

learning. After the first day, she remarked that she didn't know if she would come back; she had never experienced such difficulties before and the children were rude. She added that it tended to be schools in this city that were most difficult to do supply in. Children commented that they didn't like her (one called her a bitch and got excluded for a day; another v.polite girl told her mum that she didn't like her; the boys in the after school computer club were talking about her). The animosity on the parts of both teacher and pupils inevitably came into play in the classroom and influences the relationship and practices. She began to count the days down before she left. The head teacher remarked that she hoped she stayed even though there had been numerous problems.

## TERM 2: WEEKS 7-10

OBSERVATIONAL RECORD SHEET		
WEE K	DATE	LESSONS
Seven	Monday 25/02	Group reading
	Tuesday 26/02	Practice paper: Science test A
	Wednesday 27/02	Practice paper: Science test B
	Thursday 28/02	CCC visit: ICT and science
	Friday 01/03	Practice paper: Maths test B
		Extra numeracy session
Eight	Monday 04/03	Group reading
		Extra numeracy session
	Thursday 07/03	CCC visit: ICT and science
	Friday 08/03	Extra numeracy session
Nine	Monday 11/03	Group reading
		General observation notes: afternoon
	Tuesday 12/03	Extra numeracy lesson
		Leanne: parents evening
	Wednesday 13/03	ICT at school
	Thursday 14/03	Literacy
	Friday 15/03	Extra numeracy lesson
Ten	Thursday 21/03	Tariq: parents evening
		Beth: parents evening
		Daniel: parents evening

## Week Seven

**Monday 25/02/02** 13:25 → 13:50

Group reading: two focal children present in group of six (staff room)

❖ Notes made from head notes

### LEANNE

Leanne had not done her homework. When I asked why, she said she had read to meet her personal reading target (set by Mrs Eastwood) and had concentrated on revision for the practice SAT's. I had asked the group to look up two words that they were unfamiliar with - Leanne had done this and found the meaning of one. During the session she listened to fellow group members read and comment without interruption. Her focus was v.good and she read well. Leanne did not protest at the homework I set, which was more than usual.

### BETH

Beth had not done her homework. When I asked why, she said, in the week before the holiday, she had read to meet her personal reading target (set by Mrs Eastwood) and had got carried away with it. In the week off, she said she had forgotten about the reading homework.

Beth had not looked up the two words I had given the group. During the session she listened to fellow group members read and comment without interruption. Her focus was excellent and she read well, I observed she seemed quite nervous initially. She read aloud 'solider' instead of 'shoulder', which other members giggled at- in response, Beth got embarrassed. I asked her to continue and the group settled down again. Beth did not protest at the homework I set.

Comment: For various reasons, no one had done their reading homework over the holidays. Some protested at the homework I set (20 pages) and I told them it was more than usual, as they had not completed their reading homework and the other class wanted the to read the book.

The head teacher later came into the class and said to Mrs Eastwood that the group had a bad attitude, as she had overheard us discussing why they had not completed their homework. They looked upset as the teacher told them off (whilst addressing the whole class for unacceptable behaviour). One member commented their attitude towards 'Helen' had not been bad, and the teacher replied, the head teacher meant a bad attitude to homework. I mentioned to Mrs Eastwood that although they had not completed their homework, their attitude towards each other had improved; in terms of less interruptions and improved listening skills. This was mentioned to the

class and the group after Mrs Eastwood had given the class a 'dressing down', she added, we (the staff working alongside the children) tried to be fair.

#### **TARIQ**

This afternoon, Tariq said he had seen me in the holidays. I asked him why he hadn't said hello to me and he replied he had seen me on Thursday, on the bus near Christie's hospital, whilst he had been in the car. He then asked if this was right. I could not remember and I told him, he was probably right. I found this unusual as Tariq does not usually engage on conversation with me voluntarily.

**Tuesday 26/02/02 09:40 → 10:20**

Mrs King: class sat in alphabetical pairs in rows in 6E's classroom

- ❖ Observation of children during Science test A: 35 minutes
- ❖ Drew on a combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time

Mrs Eastwood was sat at her desk marking test papers completed yesterday. Mrs King was there in place of Mrs Patel, who was on a visit with their class. She read aloud the instructions for the paper. Children were only allowed to have the questions read aloud to them by the support staff present. There were three of us present (Mrs King, Rebecca and myself). Rebecca is the appointed support worker to the new girl in the class – I observed she chose only to assist the children if both myself and Mrs King were occupied.

#### **LEANNE**

After the instructions had been read aloud, Leanne put her hand up to ask a question (the only question asked). Leanne asked if she could ask us to explain the meaning of words, if she was unsure of them – which we were not able to do. Thus the test is assessing children's comprehension alongside their science knowledge. Leanne put her hand up three times during the test, and Mrs King and Rebecca assisted her. I overheard Leanne seek confirmation regarding her understanding of a specific question, the teacher responded "I can't tell you that, I can only read out the question." Leanne finished the test within the given time and went through her answers, without being prompted to do so.

#### **BETH**

Beth was not present, as she attended Indian music.

#### **DANIEL**

Daniel only asked for one question to be read aloud throughout the test. He asked me as I finished speaking with another child near to him. He did not put his hand up to ask for assistance, he waited to catch my eye. I asked if he would like me to read aloud the information given at the beginning of the question - "Do you want me to read this bit?" and he said "Yes." I observed he read aloud (quietly and to himself) the information and questions as he went through the science paper. As I collected the papers in, he told me he had not finished it and I replied it did not matter.

#### **TARIQ**

Tariq did not ask for any questions or information to be read aloud during the test. At one point he looked quite confused and so I asked if was okay and he said yes. I asked if he wanted me to read anything out to him, he hesitated and then said no.

In response to the question 'How could Peter make the shadow of his head bigger?' there were several options the children choose from (multiple choice). I observed Tariq held his hand above the table creating a shadow. He moved his hand closer to and further away from the table, watching the shadow formed on the table.

**Wednesday 27/02/02 09:40 → 10:20**

Mrs Eastwood: class sat in alphabetical pairs in rows in 6E's classroom

- ❖ Observation of children during Science test B: 35 minutes
- ❖ Drew on head notes

Mrs Eastwood read aloud the instructions for the paper. Children were only allowed to have the questions read aloud to them by one of the adults present (Mrs Eastwood, support worker Rebecca or myself). Mrs Eastwood told the children, she was disappointed with something - the vast majority did not do during the last paper. She asked the children to tell her what they thought it might be; they thought it was something to do with their handwriting, spelling or punctuation. Mrs Eastwood was trying to emphasise the importance of asking an adult to read aloud any question within the test paper – she said this sometimes made the question much clearer.

#### LEANNE

Leanne put her hand up on several occasion during the test, to ask for questions to be read aloud. Leanne finished the test within the given time and went through it, without being prompted to do so.

#### BETH

Beth put her hand up a couple of times during the test, to ask for questions to be read aloud. She put her hand up to tell me she knew what the answer was to a particular question, but she had forgotten it. Beth finished the test within the given time. She told Mrs Eastwood the same thing, who looked at the question and discussed it with her. I was told by Mrs Eastwood, only to read the questions and information aloud to the children – I do emphasise certain words as I read aloud the questions, giving the most important words greater emphasis. In this example, it was clear, Mrs Eastwood had the authority to do as she pleased.

#### DANIEL

I read questions aloud to Daniel without him asking, as the teacher told me to target him. I would go to him and ask which question he was on, and then proceed to read it to him. Once I began to read the information and questions to him, he started to put his hand up and ask for questions to be read aloud. He would begin to tell me what he thought were the answers (his tone of voice suggested he was seeking confirmation that it was correct) and I would say to him, to write down what he thought as I could not help him. Daniel did not finish the paper within the given time.

#### TARIQ

I read questions aloud to Tariq without him asking, I told him as he started his test that I wanted him to let me read some questions to him and he agreed it was okay. I would occasionally go to him and ask which question he was on and read it to him. Once I began to read the information and questions to him, he began to put his hand up and ask an adult to read a particular question.

#### Thursday 28/02/02 09:20 → 12.00

Visit to CCC: science incorporating ICT skills (downstairs room – Mark Watson)  
(4 focal children present)

- ❖ Observation of class during lesson
  - Revision of 'forces': 25 minutes approx.
  - Crocodile clips program 'forces' (children went through the work independently: 15 minutes approx.)
  - 10 minute break (no observations made)
  - Revision of Microsoft power point: approx. 20 mins)
  - Observation of class during independent work by the computer
- ❖ Combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time

The class had previously covered the topic of forces within science, under Mrs Eastwood; who remarked this lesson served as a good revision session for the SATs. Mark Watson asked questions and elaborated on children's answers during the overview of the topic and of Microsoft power point. The aim was to begin a presentation called 'all about forces' that could be completed during the next session (when he would be absent, as he was attending a course). Some of the vocabulary he used during the introduction was quite difficult e.g. Issac Newton 'formulated' the laws of gravity.

#### LEANNE

Leanne walked at the front of the line with Beth, they listened and followed the instructions I gave them, demonstrating they were responsible. Leanne was v.precise as she followed my instructions, e.g. if I asked them to stop at the second black post, she would tell Beth off if she went a little past it. They both engaged in conversation with me; e.g. they discussed going to Greenwood next year (Leanne had received a confirmation letter regarding her place there); the visit to the snow Queen at the MMU the previous afternoon. When Beth asked me about my boyfriend, I told her it was personal information and Leanne remarked, it was none of her business.

I observed Leanne had a few holes in her 'winter' coat (she told me she wears another one on the summer). She always wears black trousers rather than a skirt. The sleeves of her jumper were frayed at the cuff edges; her jumper is also slightly too short in the arm for her.

Leanne turned in her chair to face the teacher as he spoke. At the beginning of the introduction, Mr Watson told the children he would be absent for their next lesson, as he would be on a course. Leanne put her hand up to ask, "Who will be teaching us?" To be told it would be Mrs Eastwood and myself. During the talk on forces, Leanne put her hand up a lot in comparison to other class members – over five times. She was also selected to answer quite a few questions. During the lengthy session, Leanne's focus was v.good; at one point her attention began to drift and she slouched in her chair – when her eyes met mine, she smiled and sat up properly without being verbally prompted.

Leanne got on with her work independently. Throughout the session, she asked if certain parts of her work were okay (written text pertaining to forces). Leanne would ask if she should write about certain topics within forces, e.g. balanced forces, unbalanced forces etc. She remembered how to find her 'favourite' bullet points without assistance; also inserting relevant motion clips.

#### BETH

Beth and Leanne were partners and walked at the front of the line, they listened and followed the instructions I gave them, demonstrating they were responsible. They both engaged in conversation with me. E.g. they discussed going to Greenwood next year (Beth said probably lived the closest to Greenwood in the class and she had not received a letter to say she had place at the school and so her mum had rung up to check; she also has two brothers there); the visit to the snow Queen at the MMU the previous afternoon. Beth was v.curious about my personal life, which I was uncomfortable with and told her so, as I did not want to discuss it with her. She was v.persistent; she asked is your boyfriend fit? Where does he live? What does he do? etc.

I observed Beth always wears a skirt, without tights and coloured socks. She has a green thin jacket (similar to a slouchy jogging top) that she wears as a coat.

Beth chose a computer facing the teacher and looked at him as he spoke. Beth put her hand up to answer questions several times during the introduction. No observation notes were made during the independent sessions by the computer.

#### DANIEL

Although Daniel was sat very close to where the teacher was standing addressing he class, he sat with his back to the teacher for the whole of the introduction. Mr Watson selected Daniel to be part of two practical demonstrations (re: forces and mass). When Daniel stood in front of the class for the second demonstration re: mass, he looked down at the floor and fiddled with his hands as the teacher asked him a couple of questions and addressed the class.

When the independent session by the computers began (working through crocodile clips) Mrs Eastwood commented, that Daniel would need help and asked if I was going to do it. SO I stood with Daniel and his partner (on the next computer) and read through the text and questions with them, answering the questions together.

Daniel went onto the Microsoft power point program without any assistance. He did ask me (as I was stood behind him) how to begin thereafter. He had previously used Auto Wizard, but I suggested that we have a go at using the blank presentation as I thought it was easier. He agreed and we went through the instructions as Daniel clicked on the relevant buttons, inserting a title

page. I asked what information he would put on it and he said 'forces' and 'my name'. I thought it would be best to leave him to have a go, rather than standing over his shoulder. So I left him to assist other pupils who required had their hand up.

Mrs Eastwood was sat in Daniel's place next time I looked over, and he was stood next to her looking at the screen. She told me she was just getting Daniel started and that he was showing her how to do it, as she was not present in the previous lesson. She asked how to insert a new slide and I showed them both, asking Daniel what layout he thought would be best for a contents page (with a hint). He selected it and Mrs Eastwood assisted him with the work.

As I passed Daniel later, he asked me how to insert the moving pictures. I showed him, asking him what words to type in to find the relevant pictures etc. I did it a couple of times and then Daniel began typing terms in. We found several motion pictures relevant to the text. Daniel struggled writing the text on the slides – concise bullet points pertaining to gravity, air resistance, push and pull etc.

I observed he was wearing v.worn looking shoes, where the black colour had v.much faded. The hem of Daniel's trousers, had been let down and were frayed. He had on a primary school sweater and white shirt, similar to those of the other children in his class,

#### **TARIQ**

Tariq was turned in his chair to face the teacher – although during the introduction, his attention did not seem to be focused on the teacher. He looked around the room, spoke and laughed quietly on numerous occasions with his friend sat on the computer next to him and did not put his hand up to answer any questions. He occasionally looked in the direction of the teacher, but his face did not suggest, that he was engaged in the lesson.

**Friday 01/03/02      09:45 → 10:45**

Mrs Eastwood: class sat in alphabetical pairs in rows in 6E's classroom

- ❖ Observation of children during Maths test B
- ❖ Drew on head notes

Mrs Eastwood had been in the assembly with the class; the assembly had gone on longer than anticipated (she called the year 5 teacher/deputy head who took the assembly). As soon as the children came in, I gave the questions papers out as Mrs Eastwood read aloud the instructions. Children were only allowed to have the questions read aloud to them by one of the adults present (Mrs Eastwood, support worker (Rebecca) or myself). She told them they had done much better on the second paper, as they had asked for questions to be read aloud to them. It was rather rushed and I was giving equipment out ten minutes into the paper (protractors, mirrors, rulers, tracing paper).

I focused on reading questions and information to those children who needed greater assistance. Therefore I made limited head notes and no written notes. Such children spend so long trying to read and understand the text, that they had limited time to work on the questions and were now where near the end of the paper. Numerous children put their hand up to ask about the meaning of 'perpendicular' as they had not yet covered it in maths within year 6. Following the instructions given to me, I did not tell them – but I later discovered Mrs Eastwood had. Where had the 'instructions to follow' gone? I addressed this with Mrs Eastwood and asked her to tell the whole class, she told them it meant 'straight.'

#### **LEANNE**

Leanne put her hand up on several occasion during the test, to ask for questions to be read aloud. Leanne finished the test within the given time and went through it, without being prompted to do so.

#### **BETH**

No observation notes made.

## DANIEL

Mrs Eastwood told me to focus on Daniel. She went to him and said, he had doubled his score on a paper as he had allowed me (Helen) to read information and questions aloud to him. Daniel put his hand up a lot during the paper, asking for the questions to be read aloud. I observed he struggled with problems, as he was not sure which maths sign to use (e.g.  $\times + - \div$ ) and he was unfamiliar with some of the terminology used in the paper. He did not finish the paper within the time given. He asked me at the end of the test, which paper he had doubled his marks on, as Mrs Eastwood hadn't told him. I said it was probably the science test B as it was the last paper he had done (I also thought I had read information and questions aloud to him within this paper).

## TARIQ

No observation notes made.

### Friday 01/03/02 14:50 → 15.15

(1 focal children present in a pair: staff room)

Numeracy:

- doubling and halving
- 3× table problems
- 5× table
- addition and subtraction terminology

- ❖ Observation of Daniel during session
- ❖ Combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time

## DANIEL

First of all I tested Daniel on his 5× table, as his target the previous week, was to learn this 'mixed up.' I went up to 5×12, to see if he could do this, despite the cards only going up to 5×10. To get the answer for 5×11, Daniel knew to add 5 to 50; he then added another 5 to 55, to get the answer to 5×12. He got full marks, demonstrating he knew his tables.

I was unsure how to go about teaching doubling and halving, so I discussed it with Gillian. She had suggested throwing a dice (numbers 1 to 6) and asking Daniel to double or halve them. I only asked him to halve even numbers. This became boring, as he and the other pupil were both able to tell me the answers quite quickly.

Previously I had mentioned to Mrs Eastwood, Daniel and the other pupil needed to learn the different terminology that could be used for addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. She had said she had some at home, although she had made some addition and subtraction terminology cards for this session.

+	-
Addition	Subtraction
Plus	Take away
Sum of	Difference
Total	

They had both cut a set out of the words on coloured card to keep for their set. I asked them to pick out a card without looking at the word. I then verbally gave them a sum to work out, incorporating

this particular word – they had to tell me what the word meant and then work the sum out in their head.

E.g. what is the difference between 17 and 6?

During this session, I only looked at number bonds between 1 and 20 in reference to addition and subtraction.

I briefly looked at division with them, drawing on  $3\times$  problems. If I asked Daniel ‘what is  $6 \div 3$ ?’ he found it difficult to work out; if I rephrased it as, ‘how many 3’s are in 6’ he was able to give me the answer straight away. I gave Daniel a few more questions using the same terminology e.g. ‘what is  $12 \div 3$ ’ but, Daniel could not translate this himself into, ‘how many 3’s are in 12’

At the end of the session, when we had packed everything away, I asked each pupil in turn to tell me what each of the words meant

I asked what E.g. ‘sum of’ meant and Daniel replied ‘Add’. Daniel as able to correctly tell the meaning of each word, that we had incorporated into our work today.

## Week Eight

**Monday 04/03/02** 13:25 → 13:50

Group reading: two focal children present in group of six (staff room)

❖ Notes made from head notes

### LEANNE

Leanne had completed her homework, the reading and summary for the session (I had set more than usual). After lunch, she asked me if she could just write the reading summary before the group reading session; although she had ten minutes or so and did not need to ask. Last week I had set the group a target for this week: to put their hand up before speaking, so that no one spoke over each other or interrupted.

During the session she listened to fellow group members read and comment without interruption (the only one to do so). She reminded others not to interrupt as I waited for them to be quiet. Her focus was excellent and she read well.

### BETH

Beth had completed her homework, the reading and summary for the session (I had set more than usual). Last week I had set the group a target for this week: to put their hand up before speaking, so that no one spoke over each other or interrupted.

During the session she listened to fellow group members read and comment, occasionally interrupting other members. When another member asked if the character was a human or a dog, Beth got worked up and proceeded to speak to him quite abruptly. The text had described the dog as licking another’s dog wounds - similar to how a mother cat would clean a kitten. Beth said to this boy “Have you ever seen a human lick a dog? Have you?” He looked confused and I said it was okay if any of us were unsure, as we were there to help each other. I asked Beth to explain her comment, more calmly and she grinned and did so.

Beth asked what words meant as she came across unfamiliar vocabulary. Her focus was v.good.

Comment: I gave the group 6pp (which filled their group chart) as they had tried v.hard not to interrupt each other and every member had completed the extra homework, which I was v.pleased about. When the head teacher saw me, she asked if the group had completed their homework. I replied every member had completed the homework to a very high standard. She commented, she thought she ought to make a point of asking because of last week.

As the reading group had finished their pp group chart, they will be rewarded with a group activity next week (making cakes with myself and the other classroom assistant)

**Monday 04/03/02 14:50 → 15:15**

Extra numeracy session: one focal children present in a pair (staff room)

❖ Notes made from head notes

### DANIEL

During science (14:00 – 14:50) Daniel asked if he would be doing maths with me that afternoon. When I said that I would be taking himself and another pupil out, he asked on several occasions, “Are we going yet?”

He said he had learnt his 6× table already. When I asked who had helped him, he said he had done it by himself and with his friend sat on his table during reading time (he had asked his friend to test him). I commented that I hoped his friend was learning the 6× table at the same time. He replied he is, ‘cos we used those cards and we look at the answer and have to say the question .. like..  $8 \times 6$ . The other pupil within the pair, commented he had done v.good, as she had heard him, as she was sat on the same table.

Today we looked at the different terminology for multiplication and division. The teacher had made some cards with a range of words on; which I went through the meanings of:

- = Multiply, product, times
- = Divide, share

To reinforce the meanings of the new terminology we played a game. The children would randomly select a card (terminology meaning any of the following: ( ( ( ( ) and then tell me whether it was take away, add, divide or times (the words they are most familiar with). They would throw the dice and I would give them a sum using the term selected and the number thrown.

E.g. When Daniel picked a ‘share’ card and threw a ‘six’ ( I asked what is thirty six divided by six ( he replied six times six is thirty six. He could not tell me the answer to the question, although he had the correct information. This indicated he was not fully aware of the relationship between multiplication and division. I wrote the sum out as below and asked him to cross out the same numbers in each line:

$$36 ( 6 = ?$$

$$6 ( 6 = 36$$

When Daniel had crossed out the corresponding numbers, he was left with a six and I told him this was the answer. When I asked, he said he had understood, although his quiet voice and facial expression led me to believe he was unsure or confused. I do not think this was an effective or clear explanation of the relationship between multiplication and division. I was unsure how to explain it during the session, as I had not come prepared for this occurrence. When we had previously addressed halving and doubling on Friday (01/03/02) Daniel had experienced v.few problems calculating answers and had worked with minimal assistance. As I do not assist in numeracy lessons, I was unaware how this topic had been previously covered and explained; and doubted my ability to teach it effectively. This is an example of having the knowledge myself but finding it difficult to explain it in concise and simple terms. I will seek advice off the class teacher before the next session on Friday regarding this mathematical relationship.

Daniel had problems remembering the correct symbol for ‘minus’ and ‘product’, terms I will incorporate into the next session for revision.

Daniel was rewarded with personal points and a gel pen for his hard work on Friday and today.

**Thursday 07/03/02 09:45 - 12.00**

Visit to CCC: Microsoft power point 'all about forces' (Mrs Eastwood)

(4 focal children present: upstairs room)

- ❖ Observation of focal children during session
- ❖ Combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time

Mrs Eastwood took the lesson today, as Mr Watson was attending a course. The children continued with the presentations they had begun the previous week 'all about forces'.

#### **DANIEL**

I worked alongside Daniel quite a lot today, initially with the wording within several slides. I used the terminology and sentences in a book to assist us, as I was nervous about giving him incorrect information. E.g. the meaning of 'air resistance' or 'friction' and practical examples of how they work in real life. I also showed him several new techniques to incorporate into his power point presentation: how to put the presentation on a timer; how to bring in the pictures and text at different times and slide transition. He experimented with the time, beginning with twelve seconds (Mrs Eastwood said this was too slow); he changed it to three seconds (which I said was too fast) and he changed it to seven seconds. Mrs Eastwood asked me to show his presentation first to the class, after the break. He received a round of applause and was smiling when I looked for his response, at the end of his presentation. His friend had also shown him how to add sound to the slides and he had added the sound of applause at the end of each slide – he had not been able to check this on the computer, as there were no speakers linked to the computer; so it was an experiment. When the teacher asked for comments regarding Daniel's presentation, children liked the 'clapping' and the 'pictures, as they were to do with the writing.'

#### **LEANNE**

Leanne worked independently during the session and I assisted her in finding a picture to illustrate friction. She wanted a motion picture rather than an actual picture, although they were fuzzy as Leanne enlarged them. Leanne asked me why there were no titles under each slide within the contents table, when they were written on each slide. I explained to her, the computer did not recognise word art as writing but as a picture; therefore her titles did not show up in the contents page as she had written them using word art.

#### **BETH**

Beth asked me to look at her presentation several times during the session – it was v.good and her pictures were v.relevant to her text within each slide. She was impressed with the alterations she had made to it. Mrs Eastwood selected it to be presented to the class and Beth stood next to me and presented it to the class via the projector, whilst I looked on. She had added an end slide, saying 'I hope you have enjoyed my presentation.' She received a round of applause off the class.

#### **TARIQ**

Tariq put his hand up to ask for assistance regarding the description of the force 'upthrust' and related pictures to illustrate this force in action. When he showed me his presentation, I said I thought the content was v.good, but perhaps he could look at some of the pictures again as sometimes they were not related to the text – rather they were motion clips that he particularly liked the look of!

**Friday 08/03/02 14:10 → 14:30**

Extra numeracy session: one focal children present in a pair (staff room)

- 6× table
- doubling and halving
- numeracy terminology ( $\div$   $\times$   $+$   $-$ )
- ❖ Notes made from head notes

#### **DANIEL**

Daniel asked me during French this afternoon, if we were going out, I replied 'yes' – he turned and said 'yes' with emphasis and told the other class member that we were going out. I tested Daniel on

his 6× table and he took time to ‘work out’ he answers – rather than knowing them by rote. I asked him to look at ? again and he changed it to the correct answer. Again I went up to 6× 12 – he got all of the sums right. I presented the questions verbally and visually using the timestable cards.

I then read ten questions aloud to the children, drawing on the different terminology.

E.g. what is the product of 6 and 4?  
What is the sum of 16 and 6?  
What is 10 minus 6?  
Share 18 by 3

Again, I observed Daniel struggled with the questions ‘share 18 by 3’ he could not work out which symbol he needed to use. So I rephrased the questions for him ‘how many 3’s are in 18’ he understood this straight away – although it took him several guesses to get the answer right. I told him, the questions meant the same thing, but were just phrased in different ways (we have briefly talked about his before). I could do with going over each timestable he had learnt every week - but I also want to move forward and I have limited time. He also had trouble remembering what the word product ‘referred’ to; he often said division rather than times – so I asked him the same question several times during the session.

I then read ten questions aloud to the children, drawing on ‘doubling’ and ‘halving’. If I asked each child to half or double a number, they could give me the answer (all ten sums correct) – although they could not tell me what sum they were doing when they were halving or doubling.

E.g. I asked Daniel a question: what is double 10 and he said 20 – I said what sum did you do and after a few prompts, he said ‘times it by 2’. The other child present, could not tell me what sum were we doing when we halved it – I asked Daniel if he could help her, and after thinking about it, he said ‘divide it by 2.’

We briefly went on to fractions, as this was to be addressed within Daniel’s new IEP. Both children present did not know how to write a half, a third or a quarter. Daniel thought a half was written as 1/3. To address this I asked them to imagine my two strips of card were a whole cake, and said I ate one piece (taking one strip away)– how much was left, Daniel said ‘one’. I replied ‘Yes’ one piece. How many piece were originally there? Daniel replied ‘two’. So I explained we could write this as  $\frac{1}{2}$ .

We briefly looked at how many pieces a cake would be divided into, when we were dealing with thirds and quarters. Both children were v.unsure of this numeracy area. I thought we needed something more concrete to work with, so I said I would bring something in to help us in the next session. They said ‘Chocolate!’ and I just laughed. They each received a packet of Rolo’s and some personal points for working well.

## Week Nine

Monday 11/03/02	13:25 ( 13:50
Group reading: two focal children present in group of six (staff room)	
❖ Notes made from head notes	

### LEANNE

Leanne had completed her homework: reading, book comment and words to look up in the dictionary (covalence, valour and antagonist). She along with the majority of the group commented they did not like the book. I remarked we were fifteen pages from the end and said they could finish it for next week and I would select another book.

I asked if, in a comprehension test, an extract had been taken from this book and a question asked them to state what they thought about the extract and provide evidence to support their answer – what would they write. Leanne said that classic books were not really her thing, she preferred more modern books. She said she found it hard to follow because of the way it was written – it had difficult words in it.

She asked if they could begin reading a Judy Blume book next week. I said it was difficult for me to chose a book, that everyone in the group would like to read – as they all had different tastes, but I would do my best. Leanne took quite a vocal role within he group today and again, did not interrupt others as they spoke – she put her hand up (the majority of the group had v.poor listening skills today, and constantly interrupted each other and myself.

### **BETH**

Beth competed her homework: reading, book comment and words to look up in the dictionary (covalence, valour and antagonist). She along with the majority of the group commented they did not like the book. I remarked we were fifteen pages from the end and said they could finish it for next week and I would select another book.

I asked if, in a comprehension test, an extract had been taken from this book and a question asked them to state what they thought about the extract and provide evidence to support their answer – what would they write. Beth said she did not like the book because there was too much detail in it, and difficult words that she did not know like... I suggested 'valour,' and she said 'yes, exactly.' Beth added she thought the book was boring.

Beth said she would like to read a jeepers creepers book. I said it was difficult for me to chose a book, that everyone in the group would like to read – as they all had different tastes, but I would do my best. Beth was quite vocal today, and engaged in conversation with other members in the group. She occasionally interrupted others as they spoke – she put her hand up and waited when she wanted to say something to me or for the whole group to listen. The majority of the group had v.poor listening skills today, and constantly interrupted each other and myself – I had to remind them several times to stop and listen.

<b>Monday 11/03/02</b> <b>13:25 - 13:50</b> General notes from the afternoon (class room) ❖ Notes made from head notes
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### **LEANNE**

Leanne is now sat next to someone, who is v.loud and quite rude to everybody in the class, especially colour table (including Leanne). She seems to cope with it quite well and I have observed her answering him back quite often. When Leanne overheard me talking to Daniel about our maths session tomorrow, Leanne asked if she could come out also, as she did not like comprehension. I said that she did not really need to come out – she replied she would do some work on ... (she drifted and smiled - I smiled back at her).

### **BETH**

Beth is quite chatty on her colour table and engages in conversation with the other members in her colour group.

### **DANIEL**

As soon as Daniel saw me this afternoon (I was not in their class this morning, but on a visit with 6B) he asked if he would be going out (to the staff room) with me today. When I said 'Yes,' he replied, 'Yes' (his tone of voice implied he was happy about it). Later, he asked again if it was time to go out. The teacher had changed her timetable, and I would take Daniel out with the other class member tomorrow. When I told him this, he was disappointed and said he wanted to go out 'now'. I said he could work with me for a whole lesson tomorrow (rather than 15 - 30 minutes), instead of being in the comprehension lesson. He said 'Ahh' and I said there was nothing I could do about it, because Mrs Eastwood had swapped the lessons around. He asked if it was after lunch or in the morning that he would be coming out with me and I said, in the morning. He seemed to prefer going out in the afternoon. I said he could stay in the comprehension lesson if he wished and he said he would come out with me. I said I had bought something to help work out fractions with and mouthed the word 'chocolate' at him – he smiled.

When the teacher was explaining the science homework, I assisted Daniel with drawing the outline of his graph, before he cut it out and stuck it in his book. I did this, as I had a feeling he had not listened to the instructions and might struggle when he got home. As I left him to it, he said thanks. Daniel is also sat on Leanne's colour table and gets on well with the girl sat next to him – I frequently see them laughing together and can be quite silly.

### TARIQ

Tariq was being helpful this afternoon and assisted the teacher during the science lesson, by setting up and putting away the projector – the teacher used this to demonstrate the varying size of shadows – which was dependent on the objects proximity to the light source.

Tuesday 12/03/02      09:40 ( 10:30  
Extra numeracy session: one focal children present in a pair (staff room)  
➤ Fractions  
➤ Doubling and halving  
➤ Numeracy terminology (( ( ( ( )  
➤ Remainders  
❖ Notes made from head notes

### DANIEL

First thing, Daniel asked if we would be going out today (to do a numeracy session). He also asked if I had any sheets for him to do. Recently I had given him and the other class member that he usually works alongside, a sheet to complete in the morning session before assembly -practicing one of the four numeracy areas ( ÷ × + –). Since then, Daniel asks me every morning if I have a sheet for him (lots of enthusiasm – I did not think they would enjoy doing these sheets, when everyone else was chatting around them).

This morning, we went out for the whole session, the rest of the class were doing literacy (comprehension). I gave them both ten questions, drawing on terminology used in the previous session, to see if they remembered the meaning. Daniel thought product meant division, rather than multiplication; he was also unsure of the meaning of minus, as he sought confirmation it meant take away. I asked Daniel if he had heard of these words before and he said he remembers them from year five mental maths tests, but they were never explained to him.

We then went on to look at fractions. I asked them if they could remember from the previous session, how we wrote one half, one third and one quarter. Daniel got mixed up with the denominators for both quarters and thirds. I gave him four pieces of chocolate and used these to demonstrate fractions.

E.g. I would take one piece away and ask how much have I got, Daniel replied 'One' and I added 'Out of four – we write this as a quarter.'

I then asked 'How many is left?' and he replied, 'Three' and I asked 'Over what?' He answered 'Four.'

I did not think I explained this v.clearly, although Daniel did understand parts of it. Once we worked through several examples, he was able to answer my questions without assistance. We then went on to work out fractions of sums. Again, after we had worked through several examples together, Daniel got the hang of this.

E.g.  $\frac{1}{2}$  of 24 = 12

(We discussed the rule given to us by Mrs Eastwood: divide by the bottom and times by the top).

We began the new topic of 'remainders' as it was on Daniel new ILP (individual learning plan). I asked if Daniel had come across the word before and he said he had heard of it, but could not remember what it meant. I explained that they were 'left-overs' when we divided numbers. E.g.  $16 \div 3 = 5$  remainder one - Daniel said he understood this, although it took him a while to work out any questions; perhaps because he needed to draw on his knowledge of the times tables (which is limited).

We briefly looked at doubling and halving – I threw two dice and said either 'halve it' or 'double it' – they had to add the two numbers together before dividing or multiplying (which Daniel sometimes forgot). He picked up speed and answered the questions quickly.

They both completed two sheets, looking at the relationship between multiplication and division. I went over the first question with them. Daniel caught on quickly and completed the sheets without assistance.

E.g.  $6 \times 7 = 42$  from this, they had to write down two division sums  
I.e.  $42 \div 6 = 7$   
 $42 \div 7 = 6$

At the end of the session, I asked Daniel if he could tell me anything he had learnt today. He told me he already knew how to write a half ( $1/2$ ) and today he had learnt how to write a third ( $1/3$ ) and a quarter ( $1/4$ ). I asked if he understood how to work out a fraction of a number e.g.  $2/3$  of 15 and Daniel said he knew how to do it and answered the example (after a time).

<b>Tuesday 12/03/02</b> <b>1700 - 1710</b> Leanne's parents evening Setting: 6E classroom (3 tables grouped together) Present: Mrs Eastwood and myself Observations from headnotes
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Leanne accompanied her mum to parent's evening. Mrs Eastwood asked Mrs Taylor if she would like Leanne to sit in. She replied she did not mind and Gillian explained she had gone through with Leanne, what she would be discussing in this meeting; so Leanne's mum asked Leanne to close the door and wait outside, which she did.

Leanne's mum had an air of calm about her and seemed quite reserved. She looked older than most mothers attending parents evening of children in Year 6 (and her nails were painted bright red). She was quiet during the meeting and listened to Mrs Eastwood discuss her daughters work progress. She occasionally commented 'good' as Mrs Eastwood reported on Leanne's work and performance in the tests.

Mrs Eastwood explained that she was v.pleased with Leanne and that she had done v.well in her science tests. Her mum replied that she thought Leanne was pleased with them, but she still wanted to do a little better. Mrs Eastwood said Leanne's comprehension was good, but she could do with adding more detail within her answers and that Leanne had agreed to work on this. Mrs Eastwood mentioned Leanne needed to work on her problem solving within maths, adding she could pick up more marks on these questions in the tests. She suggested Mrs Taylor bought practice papers for Leanne. She replied she had intended to do so but was unsure what make to buy. The teacher replied any would do from a major bookstore like Waterstones, as the test papers were similar to each other.

Mrs Taylor said she did not really have a problem with Leanne as she got her own homework out without being told to do so; commenting she used to tell the boys to get their work out. She went on to mention a trip the Guides were going on. Leanne wanted to go but her mum had not definitely said she could go. Tonight was the night Mrs Taylor had to sign on the dotted line and she added that she had decided to let Leanne go. She added it cost money, explaining she had to pay for the trip and other things Leanne would need, including a sleeping bag etc. The teacher offered to lend

her a sleeping bag, but Mrs Taylor seemed hesitant to accept the offer – no decision was made, although the teacher offered again and said if they wanted to borrow it, Leanne only had to ask.

Although she did not bring this up during this meeting, in the previous parents evening, Mrs Taylor had mentioned Leanne was having a problem with friends in the class.

**Wednesday 13/03/02 10:00 - 10:30 11:00 - 12:00**  
ICT: Microsoft publisher ( 'All about France' in association with European Week  
School computer suite (4 focal children present)  
❖ Notes made from head notes

Alison and I took half the class for 45 minutes in the ICT suite and Mrs Eastwood took them for numeracy, and then the class swapped over. Previous to coming to the computer suite, the children had been assigned a partner to work with within the computer room (one boy and one girl) by Mrs Eastwood. The task was to begin a presentation based on 'France' using Microsoft power point – however when we got to the computer suite, we discovered the program had not been installed on the school computers, as Mrs Eastwood had been informed. Alison went to ask her and she came down to check and suggested the children begin on Microsoft publisher and we could then cut and paste their work onto power point for next week. I briefly discussed with the class what slides they would have to design and the information that could include:

1. Title page with their names (Children suggested 'All about France' 'France' 'French life')
2. Contents/introduction page (to include four topics – the children suggested French food, French wine, the French language, the French flag, French money, French artists and place to visit in France.)

The children learn French with a teacher who visits from Greenwood, and had just done a French assembly with her support and Mrs Eastwood's. They were also looking at French artists in art and were painting and drawing pictures in the styles of the French artists.

#### **LEANNE AND TARIQ**

Leanne and Tariq worked together. Initially Tariq's listening skills were poor and he needed prompting to listen to the task introduction. They seemed to disagree a little as they started the task but I then observed they co-operated with each other quite well (after ten minutes or so). They created the front cover together, sharing the keyboard and mouse. They discussed the topics they wanted to include and once Leanne had typed them out, she asked Tariq if they were okay. She then asked him if he wanted to change the font. They had several problems with their computer and waited patiently for me to ask the I.T. technician for assistance. They both wanted to insert bullet points and asked for my help – although they did not have the choice that they have at the CCC, and were quite disappointed (the programs were older at Roseberry Hill).

#### **BETH**

Beth worked with Jamie. There seemed to be little conversation between them, although they do not usually talk or work together. They designed a simple yet v.effective front page. When they began the contents/introduction page, I asked who had worked on the computer to design the front page (Jamie) and asked them to swap over, so Beth could have a go.

#### **DANIEL**

Daniel worked with Bex. He only worked with her for twenty minutes or so. He is part of the playground squad, and was asked to attend a meeting with the head mistress and head lunchtime organiser. During the brief session, I observed they talked to each other and discussed ideas. They began to design a front cover and Bex finished it off whilst Daniel was at the meeting.

#### **Comment**

The IT technician said the licence for Microsoft power point cost a lot to install on all the computers in the computer suite (nine). When a new computer was recently bought for each classroom, power point was installed on those only. He was going to install power point on the computers in the computer suite (as asked by Mrs Eastwood) and if someone complained about it (i.e. no license) he would deny knowledge of it.

**Thursday 14/03/02 11:00 - 11:50**

Literacy: 'how to make the best use of planning time'

Literacy place: 4 focal children present

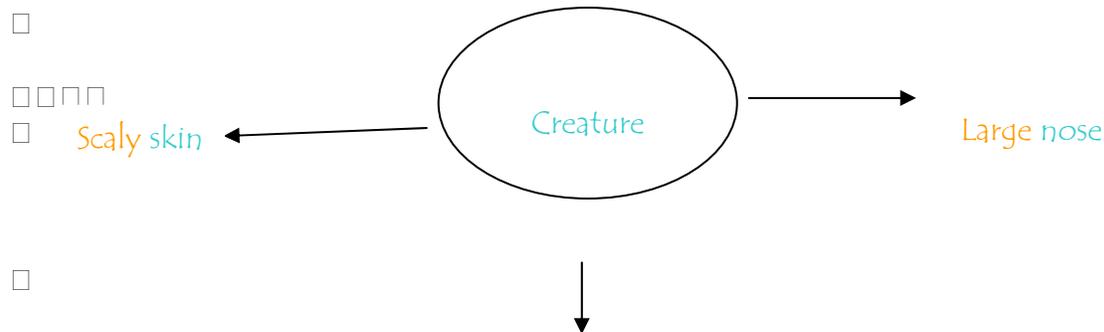
❖ Notes made from head notes

Mrs Eastwood informed me this morning, that she was going to try a new type of lesson. She asked me to observe the lesson and critique it, telling her anything that worked and any areas that could be improved. During the introduction, she asked the children to put up their hand if they thought they used the planning time well before the writing test - v.few children put up their hand. She told them the aim of the lesson, was to help them organise and use their planning time effectively – adding they would be doing one a week. She changed the sitting position of some children, so that firstly, boys and girls were not sat next to each other and secondly, as many children were sat facing her at the front of the class as possible.

As today's example, she used the last question paper (2000) and said everyone was looking at the letter 'The amazing creature.' (Although no one is marked on the writing they do within the planning sheet, it is a key to organisation of the children's work). She chose children to read through the text and selected key words within it, to discuss. E.g. 'very brief notes' the child Mrs Eastwood asked to explain 'brief' thought it meant lots of writing. (This demonstrates poor comprehension of key text, which may impact upon the work produced by the children). When Mrs Eastwood went through the worksheet, she sometimes used words that some of the children would not be familiar with e.g. imagine; visualise; asterix.

Mrs Eastwood asked the children to suggest the different things they could talk about in reference to the creature and drew a diagram on the board – adding their suggestions as they were volunteered. She then asked the children for descriptive words to describe the features, and gave the example of scaly skin – adding the words to the diagram.

E.g.



She also asked why people used bull **behaviour** and Daniel replied 'To make you see it.' Mrs Eastwood agreed and said they were v.important as the layout of the letter should be based on the bullet points given in the information. Mrs Eastwood said, that the information gave them lots of clues. She explained to the children, the following information and asked them to write it down:

- 1st paragraph: an introduction of who you are and why you are writing
- 2nd paragraph: the appearance of the creature
- 3rd paragraph: information about its behaviour
- 4th paragraph: any other details
- 5th paragraph: remind them why you are writing

This was to guide them as they wrote the letter as they were set the task for homework that night. Mrs Eastwood said they should not spend any longer than 45 minutes doing the task, as that was the time they would be given in the test. During the lesson, the children were asked to draw their

own circle and describe their creature. When they had finished, they were asked to turn to the person next to them, and discuss what their creature was like.

At the end of the session, I suggested to Mrs Eastwood, that she gave them a story and ask them what would go in the middle of the circle (as the answer had been given to them previously). She described one of the children in the class, finding an object in the grass on the walk to the CCC. The class again had to describe what the object may look like and I wrote their suggestions on the board.

#### **LEANNE**

Leanne volunteered answers when Mrs Eastwood addressed the class, both during the introduction and during the final exercise. No other observation notes made.

#### **TARIQ**

No observation notes made.

#### **BETH**

Leanne volunteered answers when Mrs Eastwood addressed the class, both during the introduction and during the final exercise. No other observation notes made.

#### **DANIEL**

I observed Daniel followed the text with his finger as it was read aloud by fellow class members. I sat with Daniel 15 minutes into the lesson and helped him to write down what points of information Mrs Eastwood wanted in each paragraph in the letter – as she had gone through it, too fast for him to keep up. After writing down what information should go in the second paragraph (creatures appearance), Daniel asked me whether he needed to draw his circle. I said we could do that later - this demonstrated he was aware, which paragraph this information related to. When he described his creature, he had lots of good ideas, which I asked him to discuss with me once he had finished. Mrs Eastwood came to him and looked at his work, she commented it was v.good and suggested the creature could have 'blood red' eyes – as he had not written any descriptive words down next to the features. At the end of the lesson, Daniel volunteered answers about the 'object that had been found in the grass on the way to the CCC'. Mrs Eastwood commented to me, that this was the most Daniel had ever participated in a literacy lesson

**Friday 15/03/2013:40 → 14:10**

Extra numeracy session: one focal children present in a pair (staff room)

- Fractions
- Division
- ❖ Notes made from head notes

#### **DANIEL**

At the beginning of the day, Daniel came to me and said he had not learnt his six times tables as he did not have time this week. I said that he would have to learn them for next week and that we would try something different in the lesson today.

At the beginning of the session, I asked Daniel how many pieces of paper I had in my hand; he looked puzzled and replied 'one.' I tore it in two and held them up, I asked 'x' how many pieces I now had and she replied 'two.' I revised my actions, so I started with one piece of paper and tore it into two pieces – I held up one piece and stated it represented half of a whole piece of paper, one of two  $\frac{1}{2}$ . I said that two halves made a whole one. I repeated this exercise, tearing a piece of paper into three and asking how we could write as a fraction, one piece of paper ( $\frac{1}{3}$ ); 2 pieces of paper and three piece so paper. I followed the same procedure for tearing a piece of paper into quarters. Once we had gone over this exercise visually and verbally, I asked Daniel if could remember how to write one half, one third and one quarter as a fraction, and he wrote the correct answers down.

We then went on to finding fractions of numbers, sticking to halves, thirds and quarters. I asked Daniel and 'x' to draw four different rectangles on the squared paper I had given them – using the measurements I gave them.

E.g. 2cm by 4cm

He drew the rectangle and I asked him what the area was, he counted the squares and replied 8cm and I replied 'good, but don't forget your units.' He added squared. I asked 'x' how she would work out the area, and she replied  $2 \times 4 = 8\text{cm squared}$ . I said they were both right and they could use either method. I asked them to work out  $\frac{1}{2}$  of eight – and asked Daniel if he remembered, he replied can I write it down and I replied yes and asked if he could talk through what he was doing.

'Eight divided by two is four. Then you divide the two by one. I asked him to stop and repeated the phrase we had talked about last week 'divide by the bottom number and times by the top number' he said, oh, you times four by one which is one, I asked again what is the answer and he said 'four.' I replied 'Excellent' and said so you would colour four squares in your rectangle. I gave both children the same three more examples to draw with a fraction, asking them first to work out the area and then the fraction.

1.  $\frac{3}{4}$  of (rectangle 6 by 4)
2.  $\frac{2}{4}$  of (rectangle 3 by 8)
3.  $\frac{2}{3}$  of (rectangle 2 by 9)

I went out of the room for a few minutes to photocopy some maths tasks. When I came back they both said to me that you could not do the last question, pointing to the final rectangle. I looked at it and replied you could – they looked confused, so we went through it together and I asked them both questions to assist me. I asked them what the area was of the rectangle (18) and what fraction we were trying to work out ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ). First we divide by the bottom number ( $18 \div 3 = 6$ ). I asked what did we do next, and they replied times by the top number, I asked 'x' what numbers did we times together and she replied 6 and 2, and I asked 'Which is what Daniel?' and he replied 12. I said v.good, 12cm squared. After going through this second example, they were able to do the middle two questions themselves without assistance; although both sought confirmation their working out and answers were right.

At the end of the session, I remarked they had both done v.well and gave them each a Cadbury's crème egg, which they were pleased with. I said next week, I would be testing them both on their 10 and 11 times tables (which Daniel smiled at) alongside another table, which in Daniel's case was the 6 times table. I said to them both I had heard they were going to go to university to be taught and how lucky they were, as not many children got to go. I said they would have one teacher each and it would be great. I was surprised at Daniel's response, as he did not smile, he just looked at me.

## Week Ten

**Thursday 21/03/02 1540 → 1550**

**Tariq's parents evening**

Setting: 6E classroom (3 tables grouped together)

Present: Mrs Eastwood and myself

Observations from headnotes

Mrs Eastwood introduced me to Tariq's father, who attended parents evening alone. He apologised for running a little late and commented some days he did not feel good, but today he was okay. He added that his wife had not been very well recently. Mrs Eastwood said 'Oh right' and did not comment further.

Mrs Eastwood said generally, she found Tariq's behaviour okay and turned to me for confirmation. I said he liked to have fun, not unlike the other children in the class. She noted he was polite and helpful, and received lots of praise. For example today he worked with an autistic boy in reception (painting the younger child's design on a tile) and was praised by the reception teacher, who said he was excellent.

Mrs Eastwood commented on each subject in turn:

**Science:** Tariq needed to revise science

**Literacy:** His previous literacy target was to complete tasks within the set time. She commented he had improved on this and was now working within the time frame. Previously he had not completed his work within the allocated time. She thought his literacy had improved and asked if his mother helped him with this. Tariq's father replied as his English was not so good, his wife helped usually; but she had not been v.well for the past month or so and had been off work. Adding, recently she had not given him the attention he needed. He added Tariq's sister also tried to help him.

**Maths:** Tariq knew the basics of maths ( $\times \div + -$ ) and needed to work on his problem solving. She said she was aware that he (Tariq's father) was helping him with his maths. He confirmed this and commented he did not understand the questions himself sometimes (laughing). The teacher said Tariq could bring those questions back in, unanswered and she would help him. He said it was okay as he tries to work them out.

**I.C.T.:** Mrs Eastwood said Tariq was v.good at I.C.T. and his father asked what this was; I replied computers. She apologised for using the I.C.T terminology. He said he knew v.little about computers although Tariq was on the computer a lot. She commented he helped others a lot.

**Art:** Tariq was v.good, produced some good pieces of work

Mrs Eastwood said the main thing was for Tariq to focus and get down to the task faster, straight away if possible. She added she was pleased with his progress but thought he could be pushed a little more. It appeared his dad interpreted this as a criticism of himself and his wife; Mrs Eastwood implied this with reference to Tariq. She reiterated this and said Tariq needed to be encouraged to do work more independently. In response he said 'okay' several times.

Tariq's dad commented, Tariq had said on several occasions, that his teacher had said something and that was good enough for him and that his parents did not have to agree. Mrs Eastwood was surprised and said she would speak to Tariq about it.

Tariq's father mentioned he had told Tariq that it was 'fast-track' at high school. He asked the teacher to mention this to him and encourage him more, so he would get down to the tasks quicker.

As I walked out, Tariq's father asked if I was a permanent classroom assistant. I informed him it was my second year as a classroom assistant at the school and I was studying at university. He asked if I had only come in for Tariq and I said, there were seven other children taking part in my research and that I would be attending their parents evening too. I asked how his wife was and he said she was not v.well and had been off work for nearly eight weeks, adding there was something wrong. As he left, he said it was nice to meet me.

**Thursday 21/03/02 1550 → 1600**

**Beth's parents evening**

Setting: 6E classroom (3 tables grouped together)

Present: Mrs Eastwood and myself

Observations from headnotes

Both parents attended, although Beth did not accompany them. As I was present from the last appointment (Tariq), Mrs Eastwood did not introduce me and I felt uncomfortable introducing myself, as she launched into conversation about the progress of their daughter's work. She later apologised as she realised she hadn't introduced me. She said I was the one who sent them the letter and she was supposed to ask them if they minded me sitting in, but as she knew them so well, she knew they would not mind (laughing). Mrs Redpath had been in recently to see Mrs Eastwood, but she had not mentioned to me what it was about. Beth had not got a place at Greenwood

although her brother attended and they lived nearby. Her mum had told Beth, the letter confirming her place must have got lost in the post; but really she had not been given a place, as the school said they had not received the relevant papers. Recently they had received confirmation about Beth's place at Greenwood. I said Beth had mentioned she had not received a letter saying she had a place, and said out of everyone she lived the closest and should go to Greenwood. Since receiving her letter she had said her mum was v.happy. They laughed and said they had aged ten years and got a few grey hairs over the whole thing.

Mrs Eastwood commented on how confident Beth had become since the last parents evening. Mrs Eastwood said Beth had really come on in her maths; stating she was a low level three when she first came into year six and was now a middle to high level four. Both seemed really pleased at this and mentioned they were panicking a bit when she first came into year six, as they thought they would find it difficult and that she would struggle. Mrs Redpath said they were no longer worried. Mr Redpath said he thought Beth had come on in 'leaps and bounds' and they 'did not have much else to say as they were really pleased'. Mr Redpath said she had grown up over the past year. He bit his nails, as Beth does.

Mrs Eastwood said her work in literacy was good, although sometimes she got carried away with her writing and forgot to use punctuation. She had discussed this with Beth and they had agreed to practice this together. Mrs Eastwood said Beth's I.C.T. skills were good. She commented Beth was good at art, especially observational work. She said Beth liked P.E. and liked to be in the thick of the action.

Mrs Eastwood asked if I would like to add anything. I said she had become much more confident, adding she used to be nervous talking in the company of some children, but now she 'goes for it' – which they smiled at. I also said she was a v.smiley person, which was lovely.

Mrs Eastwood commented out of everyone in the class, Beth had really come on and was a pleasure to have in the class. She said Beth asked questions a lot and she wanted to continue to encourage this. She added she could tell when a question was coming by the look on her face. She thought it would be good for Beth to know her scores in the SATs. She was not allowed to tell the children, but could tell the parents only if they asked –they could then tell Beth her scores. Mrs Eastwood said she thought they would see Beth improve more and more over the next few years.

Beth's parents went on to talk about her brother who Mrs Eastwood had previously taught; her mum said jokingly 'right enough about her'. He is at Greenwood and has Aspergers syndrome. His teachers had predicted E's in most of his subjects, but he was to take his GCSEs in drama and I.C.T one year early and had been predicted a grade C in both. They said they were v.happy about this when told, Mrs Redpath said she was tearful. They said he tried hard throughout his lessons, but his achievement levels were low.

**Thursday 21/03/02 1910 (last appointment)**

**Daniel's parents evening**

Setting: 6E classroom (3 tables grouped together)

Present: Mrs Eastwood and myself

Observations from headnotes

Both Mr Jones and Mrs Richardson attended without Daniel. They were sat talking with Mrs Eastwood, when I arrived. I had arrived ten minutes or so before the appointment, but they had arrived even earlier. They had waited for me before they formally began discussing Daniel's progress. Mrs Richardson said as soon as I walked into the classroom, that it was nice to put a face to the name at last - which I thought was lovely. She went on to say 'Daniel thinks so much about you both' i.e. Mrs Eastwood and I. He had been off since Tuesday of this week, with an abscess on his tooth. She said he had milk teeth even though he was eleven and that it was going to cost her money (tooth fairy – a pound per tooth).

She said she could not believe Daniel was at this stage in school. Mrs Eastwood said she thought Daniel was working towards a level three in his SAT's. She added that she knew Mrs Richardson had wanted him to get a level four, but she felt and she was sure I would agree, that it was too much to push him that far. Mrs Eastwood added that it would be bonus if Daniel got anything more than a level three. But she thought it was important that Daniel's mum let him know she was okay with this, as she did not want to knock his confidence. Mrs Eastwood stated that Daniel was nearly making a level two at the beginning of the year, and he mum said I know – so in these terms, he had done v.well. Mrs Richardson said she was okay with this.

Mrs Richardson said she helped Daniel with his maths and she sat with him at the dining room table. She will only say if his answer is right or wrong when he shows her, his work. She mentioned he had taken a piece of work home recently to show her, that he had got ten out of fifteen on. This was the highest score he had got in year six in the weekly mental maths exercises and he had completed it alone. Mrs Richardson said there were questions he took home that she did not understand. Mrs Eastwood said if Mrs Richardson marked on Daniel's sheet which questions she did not understand, she would explain them on the back of the sheet (i.e. in written format). Mrs Richardson replied that would be good, as she would be learning at the same time. Mrs Eastwood went through one maths question, that Mrs Richardson could remember, having difficulty with. I said perhaps Daniel had increased his confidence through working with the girl in our sessions - they had developed an effective working relationship and helped and tested each other on the times tables.

Mrs Richardson said Daniel was so different now. She said it was after the day when they had had a 'barney' over a play station. She cited she had gone for him and he had gone for her and she had ended up throwing a table at a window and the table had broken (Daniel was on the other side of the room at the time). She clicked her fingers and said Daniel had grown up from that day. She mentioned around that time she had a hysterectomy and it (the situation) was probably something to do with her hormones or something.

Mrs Richardson said Daniel loved going to the CCC. She added that on Saturday he had been at his friends, Matt, on the internet. She said he really wanted a computer and they wished they could give him a PC. She added maybe for Christmas they could get one for the three of them (Daniel has two sisters). I asked if the local library had computer facilities and she said he was not a member. He had been a member but they had moved and then moved back, but she would sort that out. As Jane has mentioned, computers are cheap to make, but so much profit is made on them, as they are expensive to purchase.

They asked if they could take a science book home for Daniel so he could revise over the holidays, as he would not be coming into school tomorrow. Mrs Richardson asked Mrs Eastwood how Daniel had done with 'the amazing creature' story. Mrs Eastwood said she had not marked the stories yet, but would do over the holiday. I mentioned he had been excellent in that particular lesson and was engaged, putting his hand up and offering answers. I added he had received a certificate off the other classroom assistant and myself for his participation – she was unaware of it. Mrs Eastwood said Daniel responded well to visual material (we had discussed this recently, as during this particular lesson, a spider diagram had been drawn on the board and children's suggestions added. I remember Mrs Eastwood had said, this was the most Daniel had ever participated in a literacy lesson).

Mrs Eastwood said everyone was really happy with Daniel, Mrs Clegg (the SENCO), herself, Helen, Alison - she implied it was a team input. They said they could not be any happier with him and that he was different at home. She added how he is in school, is how he is at home. I told them Daniel had won one of the classroom assistant prizes for this term but unfortunately it was chocolate. His mum said they did not mind, as they would eat it (laughing) - they took it home for him.

Mrs Richardson mentioned Daniel had not got into his school (NG High School) and he did not want to go to the only other alternative - so she did not know what to do. She said she was going to appeal, but she was not sure how to go about it. Mrs Eastwood did not offer any guidance and to be honest I did not have a clue how to go about it and thus did not say anything.

Mr Jones did not say much throughout the session. He would say on occasion say 'yes, I have noticed that', or 'Daniel has mentioned that' (CCC). When they left they said it was nice to meet me.

Before Christmas, Daniel's father came in to see Mrs Eastwood. He said his wife's mum was ill and asked if Daniel could have a couple of days off school as Daniel's mum usually sorts out the school stuff. (Perhaps it was difficult to co-ordinate his job and take Daniel to and from school).

I observed that they came to parents evening in a mechanical engineering van, presumably associated with Mr Jones's job.

**TERM 3: WEEKS 1-6**

OBSERVATIONAL RECORD SHEET		
WEEK	DATE	LESSONS
K		
One	Monday 08/04	General notes - afternoon session
		Group reading
	Tuesday 09/04	General notes - registration
		Literacy - comprehension
Two	Monday 15/04	Group reading
	Tuesday 16/04	Literacy – comprehension
	Wednesday 17/04	Group reading
		ICT @ school – ‘add and subtract’
Three	Monday 22/04	Practice paper: Maths A
		Practice paper: Mental Maths
	Tuesday 23/04	Practice paper: Maths B
		Practice paper: Science A
Four	Monday 29/04 – Friday 03/05	No observation notes made
Five	Tuesday 07/05	Literacy – review sheet
	Wednesday 08/05	ICT @ school – revisewise maths
Six	Monday 13/05	SATs: Maths paper A
		SATs: Mental maths test
	Tuesday 14/05	SATs: Maths paper B
		SATs: Science paper A
	Wednesday 15/05	SATs: General notes
	Thursday 16/05	SATs: Writing test
	Friday 17/05	SATs: Science paper B
Seven	Monday 20/05 – Friday 24/05	Bio-data collection
Eight	Monday 27/05/02 – 31/05/02	No observation notes made

## Week One

**Monday 08/04/02**      **10:45 → 12.00**      **14:15 → 15.20**

General notes - classroom  
(3 focal children present)

- ◆ Notes made from head notes

### DANIEL

Off school today

### BETH

During literacy as Beth was writing I noticed she had started shaking again. When she came into year six I observed her hands shaking, but after some time it had stopped. No observations were made in the afternoon session. After school, Beth's mum came to see Mrs Eastwood and said that Beth might not be in the next day and she wanted to watch the Queen Mothers funeral – Mrs Eastwood said this was fine and Beth's mum said it was a big thing.

### LEANNE

It was the first day back after the Easter holiday today and Leanne said hello as soon as she saw me – one of approximately six girls from this class. Leanne volunteered to take Daniels place, as the girl he usually works alongside in our sessions, asked if we would be going out to do some work today. I smiled at Leanne as although she does not need to go over the maths work we do during the sessions, she has asked and offered on several occasions previously.

### TARIQ

No observation notes were made during the morning session. In the afternoon the class were watching a revisewise science video, explaining the format of the SAT's tests and how to go about answering some science questions. Whilst watching television, Tariq looked as though he had drifted – he looked at the table every now and again. The teacher saw me looking in his direction and asked if he was listening, he replied 'yes.'

**Monday 08/04/02**      **13:25 → 13:50**

Group reading: two focal children present in group of six (outside on the benches – playground)

- ◆ Notes made from head notes

### LEANNE

Leanne said she had written in her comment book but had left both this and her reading book at home – I asked her to bring it to me tomorrow. During the session she shared the new book with a member, so I could borrow hers, as the children read aloud. She listened to fellow group members read. When I asked questions about the story and characters, she offered answers. Moreover she questioned me about the relationship of two characters mentioned in the story, as the text had not yet explained their background. Her focus was v.good and she read well.

### BETH

Beth said she had written in her comment book but had left both this and her reading book at home – she said she knew where it was and she agreed to bring both to me tomorrow, when I asked. Beth seemed quite nervous in the group today and read aloud quietly – she sought confirmation regarding the pronunciation of several words, as she said she did not know how to say them.

Her focus was good and she listened to fellow group members read without interruption. When I asked questions about the story and characters, she was hesitant but offered answers when I persisted.

**Tuesday 09/04/02 08:55 → 09:15**

General notes - registration

◆ Notes made from head notes

### DANIEL

I went over to Daniel in the morning to say hello, as I had not seen him for over three weeks. He smiled and said 'Hi miss' adding thanks for the prize (classroom assistant award from last term). I asked how his tooth was and he said it was better but still a bit sore. I asked if he had good time over the holidays, he said 'they' now had a PC. I was v.excited for him, as I was aware that he really wanted a computer of his own. He said his mum knew a fourteen year old who could do anything on a computer and it now had Microsoft power point on it (the program he had learnt to use at the CCC) and they had three hundred games for it – he was v.enthusiastic as he spoke.

### BETH

Beth was off school today to watch the Queen Mothers funeral on television at home.

### LEANNE

Leanne had mentioned she was going to see 'Fame' last night so I asked her if she had enjoyed herself. She said she had a good time and had gone with her child minder, her husband and her child. I asked if she had sung the songs as they did on stage, she replied she did not know them. I told her that I had loved Fame when I was younger and wanted to be Coco or Wonder Woman – she smiled but did not say anything.

### TARIQ

No observation notes were made during registration.

### Comment

I asked Daniel what timetable he was learning at the moment for our next session – he replied 7x table. I asked him to learn it tonight as we would be working together this week – he said he could not go tonight as he had 'that group thing' to go to. I was unsure what he was talking about, so he asked the girl he usually works with in our sessions, what it was called. Tonight was the first time he would be working alongside a training teacher at the Didsbury campus, one to one. I asked him to tell me how it went tomorrow.

The teacher allowed the class talking time as a treat at the end of the day. She commented that a popular girl in the class liked Daniel (and had previously liked a boy who was v.popular last year, but not so much this year). Whilst telling me about it, she added 'fancy going from not really liking yourself to the Romeo of the class.'

**Tuesday 09/04/02 09:35 ( 10:30**

Literacy – comprehension (classroom)

(3 focal children present)

Mrs Eastwood, Mrs Patel and myself

◆ Notes made from head notes and brief written notes

The teacher introduced the comprehension 'Visit to Belgrave Manor'. She read through the letter, selecting child to read sections aloud. She discussed the text in detail and explained unfamiliar vocabulary drawing on the children's knowledge. E.g. canopy, unhygienic, roof rafters –drawing pictures on the board to illustrate her point. Whilst the children were working I told Mrs Eastwood that I thought several children had not understood what a canopy was and that I had drawn it again several times. She responded by putting up an umbrella and telling the class that the material formed a canopy and protected her from the rain. At the end of lesson, she asked Mrs Patel and myself to criticise her lesson so she could improve upon her teaching methods - I smiled.

**DANIEL**

Daniel semi put his hand up once during the introduction – I heard him mention what he thought was the answer to the person sat next to him – it was correct, although he did not seem to have the confidence to volunteer the answer in front of the class. He worked slowly, concentrating on his writing, which I told him was v.neat. I observed he asked assistance once during the lesson.

**LEANNE**

During the introduction, Leanne put her hand up in response to the teachers questions; she was selected to answer times. As I was assisting others around her, she sought clarification from me that her written answers were okay. Leanne asked me what canopy meant as she said she had forgotten – it had been explained in the introduction.

**TARIQ**

Tariq appeared attentive during the introduction and followed the text within letter, as it was read aloud. Tariq put his hand up times in response to the teacher's questions; he was selected to answer. I observed he was engaged more in this literacy lesson compared to usual. Towards the end of the introduction, I observed Tariq became distracted and started fiddling with things on his table, including the comprehension sheet. I said to him that I had been particularly impressed with him during the lesson so far and to carry on listening as they were about to start their work - he smiled. This seemed to have no effect as five minutes or so later I asked Tariq to stop messing with rulers and start his work.

**BETH**

Beth was off school today to watch the Queen Mothers funeral on television at home.

**Week Two**

**Monday 15/04/02 13:25 → 13:50**

Group reading: two focal children present in group of six (outside on the benches – playground)

◆ Notes made from head notes

**LEANNE**

Leanne read aloud her review of the first short story. During the session she listened to fellow group members read. When I asked questions about the story and characters, she offered answers. Her focus was v.good and she read well – she appeared confident.

**BETH**

Beth read aloud her review of the first short story. During the session she listened to fellow group members read. When I asked questions about the story and characters, she offered answers. Her focus was v.good and she read well. Again she seemed quite nervous in the group today and read

aloud quietly – she appeared more confident than the previous session. Her focus was good and she listened to fellow group members read without interruption. When I posed questions about the story and characters directly to Beth, she responded but she did not volunteer answers when I asked the group generally.

**Tuesday 16/04/02 09:35 → 10:30**  
Literacy – comprehension (classroom)  
(3 focal children present)  
Mrs Eastwood, Mrs Patel and myself  
◆ Notes made from head notes and brief written notes

The teacher introduced the comprehension 'Penpals'. She read through both letters, selecting child to read sections aloud. She asked the children to underline any unfamiliar words within each of the letters, which they would later discuss. Initially the teacher asked the children to *compare and contrast* the letters – asking them to give suggestions e.g. the use of language was different in the two letters. Mrs Eastwood stated 'I want answers off everyone so wake up.' Although Mrs Eastwood made an effort to ask different people, she frequently asked one girl in particular to answer.

The children queried the meaning of numerous words in the second letter, which contained unfashionable words e.g. hon.; peruse; frugal; detract; depicting. Mrs Eastwood asked the children to guess the meanings of words first using the other information within the sentence and I then provided the dictionary definition. Mrs Patel asked children to explain 'exclusive establishment'; Jane's support worker (not Rebecca) queried the meaning of 'priceless' and I asked if anyone could explain 'game hunt.'

#### **DANIEL**

Daniel slowly read through the text as the letters were read aloud by fellow class members. He put his hand up once during the '*compare and contrast*' part of the introduction. He underlined words that were unfamiliar to him but did not have time to read to the end of the second letter. He put his hand up to state a word he did not understand but was not chosen by the teacher to contribute. I heard him mention what he thought was the answer to a question – it was correct, although he did not to volunteer the answer in front of the class. He also put his hand up to suggest why he thought the author of the second letter had made the content up – he suggested it was because it said she had gone on a safari.

During the individual work, we worked slowly, concentrating on his writing, which I told him was v.neat. He asked for assistance from me once during the lesson. I noticed he had missed one part of a question out i.e. he had answered 3a but not read 3b, and I asked him to go back to the question and answer it.

#### **LEANNE**

During the introduction, Leanne followed the first letter read by a fellow class member. She read aloud the second letter clearly and with expression. She frequently put her hand up in response to the teachers' questions and was selected to answer several times. E.g. she put her hand up during the '*compare and contrast*' part of the introduction, to state the second letter used more descriptive words compared with the first. Mrs Eastwood asked her and the girl sat next to her to put their hands down as she wanted others to have a chance of answering. She underlined unfamiliar words within the text of both letters. She suggested what the word 'hon.' and 'frugal' meant. During the introduction Leanne asked me what hon. meant as she had forgotten – I think she had overheard Mrs Eastwood and I discussing hon. before she was required to give a suggestion as to what the word might stand for.

During the independent work I observed Leanne did not seek assistance. Mrs Patel read through the pupils work on Leanne's table and explained to Leanne that a pen pal could be in the same country as the person being written to - they did not have to be in a different country as Leanne had written, in response to the question 'what is pen pal?'

As I was assisting others around her, she sought clarification from me that her written answers were okay. Leanne asked me what canopy meant as she said she had forgotten – it had been explained in the introduction.

#### TARIQ

Tariq read aloud part of the first letter and continued to follow the text as the letters were read aloud by fellow class members. He underlined words that were unfamiliar to him and put his hand up to ask the meaning of a word. No further observations made.

#### BETH

Beth attended the Indian music session during this lesson.

**Wednesday 17/04/02 09:15 → 09:30**

Group reading (classroom)

(1 focal child present in a group of six)

◆ Notes made from head notes

Continued reading the Judy Blume book 'Are You There God? Its Me Margaret.'

#### TARIQ

Tariq lacked focus initially as we sat down to listen to one another's reviews. He had completed his homework review, but when I asked him to read it out (as the children were usually asked to) he asked if I would – I did. Whilst reading the book, the word 'period' came up and he asked what it was. I hesitated as I had been caught off guard and a girl in the group said it's a little loss of blood. I responded 'Yes, exactly from down there (gesturing the general area with my hand) in girls'. Tariq asked 'Why can't you take it from the arm?'. I said it was to do with eggs and he replied 'Oh, sperm', I repeated 'Eggs.' He said 'But they are the same thing'. I was overwhelmed with questions from the group and one boy looked it up in their science book that was lay on the table (as they had been revising from it). He read aloud the brief description. I said it would be covered in more depth when they had a talk later on in the year. I found the subject awkward and the way in which I explained it prompted more questions. Each time someone read aloud menstruation or period thereafter, Tariq would say quietly 'Urgh'. He settled down and followed the text as the others in the group read. During the session, one boy commented that he did not think his mother would agree to him reading this book and Tariq agreed, remarking something along the lines of I don't think mine would.

**Wednesday 17/04/02 09:35 → 10:30**

ICT – add and subtraction (ICT suite)

(4 focal children present)

Alison and myself

◆ Notes made from head notes and brief written notes

Miss Holt and I were assured by Mrs Eastwood, that the internet facilities were working and were asked to go on maths revisewise with the children. Unfortunately we found the internet was not working when we got into the ICT suite. So we decided to go onto the add and subtract maths program instead – the children were not impressed as I think they had been on this program many times before. The program has a range of sums to work out within a limited time. The sums get progressively harder, the higher the level you are on and everyone starts at the basic level and works up.

#### DANIEL

Daniel worked alongside a girl in the class, whom he had worked well with, in the previous ICT lesson last week. There were rumours in the class that they liked each other, although they never really spoke to each other during the session about anything but maths - again they worked v.well together. They choose to complete the questions independently. The difference in their maths ability was evident during the lesson. Last week whilst doing the science revision on revisewise,

Daniel seemed more confident, perhaps as he had previous experience of the program, as he had used in several times in the after school computer club.

During this session, Daniel was initially embarrassed to work out the sums by counting on his fingers, as she sat doing nothing but starting at him and the computer screen. I asked her to type in Daniel's answers as he said them aloud - she was v.patient. I encouraged him to use his fingers to work out the sums and he was okay after several questions. She was much quicker working the answers out on her turn and she got onto a higher level – but Daniel had something to do as he typed her answers in as she stated them aloud.

#### LEANNE

No observation notes made

#### TARIQ

No observation notes made

#### BETH

Worked in a trio, with two boys – they had worked extremely well together last week and again, did so this week. They chose to work out the answers separately, but assisted each other with the answers if their time was running out. Each child was given the opportunity to contribute within this group - the implicit rules were decided upon within the group.

### Week Three

#### **Monday 22/04/02 Morning session 09:30 → 12:00**

Practice SATS's: Maths test A (6E classroom)

Mental Maths

- ◆ Notes made from head notes and brief field notes

Gillian asked if I would stay in 6E for the morning, whilst Alison went in 6B. We were required to read aloud the questions in the papers, when the children asked. Gillian had 'bagsed me' for the week of the actual SATS's, as she thought it was best if the same person was in the class reading aloud the questions to the children. She had asked Friday PM and then commented that she didn't mind really as both Alison and I were good – but she would prefer me. During the practice maths paper A, Gillian asked me to explain to Alison that she had wanted me in 6E as I had built up a relationship with Daniel and Sehrish and she thought they were likely to ask me more questions, than they would Alison (this was in case Alison was feeling pissed off – but when I spoke to her about it, she was fine. I wonder why Gillian did not explain it to her herself.) The SAT papers were from 2001, and assessed up to level 5.

Gillian mentioned that she did not mind if I read the questions to Daniel even when he did not put his hand up – she wanted me to target him amongst others. If the invigilator came in, she said I could only read the questions to him, if he put his hand up.

#### ◆ **MATHS PAPER A**

The teacher read through the instructions aloud and reminded them, that it was important that they put up their hand to ask for questions to be read aloud.

#### DANIEL

Initially, Daniel semi-put his hand up and asked for questions to be read aloud. I began to read questions aloud to him, even when he did not put his hand up – I reminded him that he must put his hand up. He was sat next to a girl who works v.fast in comparison with Daniel and who did not ask for any questions to be read aloud. They have to sit in alphabetical order when answering the papers.

#### LEANNE

Leanne asked for several questions to be read aloud within the paper.

#### **TARIQ**

Tariq did not ask for any questions to be read aloud within the paper.

#### **BETH**

Beth came in to school but went home during registration, as she was not feeling well. Mrs Eastwood commented that she was sure Beth had gone home because of the practice SATs, which is what she really needed practice with.

#### ◆ **MENTAL MATHS**

The children listened to a tape with the instructions on and then the mental maths questions followed – no questions were repeated by the teacher.

#### **DANIEL**

During the time the children were supposed to be listening to the instructions, Daniel was doodling on his sheet. Once the questions began, his focus improved and I observed he used his fingers to work out some of the sums. He also looked at the clock when a time question was posed.

#### **LEANNE**

Just before the test began, Leanne asked to go to the toilet. Mrs Eastwood shouted at her and asked why didn't she go at break time – she let her go quickly before she began the tape. Leanne's focus was good and she appeared attentive whilst the instructions played. She concentrated whilst working out the answers.

#### **TARIQ**

Tariq's focus was good and he appeared to be listening to the instructions. He concentrated whilst working out the answers.

#### **BETH**

Beth was not in school.

**Tuesday 23/04/02      Morning session 09:30 → 12:00**

Practice SATS's: Maths test B (6E classroom)

Science test A

◆ Notes made from head notes

Again I was in 6E this morning to read aloud questions within the papers.

#### ◆ **MATHS TEST B**

The teacher read through the instructions aloud and reminded them, that it was important that they put up their hand to ask for questions to be read aloud.

#### **DANIEL**

Daniel put his hand up and asked for questions to be read aloud. I read questions aloud to him, even when he did not put his hand up. I asked him why his hand was not up – he smiled in response (If he spends time trying to read the text to himself, he is missing out on valuable time to work out the questions – as he works slowly). I assisted him with some questions as Mrs Eastwood said I could and that she would take the marks off the paper – as he could learn how to approach some of the questions. E.g. drawing reflections using the mirror line, by incorporating the use of the tracing paper. I asked him to have a go at some of the questions and to try and have more confidence in himself, as I felt he was beginning to rely on me too much.

I observed he could not do some questions within the paper, as he did not understand some of the terminology. E.g. equilateral triangle, Venn diagram, perimeter, multiple, prime number

#### LEANNE

Leanne asked for several questions to be read aloud within the paper – particularly those she was stuck on and had gone back to after getting to the end of the paper.

#### TARIQ

Tariq did not ask for any questions to be read aloud within the paper.

#### BETH

Beth was not in school.

#### ◆ **SCIENCE TEST A**

The teacher read through the instructions aloud and reminded them, that it was important that they put up their hand to ask for questions to be read aloud.

#### DANIEL

Daniel put his hand up frequently to ask for questions to be read aloud and also began to say 'Helen' across the class. He was able to write the answers to these more easily in comparison with the maths paper and he commented at the end that he thought it had been easy. He did not get to the end of the paper.

#### LEANNE

Leanne asked for several questions to be read aloud within the paper – particularly those she was stuck on.

#### TARIQ

Tariq did not ask for any questions to be read aloud within the paper.

#### BETH

Beth was not in school.

### Week Four

#### Monday 29/04/02 – Friday 03/05/02

- No observation notes made – I was off school all week (not well).
- Both Thursday 02/05/02 and Friday 03/05/02 were staff training days.

### Week Five

#### Tuesday 07/05/02 09:35 → 10:30

Literacy – newspaper articles  
(2 focal children present)

- ◆ Notes made from head notes

During teacher training Mrs Eastwood had received a handout re: newspaper article review sheet. This contained the recommended key elements that all newspaper articles should contain i.e. headline, byline, lead paragraph, body, sources, illustration and caption. Moreover details pertaining to each key element were written as questions. The teacher asked the children to read through the article 'Red fans walk on by.' she then began to read through the table, briefly discussing headline, byline and lead paragraph in relation to the article and using the questions as prompts.

The aim was for the children to look at their own work and review whether all key elements had been included and what information they could add to make them better. The children were paired together to discuss the questions.

I was asked to sit with a specific table, containing one focal child in a group of four. The children on my table (two pairs) had difficulty understanding the teacher's instructions and I informed them that the aim was to discuss their article by answering the questions.

#### DANIEL

No observation notes made

#### LEANNE

Off school

#### TARIQ

As the teacher addressed the class, Tariq looked in her direction but seemed to be elsewhere. When they began reading the article individually, he needed prompting, as he had not followed the conversation. As the teacher discussed the key elements, I asked Tariq what a byline was, as I did not think he was 'engaged' in the lesson. He replied 'okay' and looked at his sheet.' So I told him, I was asking him a question and repeated it again, he shrugged his shoulders in reply. I asked him to read the information on the sheet and he briefly looked at it and showed it me on the article. He appeared v.disinterested in the lesson.

Tariq was paired with another boy in the class, whom he does not usually spend time with. Tariq found this task difficult – he did not understand what he was required to do. I read aloud to him 'Do you have a headline' he replied 'yes. I went on, 'does it contain less than seven letters?' he replied 'yes.' I asked his partner to ask Tariq those questions by each key word. Tariq did not want to participate in the 'paired talking,' which proved difficult. He would only respond if he received one on one attention, from Mrs Eastwood or myself. After quickly working through his article and making a note of the things he could add to it to make it better, Mrs Eastwood moved him and his partner onto another table to read through and review someone else's article.

#### BETH

Not present, as attending Indian music session

**Wednesday 08/05/02 09:35 → 10:30**

ICT @school (ICT suite)

Revisewise - maths

◆ Notes made from head notes

Mrs Eastwood paired the children. We took half the class for half an hour and then swapped over, they were doing numeracy in the classroom.

#### DANIEL

Daniel had been paired with someone much brighter than him, who I perceived to be quite domineering in his company. When I first went over she was answering all the questions. I asked Daniel to answer the next question and he got stuck, I prompted him to use his fingers if he needed to – he did so, but appeared embarrassed. I asked them to take it in turns to answer the questions and to help each other if either got stuck. His partner asked if they would get a certificate if they worked well together and I said I would watch them and see. Her attitude changed and she went through the questions slowly explaining each to Daniel in a different way.

E.g. percentages: the question stated  $20/100 = ? \%$  She explained there were a hundred bits, but we only had twenty, therefore we only had 20%. He got in straight away and answered the following four questions, based on the same format.

She also assisted me in explaining percentages in a different context.

E.g.  $30/50 = ? \%$

I asked what number do you think of immediately when you hear the word 'percentage' he replied 'one hundred?' in a questioning tone. I said exactly, so we have to change the bottom number to one hundred and asked him how we could do that. He struggled and needed assistance, so I told him it was  $50 \times 2$  and whatever we did to the bottom we did to the top. She repeated this statement

again and added, so its  $30 \times 2 = 60$ , which is 60%. We assisted him again through the next couple of questions, each time giving him fewer prompts. On the final question I asked him to do it alone, he went quiet. I asked Daniel 'what do you do first' and he replied in a questioning tone 'change the bottom to a hundred?' After the initial reassurance he worked through it with greater independence, although he still required prompts (although of a less specific nature e.g. remember you do the same to the bottom and the top).

There were similar questions to those we had covered before in our sessions that he had previously got the hang of after practice questions. I observed that he could not remember what the rules were.

E.g. divide by the bottom and times by the top 2/3 of 15  
Once Daniel was given the rule he could work out the answer.

#### LEANNE

Leanne worked in a group of three, alongside one boy and one other girl. I observed although she participated in answering the questions, she took more of a backseat role whilst the other two members were more vocal. Leanne was sat the furthest away from the computer and when I asked if she wanted a turn, she said that she was alright. Their group sought assistance on several questions e.g. 20% of 80. I asked Leanne what 10% of 80 was and she replied 'eight' immediately, I asked so what is 20% of 80 and she said 'sixteen' in a questioning tone. I said 'v.good, you know the answer but you have to think how you can break it down.'

#### TARIQ

Tariq was in a group of three with one girl and one other boy. He began to mess as soon as he sat down in the computer suite, so I asked him to sit in the middle of the floor. After five minutes or so I asked him, if he thought he could sit and behave and he replied 'no'. I asked him if he wanted to go back up stairs and he replied 'no'. So I asked him to sit back with his group and work through the maths questions together.

When I went back to his group and asked if they were working together and each getting a turn, the other boy said that Tariq was helping with the answers, although he didn't want a go on the computer. I asked Tariq if he wanted a turn on the computer and he replied 'Yeah...oh, I don't know' and turned away from me. I later observed whilst the others were working through the maths questions, he was talking across the room to another boy. He appeared disinterested by the task at hand.

#### BETH

Beth worked in a group of three with one boy and one other girl. Generally both the other boy and girl are quiet, but were more vocal in the company of the group members. When I asked if they were okay and working together, Beth replied they were taking in turns to answers questions. I said that I thought this was a good idea and that it would be good if they could help each other if they got stuck. They seemed to communicate and co-operate v.well as a group.

### Week Six

#### Monday 13/05/02

SAT papers:

- Maths Paper A (45 minutes)
- Mental Maths (20 minutes)

(3 focal children present)

◆ Notes made from head notes and brief written notes

Mrs Eastwood asked me to stay in her class to read aloud the questions to the children. She explained to Alison, it was because I had an established relationship with Daniel and Sehrish; adding that was what we had done in the practice SATs. She said she did not mind me pointing to key words and diagrams when I was reading to certain children in the class, including Daniel.

She told the class she had not looked at the paper, but she had looked at it with the other year six teacher that morning, as they were going through the answers (and methods) to the questions when I arrived at school.

### **Maths Paper A**

The teacher gave the class a quick warm up exercise before the first test (maths paper A). She briefly talked about several areas e.g. angles in a triangle; the importance of putting numbers in columns when adding and subtracting etc. and gave the class several sums e.g.  $32 \times 10$ . She spent time reminding them of the questions:

- What does it mean?
- What do I know? (Look at the diagram for information)
- What can I do?

The children asked the teacher to write them clearly on the board

### **Mental Maths**

The teacher provided an introduction before the paper and briefly discussed weight; pie charts; time, number line etc.

### **DANIEL**

#### **Maths Paper A**

Before the test began I went over some terminology with Daniel to check he had remembered i.e. minus, plus and product. He was unsure of all the meanings that we quickly went through, with some example sums. I reminded him that he must put his hand up for questions to be read aloud. He did not join in with the warm up exercises and looked confused in response to a number of the questions. For those questions where children were required to multiply by ten - he did not appear to understand the procedure i.e. adding a '0'

During the test he put his hand up several times for questions to be read aloud, both Mrs Eastwood and myself, read questions to him. I mentioned to Mrs Eastwood that he did not put his hand up that often and she asked me to go to him and read questions aloud, even if he did not have his hand up. I observed he had difficulty understanding what some of the questions actually meant. In one question he was required to draw a given pattern reflected in a shape and he traced it and then looked confused, asking 'What do I do?' Mrs Eastwood looked at his work and said 'You haven't drawn your mirror line' serving as a prompt for his answer. In accordance with the rules, she is not allowed to provide such information – only read aloud the questions. Daniel did not attempt all the questions on the paper.

On a couple of occasions Daniel muttered the answer was e.g.  $8 \frac{3}{4}$  unfortunately he did not know how to write down three quarters and asked if it was  $\frac{3}{3}$  and I said I could not help him and to write down what he thought.

### **Mental Maths**

During the teacher's introduction, Daniel was distracted and it appeared he was not listening. I observed he did not attempt several questions in the test re: multiples and square roots. He does not know his timestables particularly higher numbers including 6, 7, 8 and 9.

### **LEANNE**

#### **Maths Paper A**

Before the test began Leanne asked 'Helen will you read the questions out' and I replied 'yes.' She added 'but you won't tell us the answer?' and I replied 'no'. Leanne joined in with the warm up exercise. She asked for several questions to be read aloud.

### **Mental Maths**

Leanne appeared attentive during the introductory talk before the test.

When I later asked Leanne about the tests, she said she thought they were 'Easy, well they weren't easy.'

She thought the tests were there is see 'how well you (the children) know it' and so teachers know which areas children need to work on more.

#### **TARIQ**

##### **Maths Paper A**

During the warm up, Tariq looked at Mrs Eastwood and appeared to be listening. He asked for one question to be read aloud in the last five minutes of maths paper A, re: sequencing. I told him to carry on with the sequence until he got to the numbers that were asked for in the question (more information than I should give, as I am only allowed to read aloud the text – no emphasising and no pointing to the key words or diagrams.)

##### **Mental Maths**

Tariq appeared to be listening during the introductory talk before the test.

#### **BETH**

Beth was off with tonsillitis today. Her mother came in to talk with Mrs Eastwood and she told her she could bring her in and sit with her on the stairs if she wanted. They agreed Mrs Eastwood would ring her tonight and see if she was feeling any better to come in to school tomorrow. Mrs Eastwood further added that she was not upset Beth wasn't in because of the SAT results but because her results will devastate her as she has worked so hard.

#### **Tuesday 14/05/02**

SAT papers:

- Maths Paper B (45 minutes)
- Science Paper A (35 minutes)

(3 focal children present)

- ◆ Notes made from head notes and brief written notes

The teacher asked me to give the class a quick warm up exercise before the first test (maths paper B). She had not warned me that I would be required to do this and I had to think off the top of my head – I remarked I felt uncomfortable. She observed me for five minutes or so (after coming back into the classroom) and asked me to continue. I said I did not want to and she replied sometimes we all have to do things we do not want to – which annoyed me. I asked questions re: multiplication, missing numbers and area. Mrs Eastwood took over five minutes or so later, again reminding them of the questions:

- What does it mean?
- What do I know? (Look at the diagram for information)
- What can I do?

I wrote the questions out clearly on the board.

She told the class she had not looked at the paper, but she had looked at it with the other year six teacher that morning, as they were going through the answers to the questions when I arrived at school (again not managing to say hello in reply to me). She told the class that although the tests were important at this time, they would not be required to tell people for future jobs etc.

I stayed again in 6E to read aloud the questions. Mrs Eastwood said it was the worst maths paper she had seen (in terms of past SAT papers) in her teaching career. She added both her and Mrs Brookes had found some of the questions difficult and had helped each other find out the answers. She was annoyed that there were questions re: maths topics that they had not covered in class. She mentioned she had gone to Shelia to discuss this and questioned the point of spending time trying to raise children's confidence when they had to attempt such difficult questions on the papers. She particularly said this was with reference to several children in the class including Daniel.

#### **DANIEL**

##### **Maths Paper B**

During the introductory warm up, Daniel paid little attention and was fiddling with the maths equipment on his desk. Both Mrs Eastwood and I read questions aloud to Daniel. I observed he found it difficult to understand the meaning of numerous questions, not knowing what maths calculation to use ( $\times + - \div$ ). In particular he interpreted the following questions as 'add'

- How many more children in class six preferred choc grain than golden corn? (he had to read from a graph).
- How much more did the baby weigh at five months than at birth? (again reading from a graph)

I told Daniel to leave those questions out that he found hard and move onto the next, towards the end of the allotted time I pointed out one he could try and answer (although I am not supposed to).

### **Science Paper A**

I asked Daniel to ask for every question to be read aloud in the paper and he repeated 'every question?' in surprise. I nodded and he agreed. I ended up sitting next to him and reading every question in the paper to him. He left several questions out, which he did not have time to go back to as intended. He did however reach the last page of the question booklet.

### **LEANNE**

#### **Maths Paper B**

Leanne put her hand up for questions to be read aloud. In one question, the pupil was required to specify where a given pattern was on the cube net, using the picture of the whole cube as a cue. Leanne made up the net of the cube, using the tracing paper distributed for another question, to practically find the answer.

### **Science Paper A**

No observations made as I was sat with Daniel.

### **TARIQ**

#### **Maths Paper B**

Tariq put his hand up for one question to be read aloud. On this paper Tariq had the opportunity to use a calculator to work out the answers, but I observed in several instances he was checking his answers by hand. He got to the end of the paper in the allotted time.

### **Science Paper A**

No observations made as I was sat with Daniel.

### **BETH**

Beth was off with tonsillitis again today – Mrs Eastwood had rung home that morning and she was still unwell.

#### **Wednesday 15/05/02**

SAT papers:

- Reading comprehension (60 minutes: reading time (15 minutes) and reading test (45 minutes))
- Spelling test (10 minutes) and handwriting test (5 minutes)

(4 focal children present)

- ◆ Notes made from head notes and brief written notes

### **General observations**

Beth came into school today although she said she was still not feeling v.well. She came in her own clothes rather than school uniform. Leanne went to sit with her immediately and made a gap between their chairs saying 'stay away.' Another girl (Emma) came to join in the conversation. I asked Leanne why she had made a space between the chairs and she said 'cos I don't want no germs' adding she had been to bed early that week. She told me she usually went to bed around 10pm, but on Monday, she had gone at 8pm and Tuesday at 9pm.

### **Reading comprehension**

No observations made, as I was not required in the classroom. Leanne and Tariq reported they had attempted all the questions within the comprehension.

### **Spelling**

No observations made.

### **Handwriting**

Daniel was one of the last to finish writing. He had worked slowly and had produced a wonderful piece of neat work. I observed a couple of incorrect spellings that he had copied from the passage. He received compliments off Mrs Eastwood and myself – Mrs Eastwood also showed his work to the head teacher, who remarked it was the best in the pile (Mrs Eastwood did not relay this to Daniel).

#### **Thursday 16/05/02**

SAT papers:

- Writing test (60 minutes: planning time (15 minutes) and writing time (45 minutes))

(4 focal children present)

- ◆ Notes made from head notes and brief written notes

Before looking at the paper, Mrs Eastwood briefly addressed the key components within a letter and leaflet and the use of description within a story. She told the class that they were generally v.good at writing stories. She read aloud all the text within the planning sheet, the choice consisted of two stories, one letter and one leaflet – the decision was left up to each child. Although the children were supposed to work individually, all the focal children put their hand up to query something or seek advice or confirmation.

#### **DANIEL**

Daniel chose to write the story entitled 'A forgetful character.' The main theme of his story was that the character 'Alex' forgot his lines in a play. Mrs Eastwood mentioned to me, that he should not have chosen to write a story, suggesting the letter might have been better. Although she thought the main idea was good, she did not think he would be able to expand on it within the story. I went to Daniel towards the end to tell him he had ten minutes left and should begin writing the ending if he had not done so; and again at five minutes, telling him he should be coming to the very end of his story now.

#### **LEANNE**

Leanne chose to write the story entitled 'A forgetful character.' She put her hand up and said she did not know what she should write that 'Alex' forgets within the story. I said I could not help her come up with an idea, adding that it did not have to be something written on a piece of paper. She decided the main theme of her story was that the main character forgot their birthday party. Beth wrote her address in the top right hand corner and put her hand up to ask if it was okay. Leanne put her hand up to ask if she could fit in some writing she had left out and I suggested she drew an arrow to make it clear to the reader.

#### **TARIQ**

Tariq chose to write the leaflet based on the community park. He asked if he should begin it 'Dear sir or madam' I replied that was better for a letter, suggesting he began it with 'Welcome all'. Beth

wrote her address in the top right hand corner and put her hand up to ask if it was okay. Tariq asked if the word 'foggy' was rude, I asked if he meant 'old foggy' and he replied yes. I suggested he used 'people over a certain age' or 'O.A.P.' instead of using 'foggy' within the leaflet.

#### **BETH**

Beth chose to write the letter 'A special guest.' Mrs Eastwood told me she was panicking and thus finding it difficult to write. Beth wrote her address in the top right hand corner and put her hand up to ask if it was okay.

#### **Comment**

Mrs Eastwood informed me that Leanne had been to her to say that her mum had said they could not afford for Leanne to go on forthcoming trips to the Hattie museum and Tintwistle (they were required to contribute £6 and £4 respectively, towards the cost of the trips). Mrs Eastwood asked Leanne to bring the permission slip in and that would be okay (I think she would make up the money). She asked Leanne not to say anything to the other pupils in the class, as they would think it was unfair. Mrs Eastwood said she honestly thought Leanne's mum was struggling for money as Leanne had got a new pair of shoes this term, in the previous term her shoes had big holes at the front, where her socks could be seen.

#### **Friday 17/05/02**

SAT papers:

- Science paper B (35 minutes)

(4 focal children present)

- ◆ Notes made from head notes

The following questions were written clearly on the board:

- What does it mean?
- What do I know? (Look at the diagram for information)
- What can I do?

#### **DANIEL**

Before assembly Daniel had asked me if I would be in his class for the science test and I replied that I would be. Daniel put his hand up for most questions to be read aloud. I read the majority of questions to Daniel; he also asked Mrs Eastwood if I was busy, reading questions to other pupils. He left several questions out which I said he could come back to, and he did not get to finish the booklet within the allotted time.

I observed he did not always understand the meaning of words within questions e.g. what is the scientific name for materials which allow heat to pass through them?

#### **LEANNE**

I observed Leanne did put her hand up for questions to be read aloud to her. No further observations made as I spent most of my time with Daniel.

#### **TARIQ**

No observations made as I spent most of my time with Daniel.

#### **BETH**

No observations made as I spent most of my time with Daniel.

**Monday 20/05/02 – Friday 24/05/02**

- ❖ No observation notes made during lessons
- ❖ Time spent collecting bio-data pertaining to focal children

**Week Eight****Monday 27/05/02 – Friday 31/05/02**

- ❖ No observation notes made this week
- ❖ I spent time preparing materials for displays etc.
- ❖ Majority of lessons were unstructured e.g. design and technology (designing and making hats), art etc.

**TERM 3: WEEKS 9-14**

<b>OBSERVATIONAL RECORD SHEET</b>		
<b>WEEK</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>LESSONS</b>
Nine	Monday 10/06	Hattie Museum trip
Ten	Monday 17/06	Literacy
	Monday 17/06 – Friday 21/06	General observation notes
Eleven	Tuesday 24/06	General observation notes
Twelve	Monday 01/07 – Friday 05/07	No observation notes made
Thirteen	Monday 08/07 – Friday 12/07	No observation notes made
Fourteen	Monday 15/07 – Friday 19/07	No observation notes made

## Week Nine

This week I have spent most of my time in 6E because of visits to the Hattie Museum and the CCC and due to my change in role, as support worker to Jane in 6E. So far she had attended school only for the morning sessions and would now be attending for the whole school day (the afternoon sessions consist of unstructured lessons). I took time off to attend the faculty research conference at MMU on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2002.

### DANIEL

Daniel was the only one to forget about the visit to the Hattie museum and consequently was the only member of 6E not to be dressed up as a Victorian apprentice. I did not spend time observing the boys as I supervised the girls throughout the trip.

### TARIQ

Tariq made an effort to dress up as a Victorian apprentice and looked the part. I did not spend time observing the boys as I supervised the girls throughout the trip. However at one point, I did go and see what the boys were up to as several of them (including Tariq as I found out) were being v.noisy; playing up when Mrs. Eastwood was away, supervising the other group of boys (they had been divided into two groups).

### BETH

Beth looked brilliant as a Victorian apprentice: long black skirt, white blouse, white apron and white bows in her hair. At the Hattie museum, Beth took a v.active role and regularly put her hand up to answer questions posed by the mistress and was one of the few to ask questions.

On the way back from the CCC, Beth was v.chatty with me as we discussed the end of year six party. She told me whom she liked in the class etc. She remarked that he made her 'teeth sweat' and her 'heart beat like a jack hammer.' Although Beth is quite a quiet girl, she likes an outspoken, v.confident boy (whom I personally think is overconfident on the point of rude). She has a v.expressive face and is most amusing!

She commented that she did not go on the Guides trip over the school holidays as it was too expensive, adding if she had been treated, her brothers would also have to be treated (to the same amount of money).

#### **LEANNE**

Leanne dressed up as a Victorian apprentice: long black skirt with white blouse. At the Hattie museum, Leanne took an active role and regularly put her hand up to answer questions posed by the mistress, however I observed she was not selected to answer. I observed several girls who are a 'clique' in the class, spoke to Leanne in a way that belittled her. E.g. whilst making ribbons, Leanne said she wanted to wait for the ribbon colour she liked. It was also the colour they wanted and they told her who would be using it first and who was next etc. telling her to choose another ribbon – Leanne relented. I spoke to the girls involved and informed Mrs Eastwood. She went to speak to them and mentioned that was probably what Leanne's mum was concerned about last year in 5T.

Throughout the week, Leanne has spent an increasing time with Jane and they have talked together throughout lessons. Mrs Eastwood has commented that it is Leanne and not Jane who is the bad influence – but I feel it is the combination. Although Leanne is quite chatty at the moment, another child would not be pulled up for it, it is because Leanne's behaviour is usually excellent and she never speaks out of place etc. No problems have arisen concerning Leanne before and I feel it is wrong for Mrs Eastwood to pull up Leanne only. Perhaps they are not the best combination.

### Week Ten

#### **Monday 17/06/02**

❖ Literacy work

Greenwood High School has sent work for the children to complete at primary school. The largest of this is the literacy assignment- the children are required to read two books (Kensuke's Kingdom: Michael Morpurgo and The Suitcase Kid: Jacqueline Wilson) and complete a booklet containing several activities. I spent an hour this afternoon (two thirty minute sessions) reading from the first book: (Kensuke's Kingdom: Michael Morpurgo)

This is a long session, but the teacher remarked that the work needs to be done. Also there remains Broad Oak work to be finished alongside the year six production, which has yet to be started (bar one singing session).

#### **DANIEL**

Dndrew's concentration appeared to be quite good at first but later he started to drift. Mrs. Eastwood moved him on the floor near to me.

#### **TARIQ**

Tariq 's concentration was outstanding. He turned in his chair and looked in my direction throughout (he was sat in close proximity to me). Usually he fidgets with anything on the desk in front of him and does not bother to turn in his seat.

#### **BETH**

Beth's concentration was v.good and she turned in her chair to look in my direction throughout the reading. She appeared attentive and her facial expression showed she was interested in the story. During the day she had seen me and asked if she could tell me something personal i.e. about he boy she likes in 6E (he gave her a chocolate).

## LEANNE

Leanne's concentration dipped in and out and I noticed she was talking with another girl sat near to her whilst I read – she stopped when I made eye contact with her (Jane was not in this afternoon). Mrs Eastwood moved Leanne onto the floor, closer to where I read – she was not impressed.

At the end of the day Mrs Eastwood kept the class behind and Leanne was the last girl to go home. Mrs Eastwood commented to her (infront of other class members) that today had been much better than last week and that she hoped she would keep it up. I have observed Leanne has become a lot more chatty during lesson time.

## Monday 17/06/02 – Friday 21/06/02

❖ General observation notes

## DANIEL

Generally, Daniel appears to be losing interest in school work again. He has been involved in numerous 'incidents' this week, whereby he had joined in with fellow class members in disagreements with children in 6B. Mrs. Eastwood has inferred in discussion with myself, that the incidents are being escalated in the manner in which they are being dealt (it is felt Mrs. Brookes is reinforcing and strengthening the rift between the classes). However I have observed Daniel's focus is again generally v.poor. Daniel is distracted easily by children sat on his colour table or pens/pencil crayons etc. which he messes with (they are in containers placed in the middle of there table).

Daniel worked slowly and his focus was v.good during the handwriting exercise – he produced a lovely piece of work, which he received much praise for (Mrs. Eastwood, Alison and myself) and a classroom assistant certificate for.

Daniel was off on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> June (England match in the morning and sponsored walk in the afternoon). This may be due to illness, watching the England and Brazil world cup match amongst other factors. Mrs Eastwood. Commented that Daniel was always off when there were activities such as the sponsored walk and added that perhaps his mother did not have time to get something together.

## TARIQ

I have observed that Tariq's focus has generally been good during lessons, especially when I read aloud to the class. He chats with others sat on his colour table (as do the majority in his class) sometimes, when Mrs. Eastwood, Alison or myself are talking – which Mrs. Eastwood pulls him up for. He often sits patiently with his hand up waiting to talk/comment on something – Mrs. Eastwood often responds to those who shout out, although not meaning to. I have observed she picks others before Tariq, who seems to go unnoticed. He does have a great deal of patience, in that he can sit for a long time with his hand up and not be chosen to speak.

Tariq was off on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> June. This may be due to illness, watching the England and Brazil world cup match, amongst other factors.

## BETH

Beth's focus is v.good during lessons and I observed she was attentive as I read aloud text from Kensuke's kingdom. She took part in the Indian music performance on Thursday afternoon and said she enjoyed it.

### Sponsored walk

Beth dressed as an 'insane' person for the sponsored walk: hands in a shirt (she explained to me it was supposed to be like a straight jacket); face paints: black/blue bags round her eyes and red lines at her mouth; and a sign round her neck stating 'insane.' Numerous children used her face paints to add to their costumes and Mrs. Leahy helped out by painting some children's faces.

## LEANNE

Leanne seems to lack focus in lessons at the moment and is v.chatty throughout lessons. They are unstructured throughout the day, not only in the afternoon.

Leanne was off on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> June, as she said she had to go to the doctors. When I asked why, she said she was going to have a x-ray as her mum had a thyroid problem and that they were checking that she did not have it also – she commented that she did not. When I spoke with her mum during the interview, she said Leanne did have a thyroid problem.

### Sponsored walk

Leanne did not bring in an outfit for the sponsored walk and when I asked why, she said she had forgot, adding that she had only found out a week ago and that it wasn't long enough to get something. After mentioning it to Mrs. Eastwood, initially we found a school football kit for Leanne to wear, but she did not like it, so Mrs. Eastwood lent her an England top, which she had brought with her to wear that morning. Mrs. Leahy drew flags on her cheeks and she joined the group of England supporters within 6E, who walked round the field together and cheered. I asked before we went out, if she felt better in the top as opposed to walking round in school uniform, she thought about it a little and said 'I suppose so.'

## Week Eleven

**Tuesday 24/06/02**

❖ General observation notes

During the afternoon session, Ms. Thompson took the class as Mrs Eastwood was attending a course. I took a group out for reading and then came back to class to begin the afternoon activities. The class were noisy and Ms. Thompson commented privately, that perhaps it was time for her to retire as she had lost her touch:

- Reading journal (based on Kensuke's kingdom)
- French activity – making a die
- The Suitcase Kid (listening to Ms Thompson read the story aloud)

## DANIEL

Daniel's focus was poor this afternoon and he looked disinterested and 'down' all afternoon. He did not appear to listen when the teacher spoke and engaged in conversation with other children on his colour table – they were noisy all afternoon. When I asked if he was alright, he said he had hayfever. I asked 'Do you not feel very well?' and he replied 'No.' He did not appear to be listening to the story at the end of the day. When I asked why he was off on Friday, he said it was because he split his school trousers and that he watched the football (world cup England versus Brazil).

## TARIQ

Tariq 's concentration was poor this afternoon and he shouted out answers, to questions posed by Ms. Thompson, even when specifically asked not to. He did not listen to Ms. Thompson's instructions and I repeated them to him individually, once he began each task.

He did not appear to be listening to the story at the end of the day and put his head in his hands and rested on the desk.

## BETH

### Reading group

Beth completed her homework. Beth's concentration was v.good and she followed as other reads aloud. Jane has recently joined the group and struggles with some of the vocabulary – Beth is

patient and does not comment – a couple of the members begin to talk or read the words aloud (which I thought appeared rude). If she is unsure of something she has written in her book review or in the story, she asks without hesitation. She has grown in confidence, as previously she would have been apprehensive and embarrassed about asking in front of some of the group members.

During the afternoon, Beth's focus was good and she answered questions posed by Ms. Thompson. She completed her diary and listened as the story was read aloud at the end of the day. Approximately ten children of thirty, worked and behaved well – Beth was one.

**LEANNE**

**Reading group**

Leanne completed her homework. Leanne's focus dipped in and out during the reading session. She generally listened to others reading, but at times seemed to drift. Jane has recently joined the group (who Leanne has become quite friendly with) and struggles with some of the vocabulary – Leanne is patient and gives her space to read aloud the words and does not comment – a couple of the members begin to talk or read the words aloud (which I thought was rude).

Leanne's concentration was poor and she seemed bored during this afternoon's activities. She completed the tasks, although I feel she did not complete them to her usual high standard. She engaged in conversation with members on her colour table, especially the boy sat next to her. The table worked progressively better i.e. talking less and working more. Leanne seemed to be in her own world as the story was read aloud at the end of the day and stared into space.

**No further observations made this week (Tuesday 25/06/02 – Friday 28/06/02)**

<b>APPENDIX 4.0</b>	<b>OBSERVATIONAL FIELD DATA: 6B</b>
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**TERM 2: WEEKS 1-6**

<b>OBSERVATIONAL RECORD SHEET</b>		
<b>WEEK</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>LESSONS</b>
Two	Monday 14/01	CCC visit: ICT & Science
	Tuesday 15/01	Literacy
		Science
	Wednesday 16/01	Literacy
		After school ICT
Three	Monday 21/01	CCC visit: ICT and Science
	Tuesday 22/01	Literacy
	Wednesday 23/01	ICT at school
		Science
		After school ICT
Four	Thursday 31/01	Science
Five	Monday 04/02	CCC visit: ICT and Science

	Tuesday 05/02	Literacy
Six	Monday 11/02	CCC visit: ICT
	Tuesday 12/02	Short story at the end of the day
	Thursday 14/02	Group reading

## Week Two

### **Monday 14/01/02 09:15 - 12.00**

Visit to CCC: science incorporating ICT skills

- ❖ Observation of class during introduction by CCC manager; independent work by the computer (crocodile clips and publisher) and again being addressed by Mr Watson (4 focal children present in group of 6)
- ❖ Combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time

Context: There were 30 computers in the one room (very £ looking); each child had access to a computer of their own and a swinging chair. In ICT lessons in school, there are two children to one computer and they attend the lessons in two halves. Mr Watson emphasised several times, for the children to work independently and at their own pace, they were not to worry if someone else was working much faster in comparison.

#### **JALEELA**

Jaleela was sat facing the teacher and the board as he addressed the class. She did not put her hand up in response to any questions of the teacher. During the independent session at the computer, Jaleela only asked for help if you asked if she was okay. Otherwise she sat there and looked at the computer screen; perhaps she was trying to work the answer out or perhaps she was too nervous to ask for help. Jaleela did not seem confident in her use of computer skills.

#### **ISABEL**

Isabel was sat facing the teacher and the board as he addressed the class. She did not put her hand up in response to any questions of the teacher. During the independent work at the computer,

Isabel sought help from any adult helper when she didn't know what to do or she didn't understand a question. She appeared confident in her use of computer skills.

#### CHARLOTTE

Charlotte was sat facing the teacher and the board as he addressed the class. She did not put her hand up in response to any questions posed by the teacher. Charlotte sought help off her friend sat close by if she was unsure of what to do or asked me if I was near or her friend didn't know. She appeared to be confident in using the computer programs and mouse etc.

#### JUN

No observation notes made

**Tuesday 15/01/02 10:50 → 12:00**

Mrs Brookes: class sat in literacy groups (classroom)

Literacy text level: 'instructional writing'

❖ Observation of:

- 'Fast chalk and talk' introduction (teacher addressed whole class for 10 minutes approx. 4 focal children present)
- Work was set to be completed independently (I was sat with a group of 4, one focal child present - Isabel)

❖ Drew on a combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time

#### JALEELA

Jaleela was sat facing the teacher and the board. She did not volunteer any answers during the teacher's intro.

#### ISABEL

I was sat with my group, including Isabel from the beginning of the lesson. Towards the end of the chalk and talk intro. Isabel turned to face the teacher and the board. During the introduction, I urged the children in my group to put their hands up and participate in the lesson (I like the children to get involved in what's going on rather than be spoken at. If they are not participating I generally think they are not interested, not listening or have not understood the info. Being relayed to them.) From that point only Isabel from the group put her hand up and volunteered answers twice.

Once the introduction was over, I discussed the text and questions with the group and we completed several questions as a group, before attempting later questions independently. Isabel had quite a vocal role within the group during the initial discussion and volunteered answers although she admitted she had only partially listened to my explanation of the worksheet. When completing the work independently, she was not afraid to ask me for assistance or to check her answer and sentence structure was okay. Once I left the table, the table engaged in discussion outside of the work and all members, including Isabel required continual prompting to focus on the task set.

#### CHARLOTTE

Charlotte turned to face the teacher and the board. She did not volunteer any answers during the intro.

#### JUN

No observation notes made

**Tuesday 15/01/02 14:00 → 15:00**

Mrs Brookes: class sat in literacy groups (classroom)

Science: 'force meter and newtons'

❖ Observation of:

- 'Chalk and talk' introduction (teacher addressed whole class for 10 minutes approx. 4 focal children present)
- Work was set to be completed independently

❖ Drew on a combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time

#### JALEELA

Jaleela was sat facing the teacher and the board. She appeared distracted, talking with the girl sat next to her and not fully listening. Towards the end of the intro. she volunteered one answer, although the answer was obvious, it would indicate she was listening.

During the work to be completed independently, I noticed Jaleela was crying and I took her out of the classroom, to ask why she was upset. She was very worked up and had to calm down before I could tell what she was saying. Jaleela said some people in her group were being horrible to her. One boy had put the bull dog clip they were weighing, in a rude place and he had thrown it had her; all but one person on her colour table were saying she had germs. She repeatedly said she wanted to go home. I told her it would be best to sort the matter out now, as she might feel uncomfortable coming into school tomorrow. She said that it would be okay by tomorrow, because everyone will have forgotten. Jaleela asked me if she could move tables and I said I would discuss it with the teacher. When I asked which table she would like to sit on, she shrugged so I asked her which friends she would like to sit with and she replied she didn't have any. I said I knew this wasn't true as I saw her talking with girls in that class all the time. I said she would have to stay until the end of the school day, she asked if she could go to the mosque and I replied no.

I went to talk to the teacher and told her about what had happened, she replied shortly, "Well, she can't go home." She moved Jaleela onto another table and split the rest of her colour group up onto different tables. She told them inform of the class, that she was not happy with their behaviour at all today and that they were talking too much. Jaleela continued with her work and people on her 'new' table appeared concerned and asked if she was alright. She was still upset, so I asked them to leave her to get on with her work. She continued to work and after 5 or so mins, the teacher passed her and said "That's very neat work, Jaleela."

#### ISABEL

Not in school today.

#### CHARLOTTE

Charlotte turned to face the teacher and the board at the beginning of the session. She put her hand up to answer questions three times during the lesson indicating she was listening to the teachers intro. She volunteered to go to the board and indicate the direction of rain upon an earth by drawing on a diagram.

#### JUN

No observation notes made

#### Wednesday 16/01/02 09:40 → 10:30

Mrs Brookes: class sat in literacy groups (classroom)

Literacy text level: 'personification'

- ❖ Observation of:
  - 'Chalk and talk' introduction (teacher addressed whole class for 20 minutes approx. 4 focal children present)
  - Group work to be completed (10 minutes approx. worked with 1 focal child - Isabel)
  - Class discussion of group work
  - Work set to be completed independently (20 minutes approx)
- ❖ Drawing on a combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time

#### JALEELA

Jaleela was sat facing the teacher and the board. She put her hand up on several occasions during the 'chalk and talk' intro. and the class discussion of group work. It may be suggested she was participating in the lesson.

**ISABEL**

During the chalk and talk intro. Isabel turned to face the teacher and the board. The class were asked to personify four types of weather:

Rain	Snow	Wind	Thunder
Drizzled	Glistened	Howled	Bellowed

Isabel suggested, "The snow anchored the ground."

The teacher replied "Hmm, I'm not sure about that one, the snow anchored the ground... perhaps smothered is better."

Isabel continued to put her hand up and offer suggestions after this ?, indicating she was not discouraged by providing an incorrect answer. It may be suggested she was participating in the lesson. During the group work she ran any suggestions by me (as did the other children comprising the group) to seek confirmation that they were okay, before noting them down with the other group's suggestions. During the individual work (the children were expected to work without talking on this occasion), I observed Isabel was easily distracted by another child messing on her table, and she engaged in discussion with him and the girl she was sat next to.

**CHARLOTTE**

Charlotte turned to face the teacher and the board. She didn't put her hand up once during the lesson, although she did answer the teacher when asked a question. Thus she was listening the teacher and what was going on around her. Charlotte giggled every time someone else on her table offered answers to the teacher in response to questions.

**JUN**

No observational notes made

**Wednesday 16/01/02 15:30 → 16:30**

Mr West: after school ICT session (computer room)

Using the internet to search for answers

(1 focal child present in a group of seven)

- ❖ Observation of:
  - Ongoing verbal and practical assistance throughout session
- ❖ Drawing on head notes

This was the first ICT after school session. Pupils went onto the internet and used the search option to look up answers to a list of questions, the teacher had drawn up.

E.g. What is the height of Mount Everest?; What is the diameter of the earth?

**ISABEL**

Isabel was not scared to experiment with the computer keys or select from the numerous choices on the screen (internet). She asked assistance as and when she needed it. She was aware of the 'Ask Jeeves' facility and asked how to access it, to ask him the questions!

She seemed to enjoy her time at this session and chatted with her friends throughout it.

**Thursday 17/01/02**

- ❖ No observation notes made in the afternoon

**Friday 18/01/02**

❖ I did not work with 6B today

### Week Three

**Monday 21/01/02 09:15 → 12.00**

Visit to CCC: science incorporating ICT skills

- ❖ Observation of class during brief introduction by CCC manager; independent work by the computer (crocodile clips and publisher) and again being addressed by Mr. Watson
- ❖ Combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time

At the CCC centre, the teacher utilised a computer linked up to a projector. Consequently, all class members could see the image of the computer screen, as the CCC manager demonstrated the steps to followed.

#### ROBERTO

No observations made.

#### ISABEL

Not in school today.

#### JALEELA

Jaleela asked if she could walk with me to the CCC as she has no-one to walk with. I asked her to wait and see if there were any other class members without partners. As such a girl then asked to be Jaleela partner to walk to the CCC. They spoke for the duration of the walk to the CCC (15 minutes) walking just in front of me. Once at the CCC, Jaleela turned to face the board the teacher was referring to and appeared to be listening to his introduction. She raised her hand hesitantly to indicate she might know how bring her work up from the previous session last week. The teacher said "Go on, I bet you know how to do it." She spoke very quietly and answered using questions, for example, "Do you click on the switch?" The teacher gave her positive feedback, which she looked embarrassed about receiving. I noticed she preferred to ask myself for help, rather than her classroom teacher or the CCC manager. She asked me on several occasions to type for her as she thought she was 'Too slow.' I typed a little, and told her that with more practice, she too, would become faster.

During the second introduction to the internet, she appeared to focus on the projected image which the teacher referred to, listening and watching the steps being taken to access the internet.

#### CHARLOTTE

Not in school today

**Tuesday 22/01/02 10:50 → 12:00**

Mrs Brookes: class sat in literacy groups (classroom)

Literacy text level: 'instructional writing'

- ❖ Observation of:
  - My introduction within the small group (I was sat with a group of 4, 2 focal children present)
  - Work being completed with greater independence
- ❖ Drew on a combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time

#### JALEELA

Jaleela appeared to be engaged in the introduction, as we read through the text as a group. I asked questions to clarify the each group members understanding. I stated the aim was to work more independently; I didn't mind them asking questions after they had attempted it themselves. Jaleela attempted to work with greater independence; she asked for help without hesitation, on a couple of occasions. Jaleela answered the questions in a very basic way; without incorporating evidence from the text. Sometimes it seemed she provided answers around the question area rather than specific

to each question. She completed the work within the lesson time and went on to complete the neat copy of her poem. Jaleela is quite a fast worker and tends to complete most of her literacy work during lesson time.

#### ISABEL

Isabel appeared distracted during the introductory talk within the group. She had been off school ill and was still sounded full of a cold. Isabel worked extremely well, asking for very little help as she went through the comprehension. Her answers were detailed and specific to the question; I asked her to add a little more to one question – which she didn't seem happy about, but did it nevertheless. She did not participate in the group as much as the previous time I had worked with her. She adopted a low profile and was less vocal. She completed the work within the lesson time and went on to finish writing her poem. Isabel is generally a slow worker compared with others in the class. She usually does not complete the literacy work within the lesson time.

#### CHARLOTTE

No observations made.

#### ROBERTO

No observations made.

#### Wednesday 23/01/02 11:00 → 12:00

Alison and myself: A group were selected by Mrs Brookes to attend ICT session (computer room)  
ICT: 'Late poem'

- ❖ Observation of:
  - Listening skills during introductory talk: accessing program (5 minutes approx. 1 focal children present in group of 10)
  - Working independently and with another at the computer (50 minutes approximately)
- ❖ Drawing on a combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time

#### JALEELA

Jaleela worked with greater independence in this lesson, compared to the ICT at the CCC. She listened to and followed the instructions given at the start of the lesson to access publisher and create her own file in which to save her work. Once I had demonstrated how to create a text box within the publisher program, she began to type her poem out at her own pace. She knew about the use of the text box and how to construct one, but was unfamiliar with the way I had referred to it. Although other class members present, did refer to it as I did. I showed Jaleela how to use the cut and paste method. When another class member came to join the group, she sat with Jaleela. I asked Jaleela if she could remember how to create a new file and if she would show her partner. She did this as I watched and asked if she could also show her the copy and paste method. Jaleela did not remember that you needed move the cursor to where you wanted the text to go, and then select copy; consequently it didn't go quite right. After a couple more 'copy and paste' applications, under my supervision, they got it.

#### Wednesday 23/01/02 13:50 ( 15:00

Mrs Brookes: class sat in colour groups (classroom)  
science: 'forces'

- ❖ Observation of:
  - 'Chalk and talk' introduction (teacher addressed whole class for 2(10 minutes approx. 2 focal children present)
  - Work set to be completed independently (2 ( 25 minutes approx)
- ❖ Drawing on a combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time

#### JALEELA

Jaleela initially turned to sit facing the teacher whilst she began the verbal introduction. She began wrapping her hair around her fingers and became distracted by background classroom chatter, looking around the room. She looked at the board as the teacher began to refer to some diagrams

on it. Jaleela did not put her hand up to answer any questions. Once the work was given out, Jaleela asked me for help as she began to colour in the diagrams on the worksheet. She was required to label the forces illustrated on the worksheet. I sought assistance from the teacher before I helped Jaleela, as I was not sure! Jaleela was sat with only one other peer on this table, as the others were off. Throughout both pieces of work, Jaleela was quite chatty with the girl she sat next to. She did not put her hand up in response to any questions of the teacher during the second session at the board. She finished before the majority of others and helped another girl tidy up the wet play box. Jaleela then asked to brush up in the classroom as she stated "I can a lot of mess on the floor."

#### ISABEL

Isabel was sat with her back to the teacher and did not turn round to face her whilst she gave an introduction to the 'forces' topic. She appeared preoccupied, messing with her nails and hands. I went over and quietly asked if she was listening and she replied, "Yes." The teacher moved on, to refer to some work on the board; at this point Isabel turned round and looked in that direction. Isabel did not put up; her hand to answer any of the questions posed by the teacher. Once left to complete work independently, Isabel and her peers on the colour table (three) were very chatty. They worked and talked to each other simultaneously, occasionally she briefly stopped work completely and the chatter took centre stage.

During the second introduction, the teacher weighed objects and I made note of the weight in air and in water on the board. Isabel volunteered and answered a question based on the work we had gone over as a small group yesterday; indicating she was engaged. Once the verbal introduction was over and the worksheets given out, the talking whilst working began again. She appeared to get on well with her other group members, talking, smiling and laughing throughout. Isabel had not completed both worksheets by the end of the day and had to take them home to finish off (as did 2 other peers on her table.).

#### CHARLOTTE

Not in school today.

#### ROBERTO

No observations made

**Wednesday 23/01/02 15:30 → 16:30**

Mr West: after school ICT session (computer room)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk> Revisewise website

(1 focal child present in a group of six)

❖ Observation of:

- Initial 10 minutes: independent investigation of the word 'volcano' on the internet. All children had to draw on their knowledge of the previous session incorporating a trial and error method.
- Ongoing verbal and practical assistance throughout session

❖ Drawing on head notes

#### ISABEL

Isabel came into the session late as she had been talking with her mother. She soon caught up with the others by asking for assistance. She said she couldn't remember from last week and stated, 'I have a very bad memory you know.' I asked her to try and have a go and she replied 'But I have a bad memory.' I indicated where the search button was and replied, "Try starting from there." Within a few minutes she had found a list of websites containing the word 'volcano', through utilising the knowledge she had gained from last week. The task was to find any 'new' fact about volcanoes. No one was able to find a 'new' fact about volcanoes within the time limit, although all but one had performed a search and found a list of related websites and visited at least one.

The second task was to begin work on revisewise science. The aim of this, was the development of ICT skills alongside science revision; the latter in preparation for the S.A.T.'s. All followed instructions about how to log on and obtain their personal username and password. This was quite

a lengthy process and required children to focus, listen, follow instructions and in patience, as the computers were working slowly. She was able to do this, without assistance. Once on revisewise science, children worked through different science topics at their own pace (intro, fact sheet, test). Isabel completed the first topic and scored 14/15. When I asked if she knew which question she had got wrong, she replied "The last one, I put d and it was b." Isabel could not remember how the question was phrased but commented it was something to do with energy and plants. Thus it appeared Isabel did not review the question she answered incorrectly, but was aware she had selected the wrong answer. It may be questioned how helpful this method is in terms of learning; are explanations of the correct answers to each question easily accessible?

**Thursday 24/01/02**

❖ I did not work with any focal children in this class today

**Friday 25/01/02**

❖ I did not work in 6B today

**Week Four**

**Thursday 30/01/02**

Science: forces

(4 focal children present)

- Observation of children during lesson (listening to the teacher and independent work)
- Combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time Teacher

The teacher weighed differing amounts of weights on an elastic band, to see how much weight it could hold without snapping. I wrote the results on the board and recorded how much the elastic band stretched each time a heavier weight was placed on it.

**JALEELA**

Jaleela turned in her seat to look at the teacher and watch the experiment during the introduction. She appeared to be listening when the teacher addressed the class. She asked me for assistance throughout the lesson e.g. regarding to the graph axis. She put up her hand and volunteered answers on several occasions throughout the lesson, demonstrating she was actively engaged. Jaleela finished the work set within the lesson time.

**ISABEL**

Isabel did not turn to face the teacher during her introduction to the science topic. Isabel turned round when the teacher began the experiment; she appeared distracted by the boy, sat with her on the table. She didn't seek assistance throughout the lesson. She sat with one boy on her table and talked with him whilst the teacher was addressing the class. Isabel did not put up her hand during the lesson and her concentration was poor. Isabel did not finish the work set within the lesson time and had to take it home to complete for homework. Isabel was unaware of the statement she had to write in her science book to accompany the work she had started during the lesson, as she had been talking.

**CHARLOTTE**

Charlotte did not turn to face the teacher during her introduction to the science topic; she turned when she began the experiment. Charlotte chatted throughout the experiment with the girl sat next to her on the table. Charlotte did not put up her hand to volunteer answers during the lesson. She did not seek assistance to complete the class work based on the experiment. Regarding the line graph they were asked to draw, Charlotte was not clear on how to join the crosses. She questioned, if you were supposed to join the crosses to the bottom axis. I said she needed to join the crosses together and she replied "Oh, so that's how you do it." (A number of children were unclear about this). Her friend was also unclear and therefore unable to assist her. Charlotte finished the work set within the lesson time.

During the lesson whilst the teacher was talking, Charlotte continued to work on her science. When I asked if she had listened to the teacher; Charlotte was able to relay a summary of what the teacher had said “What? about writing the opposites in the science answers in the SATS?” This demonstrated her ability to divide her attention effectively.

#### **ROBERTO**

Roberto appeared attentive during the science lesson and put his hand up several times in response to questions. On the occasion, the teacher asked him to answer he was silent. When the teacher brought the weight around to feel how heavy it was, he wanted to hold it via the elastic band. When I said to him don't forget to write the title as I went past, he remarked “I can do this by myself, I don't need your help.” Roberto finished the work in the lesson.

### Week Five

#### **Monday 04/02/02 09:40 → 12.00**

Visit to CCC: science incorporating ICT skills (upstairs room)

(4 focal children present)

- ❖ Observation of class during 1<sup>st</sup> introduction by CCC manager (creating a series and parallel circuit using a word document: approx. 15 mins)
- ❖ Observation of class during 1<sup>st</sup> independent work by the computer
  - 10 minute break outside (no observations made)
- ❖ Observation of class during 2nd introduction by CCC manager (creating a front cover on microsoft publisher 10 mins)
- ❖ Observation of class during 2nd independent work by the computer
- ❖ Combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time

The manager demonstrated what a series and parallel circuit was, using children from the class as objects (bulb, battery, switch and their arms as represented the wires). He stated the task of today was for each child to create two series and parallel circuit, using pictures in one and symbols in the other. Every child printed out a copy of a series and parallel circuits they had designed.

At the CCC centre, the teacher utilised a computer linked up to a projector. Consequently, all class members could see the image of the computer screen, as the CCC manager demonstrated the steps to followed. The manager put an illustration of a parallel circuit on the board as the other class had struggled with this concept.

After break, and only when the former task had been completed, the second task was to produce a front cover for the work they had produced at the CCC (which would form a file 'electricity') using the publisher program. Only a few children finished this.

#### **ROBERTO**

Roberto was selected as a battery in the practical demonstration of the series and parallel circuit. When the children in the 'circuit' were asked to rearrange themselves from a series circuit to a parallel circuit, Roberto was able to participate in the rearrangement as he has listened to the explanation. I did not assist Roberto during the lesson.

#### **ISABEL**

Isabel turned to face the practical demonstration of the circuits, by her fellow class members. She giggled along with other children in her class during the display and thus appeared to be listening to the manager's explanation and observing the layout of the circuits. After this demonstration, she became distracted and started to look around the room and her computer. Isabel put her hand up to answer questions a couple of times to answer questions, but was not selected.

I showed Isabel how to use 'fill effects' to add a background to her front cover. She had used it before, but had forgotten how to do it. She remembered how to do it, once she had watched me demonstrate Isabel panicked as she covered her work using this method and I showed her how to 'send it to the back' under 'arrangements.'

### JALEELA

Jaleela asked if she could walk with me to the CCC as she has no one to walk with, as the girl she walked with last time was off school. I asked her to wait and see if there were any other class members without partners and there was, so I asked the two girls to walk together. They talked during the walk to the CCC (15 minutes) walking just in front of me.

Once at the CCC, Jaleela turned to face the practical demonstration of the circuits, by her fellow class members. I could not see her face in this position. She did not put her hand up to answer any questions during the introduction.

During the first session of the independent work, Jaleela had forgotten which program she was supposed to go on and looked at Charlotte's screen and asked her (perhaps as she was sat next to her?). As she designed her series circuit with two bulbs in it, she asked me "Where do I put the bulb?" (the second bulb). Jaleela also sought assistance when designing the circuits with symbols. Generally Jaleela sought and received quite a lot of assistance with this exercise.

Jaleela received guidance off myself and another pupil when designing her front cover. He showed Jaleela how to use 'fill effects' to add a pattern to the background of the front cover. The pupil changed it several times for Jaleela as she could not remember the steps to follow. I reminded Jaleela how to insert pictures from clip art to her design. Once shown, Jaleela remembered this, as she had previously utilised this method to complete several pieces of work in school.

### CHARLOTTE

Charlotte was sat facing the practical demonstration of the series and parallel circuits (by fellow class members). She laughed giggled along with other children in her class during the display and thus appeared to be listening to the manager's explanation and observing the layout of the circuits. She put her hand up several times throughout the introduction and answered a couple of questions. During the first independent session at the computer, Charlotte worked quite independently. She only asked how to select all the text and diagram, so she could move it.

During the second independent session by the computer, when designing her front cover, she asked for more assistance. She sought clarification on the insertion of boxes for clip art. She used the 'fill effects' tool to add a background to her front cover. Charlotte asked for help regarding the retrieval of her work and sending the 'fill effect' into the background. After this we had difficulty inserting text onto the cover without a border and it took five minutes or so to work it out together.

**Tuesday 05/02/02 10:50 - 12:00**

Mrs Brookes: class sat in literacy groups (classroom)

Literacy text level: 'instructional writing'

❖ Observation of:

- My introduction within the small group (I was sat with a group of 3, 2 focal children present)
- Work being completed with greater independence

❖ Drew on a combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time

Within the introduction, the teacher emphasised the nature of the text (instructional writing) and told the children to look up any unfamiliar words in the dictionaries that would be given out. The teacher read through the text and went over some of the vocabulary in the text inc. 'tilt' and 'toss'; before asking children to get on with their work independently.

I told the girls (Jaleela and Isabel) on the table where I was sat, that the aim this week, was to work with greater independence. I emphasised that I didn't want them talking to each other and could ask me for assistance if they needed it.

### JALEELA

Jaleela appeared to be engaged in the introduction, as the class read through the text. She put her hand up once towards the end of the session to answer a question regarding the meaning of 'tilt'; she described it by doing a hand movement, we would associate with 'toss.' The teacher explained

the difference by asking other children to explain each of the words. Jaleela was still unsure and I tried to demonstrate using my hand as the frying pan and a pen as the pancake mixture (v.difficult and not v.appropriate – it would have been better if the teacher had brought in the correct kitchen utensils).

Once we began the independent work, Jaleela found it difficult to understand much of the vocabulary within the text and asked me their meaning (e.g. batter). She didn't want to read all the text to find answers for the questions; and tried to get the answers from me. One question asked the children to write down, what 'fasting' meant. I asked her to look it up in the dictionary, where it said 'to go without food.' I knew Jaleela had fasted during year 6 and I asked her what it meant. She replied, "I get up at six, eat, go back to bed for a bit, get ready for school, starve all day till four." I asked Jaleela why she hadn't used her personal experience to answer the question, as she fasted sometimes. She replied, "In the dictionary it doesn't say I go to school."

At the end of the lesson, she asked the teacher if she could collect everyone's books in and the teacher commented on how helpful some children in the class were being, including Jaleela (which she smiled at).

#### ISABEL

Isabel talked with the girl sat next to her during the teacher's introduction several times and I asked them on a couple of occasions to stop talking, listen and follow the text (I was sat on their table and I thought this was v.inappropriate). Isabel put her hand up a couple of times near the end of the introduction.

During the independent work time, Isabel sought clarification as to whether her understanding of a word was correct. I asked her to look in the dictionary first and then ask me if she still needed reassurance. She worked quietly and independently, asking for v.little assistance after this initial question. I would ask her if she was okay and she would reply 'yes' occasionally seeking clarification her answer was appropriate. On one occasion she said she knew the answer, but she didn't know what words to use. I asked her to tell me the answer. After listening to her, I told her to write down what she had told me, repeating it for her. She was v.quiet towards me compared to usual. I had been stricter than usual and didn't want them to talk with each other, as they become distracted from their work. I also wanted to see what she could do without assistance. She worked slowly, although her focus was excellent after initial prompts.

#### CHARLOTTE

Charlotte sat alone on her table. She did not turn round to face the teacher as she talked. She put her hand up once to answer a question posed by the teacher. She worked at a steady pace and decided to start again as she had used 'sift' instead of 'sieve' in her answer to the first question.

#### ROBERTO

Roberto turned to face the teacher during the introduction. He put his hand up to answer a question at the start of the introduction, but he misunderstood the teacher's question (which was not clear) and she moved on. He became distracted and began looking around the room and fidgeting. After 10mins or so, he turned his chair to face the teacher. He put his hand up to answer a question and the teacher agreed with his answer and pushed for a fuller explanation.

During the independent work session, his table were talkative. He covered his work as I went past. He sought help off the teacher a couple of times (via putting his hand up) and asked for help off me once, "I don't get number six." The text explained why Lent came about and I explained why people used up their rich foods stored in their cupboards. He needed to filter out the main points and write an answer, but he wanted to be told what to write, word for word.

### Week Six

**Monday 11/02/02 09:40 - 12.00**

Visit to CCC: power point (downstairs room)  
(4 focal children present)

- ❖ Observation of class during 1st independent work by the computer
  - 10 minute break outside (no observations made)
- ❖ Observation of class during 2nd independent work by the computer

The class had a different CCC teacher today and their normal class teacher was away, so another member of staff was taking them. The CCC teacher (Mark Hepworth) introduced the power point program to them, which most had never heard of or used. The aim of the session was for each pupil in the class to create a power point presentation 'about me' (4/5 slides maximum). The initial introduction was quite long (approx 25 mins) and the children grew restless (and the teacher experienced a few problems). Within the first introduction, the children were showed: how to get onto the program; the different types of presentation slides to choose from; how to change the text; the importance of brief statements incorporating the use of bullet points; how to insert new slides etc. The second introduction addressed how to change the slide background; the use of word art; changing the speed and the format of the slide presentation. At the end of the session, the teacher selected a few children's examples to present to the rest of the class.

The CCC teacher told the class, that this session was for the children to become familiar with the program and get some ideas; as next week they would make a new one. They would not have the opportunity to print out their work, as the idea was for a power point presentation.

### **ROBERTO**

Roberto did not always listen to the teacher as he addressed the class; he was too preoccupied adding to his work on power point. This was evident when the teacher had asked them to save their work after he had just demonstrated the steps to follow on the projected computer screen. I asked Roberto if he had saved his work and in response, he asked me how to do it.

I asked him if he knew about word art and showed him the different styles of writing he could use; and he commented it was 'sick' He asked for assistance regarding the insertion of word art within the text boxes (I asked a pupil to show Roberto and myself, as he had worked it out).

He did not have the confidence to 'experiment' with the available tools

E.g. although he had prior knowledge of inserting pictures from clip art (on the publisher programme) he was hesitant about having a go. He said to me, you have to insert a picture box before inserting clip art (which is the case in publisher) but the button he usually clicked on, was not there (a different toolbar). So I said we would have a go at inserting clip art without a box and see what happened, adding I would undo it, if it did not work. As it happened it did work and Roberto said "I know what to do now."

At the end of the session, Roberto asked me "Miss, so you want to see mine?" (a preview of his power point presentation). I said I would look at it next time, as our time was limited - the CCC teacher asked them to close down their programs and log off so he could have access to them to present to the rest of the class.

### **JALEELA**

Jaleela asked me if she could be my partner during the walk to the CCC. I told her I did not walk with a partner to the CCC as I had to help supervise her class. Initially she walked at the front of the line with another girl, but I had to move a couple of boys to the front of the line for misbehaving.

Jaleela sat next to her partner in the computer room and chose the same background to work on. She chose to change the background to something different, once the class had been shown to.

I demonstrated how to use word art and she commented her sister used it all the time. In response to the range of alterations I made to Jaleela's work (which I said we could undo if she did not like it); Jaleela would say: 'no I don't like that' 'I like that' or 'I want it like it was before.' Thus demonstrating she had the confidence to tell me what she did and did not like, from the changes I suggested.

She asked if she could walk at the front on the way back, but I said I wanted them to walk in the same order. On the walk back to school, I asked Jaleela if she had enjoyed the morning at the CCC. She commented she had liked it, and had found the work easy, adding that as she had not needed much help with the work.

### **CHARLOTTE**

Charlotte worked quite independently during this session. Charlotte had used word art and I showed her that the size and slant of the letters could be changed, by using the yellow arrow (as she was not aware of this option). I asked Charlotte if I could show her the different bullet points she could use on her slides. She agreed, although appeared reluctant. I added I would undo the

changes I made if she didn't like them – which she seemed happier with. I utilised the picture option within bullets and numbering; Charlotte was impressed with this and selected one to incorporate into her slides. When I asked if she was going to add pictures to her slides, she was also hesitant to try inserting clip art without the picture box. I assured her it was okay and showed her an example, undoing it, so she could do it herself. She remembered the procedure without any problems.

#### ISABEL

Isabel had selected a certificate layout for her power point presentation and was thus allowed to print out her certificates (as the children had been told to select any slide format). I observed she created a couple of 'congratulations' certificates. One was for her siblings, and stated their names and was presented for 'being the best brother and sister.' Generally, I did not assist Isabel during this session.

**Tuesday 12/02/02 15:10 → 15.20**

Five minute story (classroom: colour groups)

(4 focal children present)

- ❖ Observation of focal children during story being read aloud by the teacher 'The Arsonist'
- ❖ Combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time

#### ROBERTO

In response to the teacher asking the class, 'What is an arsonist?' Roberto was one of two people to put their hand up (v.enthusiastically –eager to answer the question):

"Someone who's bad and sets fire to things on purpose... like in Sydney, there was all those bush fires."

He continued to put his hand up during this short session in response to each question the teacher asked. He was one of very few children who made the effort – perhaps because of the time of day. His focus and listening skills were excellent. He had turned in his chair to face the teacher as she read aloud the short story.

At the start of the previous lesson (Art – after group reading) he had been given a warning card that was to be placed on his desk. He was given as the teacher had seen him flicking an elastic band across the classroom. The card is a new 'visual' method telling children that they have been given a warning off the teacher. Consequently at the end of the day, Roberto would have to speak to the class teacher about his behaviour.

**Thursday 14/02/02 13:25 → 13.50**

Group reading (on the stairs)

(4 focal children present)

- ❖ Observation of focal children during group reading
- ❖ Use of head notes

#### ROBERTO

I asked Roberto why he was reading in this group, as I had already read with him earlier in the group and I wondered if he had swapped groups. He explained to me that he was not part of this reading group usually, but as we are reading a play script and there are more characters than children in the group, he is a temporary member. He asked where he should sit and as there was a gap next to me, I replied he could sit next to me, as it was Valentine's Day – the girls giggled.

Each pupil had been given the role of a specific character. Roberto complained he did not get a chance to read, as he his characters had v.few lines. Thus, I asked him to read my character's lines and those of the narrator – which he was happy to do.

During group reading, Roberto was v.enthusiastic and his use of intonation was excellent. He really 'gets into' the group reading book and gets annoyed when other members don't follow the story-evident as the pupils are asked to read aloud text, in turn.

E.g. when another pupil (boy) did not read out his lines, Roberto remarked, “Why don’t you just follow it?”

### JALEELA

In contrast, the other members of the group (girls), including Jaleela would try and prompt the other pupil, by reading aloud the beginning of the line and eventually saying his name, when he did not respond and pointing to where he should be. Jaleela followed the text, as the play script was read aloud. She read aloud her characters lines without prompts from other members. Jaleela read without using obvious expression or emphasis – when I have previously asked her to read with ‘expression’ during group reading, it has not very obvious.

### TERM 2: WEEKS 7-10

OBSERVATIONAL RECORD SHEET		Art
WEEK	DATE	LESSONS
K	Thursday 14/03	Numeracy Group reading
Seven	Monday 25/02	CCC visit: ICT and science Science
Ten	Wednesday 20/03	Roberto: The Hungry Caterpillar
	Thursday 26/03	Practice paper: Science test A
	Thursday 21/03	CCC visit: European Week
		Handwriting and spelling test
		Charlotte: parents evening
	Friday 01/03	Practice paper: Science test A Isabel: parents evening
Eight	Monday 04/03	CCC visit: ICT and science
	Tuesday 05/03	Numeracy (supply teacher) Literacy (supply teacher)
	Thursday 07/03	Small group: practice SAT's Science
Nine	Monday 11/03	CCC visit: ICT and science
	Tuesday 12/03	Literacy

## Week Seven

**Monday 25/02/02 09:20 - 12.00**

Visit to CCC: science incorporating ICT skills (downstairs room – Mark Hepworth)

(3 focal children present)

- ❖ Observation of class during 1st introduction by CCC manager (forces and quick revision of Microsoft power point: approx. 35 mins)
- ❖ Observation of class during independent work by the computer
  - 10 minute break (no observations made)
- ❖ Observation of class during presentations of fellow class members
- ❖ Combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time

This was the second time Mark Hepworth had taken this class for an ICT session. They class had previously covered the topic of forces within science, under Mrs Brookes. He provided an overview of the topic and of Microsoft power point. The aim was to create a presentation called 'all about forces.' He used vocabulary throughout the session and within questions, many pupils were unfamiliar with (E.g. deduce, congested, formulated, distorts, evident, exerting). One girl dominated when answering the teacher's questions.

### **ROBERTO**

Roberto was not present in school today.

### **ISABEL**

Isabel came to school a little late today (approx. 10mins). She walked with her friend to the CCC and shared her friend's umbrella as Isabel's had broken. At the CCC she turned in her chair to face the teacher as he talked about forces. During the teacher's explanation, she spoke occasionally with her friend, sat next to her. She swung in her chair and swung her feet out (although this is

v. tempting when your feet don't touch the floor) - she seemed to be unaware she was doing this. She became distracted after a while and began to look around the room and spoke more frequently with her friend. No observation notes made during the independent time at the computer.

### JALEELA

Before the holiday I mentioned to my focal children in 6B, that I would send them a worksheet to complete, in relation to how they think they learn. Jaleela asked me if I sent the letters out and I replied, that I had changed my mind and would do the task during school time. She said she should have given me her phone number so I could have told her, as she had got up at 07.30 every morning to check the post – I felt awful and apologised numerous times.

Jaleela told me she had agreed with another girl before the holiday, that they would walk with each other to the CCC. She asked if I would ask her if they could walk together, in case she had forgotten. I replied it would be fine and not to worry - they did walk to the CCC together, alongside another pupil.

At the CCC, Jaleela did not sit with either girl. She turned in her chair to face the teacher. Jaleela put her hand up five times during the course of the introduction and answered three questions. When the teacher asked for examples of forces, she volunteered 'upthrust'. When the teacher asked her to explain what this was, she looked at me, I asked her to have a guess and she smiled and looked embarrassed, not knowing what to say.

During the independent time at the computer, Jaleela sought assistance of myself on numerous occasions throughout the ICT session. In fact, I spent most of my time answering queries off Jaleela, Charlotte and another pupil sat near them. Jaleela would say "Helen, Helen, Helen" to get my attention – I would ask her to wait until I had finished helping whoever I was with. She needed help to get onto the blank format of the power point presentation; she followed the steps taken in the previous lesson and had used the wizard. Most assistance Jaleela sought was in relation to the text within the slides e.g. what forces do (push open a door, pull shut a door). Jaleela stopped working on her presentation and watched fellow class member's presentations.

She looked upset near the end of the lesson and when I asked what was wrong she said she was not upset. I persisted and although she did not tell me, she asked if she could walk at the front of the line with me – which I agreed to.

At school, I told her she could come and talk to me if she was upset. She said she wanted to go home, when I asked her why, she said she did not know. I said I would not ask her again what was wrong. On my way out of the classroom, Jaleela asked if she could talk to me at lunch time; so we arranged I would come back 5-10 minutes early to talk. When I came back, she told me the head teacher had sorted it out because she had been crying at lunchtime. She said she wanted to talk to me about it - a couple of boys in the class had teased her saying she liked another boy in the class as she had stuck up for him. She said she had not stuck up for the boy, she just wanted to concentrate on her work and had told them to shut up.

### CHARLOTTE

Before we began to walk to the CCC, Charlotte and her partner quizzed me about their trip on Wednesday, which they had not yet received details about. Charlotte walked to the CCC and back, at the front of the line with her 'best friend'. They both listened and followed my instructions, (where to stop and wait whilst I saw other pupils across the road etc.) which was excellent. I asked if they would prefer personal points or a certificate off Alison and I, for their excellent behaviour. Charlotte responded "Chocolate" and I replied that it was not an option! They decided to choose a certificate; Charlotte mentioned her dad had laughed at the wording on it, when she had taken it home 'the prestigious Helen and Alison award'.

They both walked with alongside me to the CCC (perhaps because I had an umbrella and it was raining!) They instigated the conversation, asking whether I had seen named films (Shrek, Billy Elliot) moving onto television (Friends, Faulty Towers, Malcom in the Middle). We talked about television programmes and films they and I liked to watch. Both said they were allowed to watch 12 and sometimes 15 rated films. They told me they were best friends (which I was not aware of –

Charlotte replied “Isn’t it obvious?”). We discussed a range of topics on the way to and back from the CCC: holidays, names, driving etc. Charlotte was very amused that I had to sit on a cushion and put the car seat as far forward as possible, now that I am learning to drive. I commented that I still liked being small and she agreed.

Charlotte asked me if I would like to know what the boys thought of me, when I didn’t respond, she went on to say, they thought I was ‘safe’. Her friend said this meant something good in their language. When I asked if Charlotte lived nearby, she said she lived half a week at her mum’s and half a week at her dad’s. When I asked her if this was hard, she said it didn’t bother her as she was used to it. She had been doing it since year three; previously they had all lived in, what was now her father’s house. Charlotte asked if I was Greek, as her mum had said I had a Greek name. Charlotte’s surname is that of her Mother’s, although her full name includes her Fathers. She mentioned Roberto was half Italian, a quarter Caribbean and a quarter English.

At the CCC, Charlotte sat near Jaleela and commented to her that she thought her earrings looked nice (she had them pierced over the holiday). She chose a chair facing the teacher. Charlotte messed with her hands and nails throughout the teacher’s introduction to forces. She put her hand up to answer questions, five times during the introduction and answered three times. Thus demonstrating she was engaged in the lesson. When the teacher said he knew the class was eager to begin and that he talked too much, Charlotte laughed alongside her friend. Towards the end of the teacher’s explanation, she turned round to ask me a question and I told her to turn round and listen (she worked out what to do herself).

Initially, Charlotte selected the same background as her friend, who complained she was copying - Charlotte changed it. Charlotte sought quite a lot of my time during the lesson (mostly reassurance). She would ask if her work was okay, whether her text was correct etc. She did ask for my assistance regarding the wording of text within the slides. When Sophie Brookes asked if there were any presentations that would be good to show to the class, I suggested Charlotte’s. She asked Charlotte and she agreed, pulling a face at me as she got up (as she had overheard the conversation). She received a round of applause after her presentation and she grinned. Charlotte whispered to me, “You told Mrs Brookes to pick mine.” And I replied “I suggested it,” and she smiled and laughed. As Charlotte watched fellow class member’s presentations, she added information to her work that she had missed out.

On the way out, Charlotte asked, “What’s your boyfriend called?” and I replied that it was personnel (she had asked me several times before). She said I was v.secretive and that she wouldn’t know him, so I told her his name.

**Tuesday 26/02/02 10:50 - 12:00**

Mrs Brookes: majority of class sat in alphabetical pairs in rows

Science test A: 35 minutes

Spelling and handwriting test (I gave this test to the class)

❖ Observation of:

➤ Children during test

❖ Drew on a combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time

### **ROBERTO**

Roberto was not present in school today.

### **ISABEL**

During the test, I observed Isabel looking into space, tapping her pencil against her face (thinking?). I went over to get her attention (as I did not want her to spend too much time thinking and not writing) and she smiled at me and went back to her writing.

Isabel always wears a skirt (sometimes with tights) rather than trousers. She wears the Roseberry Hill school jumper with the white polo top underneath. Isabel always wears her v.long hair up, usually in a pony tail, sometimes with an alice band – it is sometimes greasy in appearance.

## JALEELA

When I went into the classroom after break, I noticed Jaleela looked upset, I asked what was wrong and she replied 'Can I do the test somewhere else?' When I asked why, she said 'because...' and did not give me full explanation. I told her she could not move for no reason, as I would have to okay it with Mrs Brookes. The 'milk time' was near to the end and Jaleela had tears in her eyes. I asked her to come and talk to me outside the classroom as she looked v.close to crying. She told me she was the hall monitor, which meant she was to clear the hall from assembly during break time. Rebecca was supposed to help her, but had not turned up, so she had asked Andrew. Awais had turned up in the hall and Jaleela said, he had given her a dirty look. So she had left and gone outside. She said no one came to talk to her during outside break. I asked where were her friends and she replied used to have friends in the class, but she was not sure now. We both sat on the stairs to talk and she was very upset, crying and asking to go home. I told her it was best not to run away from problems but sort them out there and then. I said she could not go home, but I would ask if she could sit outside and do the test here. I explained to Jaleela I would have to tell the teacher, what she had told me - she agreed. Mrs Brookes pulled her face as I relayed the conversation to Jaleela – especially when I mentioned the dirty look. She wrote the names of those mentioned and said she would talk to Jaleela about it. In the meantime the science test had begun and Jaleela was allowed to do the test outside. I read the instructions to her and asked her to come and get me if she needed me to read out any questions, she replied she would not need my help. I said sometimes, a question could become much clearer, when you hear someone else read it aloud. She said okay, but did not ask me to read out any questions for her. I went out to check on her and told her every 10 mins or so, how long she had left.

Jaleela came in after the science test, to complete the handwriting and spelling test in the class, as I was going to read the spelling passage to the class. She sat in her normal place for this test - in register order.

Jaleela wears grey trousers rather than a skirt. At the beginning of the year, she used to wear a scarf (correct terminology?) on her head, but she no longer does this. She wears the Roseberry Hill school jumper with the white polo top underneath. She wears her hair down, with a clip in it.

## CHARLOTTE

During the science test, Charlotte spoke as her wrote her answers down (it was as if she had formulated the sentences in her head, and was writing these out). She had taken her shoes off, and she messed with them under the table using her feet (she often takes her shoes off within the classroom). She worked at a steady pace and finished the test within the allotted time.

During the spelling test, I observed Charlotte quietly repeated the words I said aloud to the class; I think she did this to help her sound them out as she wrote down the spellings.

Charlotte always wears black trousers, never a skirt. She wears the Roseberry Hill school jumper with the white polo top underneath. She has a v.clean presentation and usually wears her mid length hair, down without any clips etc.

### Friday 01/03/2010:50 → 12:00

Staff room: three children doing tests they had missed

One focal child in a group of three

Science test A (35 mins)

- ❖ Observation of:
  - Children during test
- ❖ Drew on head notes

Alison and I were timetabled to assist in music with Mrs Brookes and 6E, but a guest music teacher had come to run a music workshop – so we were not required. Instead, Mrs Brookes asked us to take three children and supervise them taking their tests. We spaced them around the staff room table, as they could be chatterboxes at times. I read the instructions aloud and told them the time they would be finishing, giving them regular updates about the time left. We told them to ask us if they needed a question reading, as we had work to do also.

## ROBERTO

Roberto was quite giggly in this company. He, along with the other eventually got on with their tests – we had to tell them off for talking several times, before they settled. He put his hand once to ask what 'opaque' meant – I told him I could not explain it to him, but told him to have a guess. He said he thought it blocked light and I told him to go with that thought. He did not ask for any questions to be read out. He sniggered quietly and when I asked him what he found funny, he pointed to a table with the adjoining question 'Who smokes the most?' – he had written down the answer 'Helen', which had obviously amused him. He finished the test before the allotted time and I told him to look through his answers at least twice.

Once he had finished, Alison and I asked him if he would like to do a favour for us. He asked, "What is it?" We replied, "Do you mean of course Alison and Helen?" We mentioned that we were looking for people to give our award to and he replied, that he did not care about them (charming!). Nevertheless he agreed to go and drop the papers off for us, to the millennium room.

## Week Eight

**Monday 04/03/02 09:20 → 12.00**

Visit to CCC: science incorporating ICT skills (downstairs room – Myself and Mrs Patel)  
(4 focal children present)

- ❖ Observation of class during walk to the CCC
- ❖ Observation of class during independent work by the computer
  - 10 minute break (no observations made)
- ❖ Observation of class during presentations of fellow class members
- ❖ Notes made from head notes

Mark Hepworth was off today and it was arranged last week, that Mrs Brookes and myself would take the session. Mrs Brookes was off ill and Mrs Patel from year 3 had given up her timetable so the class could attend the CCC. I was asked to take the lesson (Mrs Wadsworth said "You'll be fine" when I mentioned there would be no teacher). The head teacher came up to address the class about behaviour before we left (on Mrs Wadsworth suggestion and my subsequent request). Mrs Patel said she would be my assistant this morning.

During the introduction, I asked the children how to log on, how to get onto Microsoft power point and how to open their work from last week. I remarked "Everyone's hand should be up as you have done it several times before." In response, a lot more hands went up. I asked children who had not put their hand up, to give me instructions in response to the questions. I followed their instructions on the laptop, where the screen was projected for the class to see. I then asked them to open up their work from last week and continue (Microsoft power point presentation on 'forces'), whilst we sorted out any problems with the computers and explained the task, to those who were absent from the previous session.

During the lesson, the children worked quite independently and produced some lovely work. The class had the opportunity to watch each other children's presentations during the session (I showed about ten presentations – the majority of which, the children had asked to be shown.)

## ROBERTO

Roberto walked with his friend to the CCC. The majority of the boys in the class tended to walk together and talk amongst each other, as opposed just to their partners.

I explained the task to Roberto (and his friend sat next to him) as he was not present the previous week. I explained they needed to create a presentation based on forces, using 4/5 slides. This needed to include a front slide, contents page and examples of forces with an accompanying brief explanation. I showed Roberto had to insert a new slide and change out the desired format. He listened to the beginning of the explanation, as he asked again after the front slide, what should go in the presentation.

He drew on his knowledge of power point and I observed he asked another pupil sat near him, for assistance. I overheard her remark something along the lines of, 'If your not going to be nice, then people will stop helping you.' He was quite noisy sat next to his friend, who he said was saying silly things and beginning to annoy him. He tome of voice became more agitated and he told his friend to shut up.

I explained to the class, that Roberto had worked hard and completed an excellent presentation within this session (which numerous children laughed at – I heard children mumbling, 'Helen, Roberto likes you'. His presentation contained the necessary information alongside unique examples of forces in action e.g. friction – roller blades. He asked me to show it to the class, which I did. He then began another presentation based on a topic of his choice.

#### ISABEL

Isabel came to school a little late today (approx.10mins). I asked her once during the session. She did not finish her presentation, although I still asked to show it. I do not think Isabel fully understands the concept of 'friction' as her explanation on the relevant slide, was incorrect.

#### JALEELA

I suggested to another girl in the class, that she walked with Jaleela near the front of the line, as they had been v.good at the front of the line last week. I overheard Jaleela saying to someone else in the line, "Helen is our teacher this morning."

I assisted Jaleela occasionally during the session. When she had finished she presentation, she asked if I would show it to the class, which I did. I commented it was v.good, and that I especially liked the fact that her clip art/motion pictures were v.relevant to the text.

Jaleela then added sound to her presentation and asked me to show it again to see if it had worked (as their were speakers attached to the lap top, but not the individual computers.) I said no, as some children had not had the opportunity to show their work at all and that it would not be fair. I had to tell Jaleela to sit down on several occasions, as she was wandering about on several occasions.

#### CHARLOTTE

I asked Charlotte and her partner to walk at the front of the line, as they had been excellent last week – they grinned at me and agreed. They stopped (sometimes without reminders) at all roads and the same places as the previous week – excellent in comparison to the majority of pupils who have walked at the front. They involved me in their conversation about body piercing.

They had spent time together with another friend over the weekend, who had been wearing magnetic earrings. Charlotte had tried it on as a lip stud and was very impressed with it. She said she was not allowed to have her ears pierced until she was twelve. But she had worked on her dad, who was more 'soft' than her mum and he had agreed (I was openly amused by the 'soft' comment). She said her dad didn't worry like her mum, who worried all the time and wanted her to eat lots of fruit and vegetables. Charlotte said when she was older, she would like to have her ears pierced again and her belly button, her friend agreeing. Charlotte asaid she wanted to be like her cousin (fifteen years old) who had her ears pierced twice and her belly button done.)

They then went on to discussing becoming a vegetarian. Charlotte was thinking about it, and her friend was already one. Charlotte mentioned her dad's girlfriend was one and that she was trying to get Charlotte to become one. Charlotte said she didn't think she was old enough, and that she would miss chicken, ham and bacon as she liked them too much.

During the session, Charlotte asked for assistance on a couple of occasions. She sought confirmation that her explanation of upthrust was okay. She asked if it would be a good idea to explain words that people might not know on the last slide, asking what this was called. I asked whether she meant a 'glossary' and I said I thought it was a v.good idea. I also showed Charlotte

how to bring in text and objects at different times (slide animation) and slide transition. She incorporated these ideas and worked v.well to complete an excellent presentation.

### Comment

I found it v.difficult to make detailed notes of the children's actions and verbatim quotes today, as my role was more demanding. It was difficult to maintain the attention of approx. thirty children. I felt under a lot of pressure in the teacher role, as I was ill prepared and relied on my memory and practice from previous sessions. I had less time to go to children individually and address their questions as I was stood addressing the class as a whole e.g. as I showed children's individual presentations to the class via the projector.

During the break, Mrs Patel asked of there was normally anyone in with the class on a Monday afternoon. I explained as I was with them all morning, I was in with 6E in the afternoon and Alison only worked part-time. She said as she did not know the class v.well and they did not know her, or respect her as a teacher, today would be more about managing them than teaching them.

**Tuesday 05/03/02 09:20 → 12.00**  
Numeracy – coordinates (Supply teacher – Mr Berrys)  
(4 focal children present)

- ❖ Observation of class during maths quiz 10:55 → 11:05
- ❖ Observation of class during independent work
- ❖ Notes made from head notes

Alison normally assists in numeracy lessons, and I in literacy lessons. I did not feel v.confident working within this lesson, as I was not prepared and had not been present during the introduction to this topic yesterday afternoon (Mrs Patel). I assisted those who put their hand up and was quiet busy. Mr Berrys did not move from the teacher's desk and the children chose to put their hand up and ask me rather than ask him.

### **ROBERTO**

As I walked around the class and looked at the children's work – Roberto covered his work. At one point he looked confused and I asked if he was okay and he replied that he did not need my help. I saw him asking for help off fellow table members and asking, "What did you get for number...?" When I went over again during the lesson, he covered his work and said "What?" rather loudly and indignantly. I quietly told him he was being v.touchy and left him for the rest of the lesson.

### **ISABEL**

No observation notes made

### **JALEELA**

Jaleela worked independently and said she did not need help, as she knew what to do. When she came to mark the work later (Mr Berrys read aloud the answers and the children marked their own work) she had got the answers wrong. She knew what to do, but had written the coordinates the wrong way round i.e. the y axis, then the x axis. I told her not to put a cross by all her answers – just one at the bottom of the page, as she had done a lot of work. She was v.disappointed and asked why her answers were wrong. I explained to her, that the rule was to write the coordinates, looking at the x axis first, and then the y axis. She replied it did not matter, as the point would still be the same. We went over an example together on the board and what she said made sense when you looked at co-ordinates. I replied it was a rule to follow and came away feeling confused.

### **CHARLOTTE**

Charlotte worked independently and did not ask for any help. As I walked around the class, I observed and commented that her work was set out v.neatly – she looked up and smiled at me.

**Tuesday 05/03/02 14:00 → 15.10**

Literacy 'All about me' (Supply teacher – Mr Berrys)  
(4 focal children present)

- ❖ Observation of class during task time
- ❖ Notes made from head notes

The children were given time to write down all information that they feel was important about them – family, hobbies etc. Then, they were asked to work from this and select eight or nine sentences to write out as a passage or a poem on the neat piece of paper given out.

An incident had occurred after lunch to upset me. I had heard off another focal child, that children in 6B thought I 'fancied' Roberto. One class member had remarked 'Roberto and Helen' as I went down the stairs, so I decided to address it. When I challenged him, he reported he had said "Roberto and hell" (Roberto was nowhere to be seen). This person said, that all the class was saying Roberto fancied me. So I asked him if he was Roberto friend, and he replied yes, so I asked do you think you are being a good friend at the moment, and he shrugged his shoulders. I talked to Mrs Wadsworth about it, who said it needed addressing; and that I should ask Mrs Brookes to talk to the class about it. I said I thought Mrs Brookes would shrug it off, but Gillian said she would talk to Sophie about it. It was really upsetting me and I felt awkward being in 6B.

Later on, I heard a child quietly say something about me 'jumping Roberto' and I told him, that I would be bringing the matter to the attention of Mrs Brookes. The child who had said something as I walked down the stairs, asked me if I would be mentioned what he had said to the teacher and I replied I would be mentioning everything. He went on to say, that the class did think Roberto fancied me, but that it was the other way around. I told him I knew what was going on. (I think Charlotte had told him to tell me this – as when I said I knew this, he relayed it to her. Roberto said to me, "It's not me," and I replied that I knew it was not him, but several other people were involved.

#### **ROBERTO**

Under the circumstances, I decided it was best for the moment, to keep some distance between Roberto and myself. I did not go to him and ask if I could read his work. I did read other children's, and looked at some work of those on his table. However, he put his hand up and engaged me in interaction with him; asking for me to read his work and see whether it was okay. Most people had written out their hobbies, family members, pets, favourite foods, friends etc. Roberto's was v.interesting and had that slightly quirky feel to it. I asked if he was from a mixed cultural background and he said yes. He proceeded to write down he was half Italian, half English, a quarter Irish and a quarter Caribbean – I told him this would mean he was one and a half people and he replied "I know." He went on to say his grandma was Irish and his granddad had been Caribbean – I left him to it. He was quite chatty with me that afternoon.

#### **ISABEL**

Isabel did not want to begin her work until her friend came back from the cloakroom with a particular pen. When I told her it was a rough piece of work to write down some ideas, she agreed to begin writing in another pen. She wrote down her best friends within the information. Isabel chatted a lot with the children on her table, which distract her from her work.

#### **JALEELA**

Jaleela worked independently to complete this work. I overheard her ask Mr Berrys how to spell 'because.' She worked at a steady pace and got onto her final piece of work – although she did not finish it.

#### **CHARLOTTE**

Charlotte worked whilst talking with children on her colour table. She worked at a steady pace and got onto her final piece of work – although she did not finish it. Her work included her hobbies, her favourite food etc.

#### **Comment**

I found it difficult to make written and mental notes during this lesson, as I was quiet busy going round and assisting children. I observed several children 'played up' in terms of behaviour and my attention was directed at them, to focus them on task by assisting them in writing the sentences.

**Wednesday 06/03/02**

❖ No observation notes made

I have found it difficult to take notes recently. I have felt uncomfortable in 6B and in particular around Roberto (see research diary). The whole situation has escalated from being something silly into something viewed as much more serious – Mrs Brookes addressed the class this morning. The whole incident has affected how I relate to him.

The children were given time to write down all information that they feel was important about them – family, hobbies etc. Then, they were asked to work from this and select eight or nine sentences to write out as a passage or a poem on the neat piece of paper given out.

An incident had occurred after lunch to upset me. I had heard off another focal child, that children in 6B thought I ‘fancied’ Roberto. One class member had remarked ‘Roberto and Helen’ as I went down the stairs, so I decided to address it. When I challenged him, he reported he had said “Roberto and hell” (Roberto was nowhere to be seen). This person said, that all the class was saying Roberto fancied me. So I asked him if he was Roberto friend, and he replied yes, so I asked do you think you are being a good friend at the moment, and he shrugged his shoulders. I talked to Mrs Wadsworth about it, who said it needed addressing; and that I should ask Mrs Brookes to talk to the class about it. I said I thought Mrs Brookes would shrug it off, but Gillian said she would talk to Sophie about it. It was really upsetting me and I felt awkward being in 6B.

Later on, I heard a child quietly say something about me ‘jumping Roberto’ and I told him, that I would be bringing the matter to the attention of Mrs Brookes. The child who had said something as I walked down the stairs, asked me if I would be mentioned what he had said to the teacher and I replied I would be mentioning everything. He went on to say, that the class did think Roberto fancied me, but that it was the other way around. I told him I knew what was going on. (I think Charlotte had told him to tell me this – as when I said I knew this, he relayed it to her. Roberto said to me, “It’s not me,” and I replied that I knew it was not him, but several other people were involved.

#### ROBERTO

Under the circumstances, I decided it was best for the moment, to keep some distance between Roberto and myself. I did not go to him and ask if I could read his work. I did read other children’s, and looked at some work of those on his table. However, he put his hand up and engaged me in interaction with him; asking for me to read his work and see whether it was okay. Most people had written out their hobbies, family members, pets, favourite foods, friends etc. Roberto’s was v.interesting and had that slightly quirky feel to it. I asked if he was from a mixed cultural background and he said yes. He proceeded to write down he was half Italian, half English, a quarter Irish and a quarter Caribbean – I told him this would mean he was one and a half people and he replied “I know.” He went on to say his grandma was Irish and his granddad had been Caribbean – I left him to it. He was quite chatty with me that afternoon.

#### ISABEL

Isabel did not want to begin her work until her friend came back from the cloakroom with a particular pen. When I told her it was a rough piece of work to write down some ideas, she agreed to begin writing in another pen. She wrote down her best friends within the information. Isabel chatted a lot with the children on her table, which distract her from her work.

#### JALEELA

Jaleela worked independently to complete this work. I overheard her ask Mr Berrys how to spell ‘because.’ She worked at a steady pace and got onto her final piece of work – although she did not finish it.

#### CHARLOTTE

### Comment

I found it difficult to make written and mental notes during this lesson, as I was quiet busy going round and assisting children. I observed several children 'played up' in terms of behaviour and my attention was directed at them, to focus them on task by assisting them in writing the sentences.

#### **Wednesday 06/03/02**

- ❖ No observation notes made

I have found it difficult to take notes recently. I have felt uncomfortable in 6B and in particular around Roberto (see research diary). The whole situation has escalated from being something silly into something viewed as much more serious – Mrs Brookes addressed the class this morning. The whole incident has affected how I relate to him.

#### **Thursday 05/03/02 14:00 → 15.10**

- Handwriting and spelling test
- Mental maths test

(1 focal children present in a group of 3: staff room)

- ❖ Observation of focal child during test
- ❖ Notes made from head notes

I was dreading going into this class. Mrs Brookes asked me to implement the spelling and handwriting test to three children, one of which was Roberto and then give Roberto the mental maths test.

Roberto did the spelling test alongside the other two girls. He did not listen as I began read out the instructions (he was looking at someone else working in the staff room) and so I prompted him to focus. I gave him the M.M. test as the girls did their handwriting. I read aloud the instructions written in the teacher booklet – he said he understood. He covered his work, as I read aloud the questions – I observed he struggled with the questions. I told him to have a guess rather than leave the answer boxes blank. By the time he had completed the M.M. test, the girls had finished their handwriting and gone back upstairs. I said he could do the handwriting outside the classroom, as I was going to go in the class and do science.

On the way upstairs I talked to him about a couple of the questions. I asked what he thought 'sum of' meant and he replied take away and I shook my head, he queried, 'add?' and I nodded. I asked him what time it was if I said it was 14.30 – he replied, I put 4.30pm but is it 2.30pm? I said 'yes.' He said he thought about outing that. So I asked him what time is it, if I say it is 13.40, he hesitated and said 'err, would it be 1.30pm?' and I replied, 'yes'.

He sat down to do his handwriting test and I told him I would be back to say how long he had to do it – I was given no specific time limit, so I told Roberto, 'Mrs Brookes said to come back when you have finished.' I told Mrs Brookes, that I thought Roberto was unsure of the different terminology for addition and subtraction, and that he could do with learning them alongside that of multiplication and division. I mentioned I was working on maths terminology with a couple of children in the other class. She agreed and said she would mention it to his parents at parents evening, adding that his English was fine.

#### **Thursday 05/03/02 14:00 → 15.10**

'Science-light' (Mrs Brookes – colour groups)  
(4 focal children present)

- ❖ Observation of class during introduction
- ❖ Observation of class during task time 'written notes and making a periscope'

❖ Notes made from head notes

The teacher introduced the topic of light to the class and asked questions throughout to engage the class. She then gave them a couple of worksheets to complete and stick in their books. They were then set the task of making a periscope in pairs, using two rulers, two mirrors and some blue-tac. They were given a worksheet to complete for homework.

**ROBERTO**

During the introduction, Roberto put his hand up eight times in response to the teachers' questions and answered two. He described what a periscope was and where you were most likely to find one. He waved his hand in the air and said 'Uhh' to get the teacher's attention, when she asked some questions. Roberto had chosen to copy out the pictures on the science worksheets in his book (the majority of children, cut and stuck them in their books). As I passed him, Roberto asked me, thrusting his book in my direction, "Helen, is this okay or is it rubbish and should I throw it away?" I said it was v.good; he smiled and turned back round to get on with his work. Roberto was chosen by Mrs Brookes to accompany me outside to see if his periscope would enable him to see over a wall (it did not) – he also tried looking through the infant toy periscope I had taken outside with me, commenting "Helen, you look about his big" (v.short)

**ISABEL**

During the introduction, Isabel did not put her hand up in response to any of the teacher's questions. I caught her eye and mouthed, "Come on, put your hand up." She responded by putting up her hand once and answering the question. No observation notes made in reference to the written tasks or 'making a periscope'.

**JALEELA**

During the introduction, Jaleela put her hand up seven times in response to the teachers' questions and answered two. She said 'Shh' to others in close proximity, as the teacher addressed the class. During the written tasks, Jaleela worked quickly, using a paper cutter to trim her worksheets to the correct size to fit in her book. She needed help drawing the path of light within a periscope, enabling a person to see over a wall. No observation notes made in reference to 'making a periscope'

**CHARLOTTE**

During the introduction, Charlotte put up her hand six times in response to the teachers' questions and answered two. No observation notes made in reference to the written tasks. Charlotte was chosen by Mrs Brookes to accompany me outside to see if her periscope, would enable her to see over a wall (it did not) – she also tried looking through the infant toy periscope I had taken outside with me.

**Week Nine**

**Monday 11/03/02 09:20 → 11.45**

Visit to CCC: science incorporating ICT skills (downstairs room – Mrs Brookes)  
(4 focal children present)

- ❖ Observation of class during introduction by Mrs Brookes (in minutes approx.)
- Continue with science presentations until complete
- Begin a European presentation using power point
- Design European poster (for European week next week)
- Design and copy out a short book in German & English (E.g. the hungry caterpillar)
- ❖ Observation of class during independent work by the computer
  - 10 minute break (no observations made)
- ❖ Observation of class during independent work by the computer
- ❖ Combination of head notes and observation notes made at the time

Mrs Brookes addressed the class at the start of the lesson, as each child was sat at a computer. She told them to finish their 'all about forces' presentation or any other presentations about science that they had started. If they had finished this, they were to design a European poster on Microsoft publisher. She wrote any suggestions the children volunteered, on the white board (flags/currency-the Euro/sports/food). She also said some children would be writing books in German and English from several examples she had brought along (i.e. those children she selected – she had previously said to me, she would choose those children who worked fast.) Some children, who were given books, chose to create a power point presentation rather than copy the book out again. The introduction was kept brief and simple. Throughout the session, the children worked quite independently and at a steady pace.

### ROBERTO

During registration, Mrs Brookes asked all children to stop calling each other names. She said if anyone was teased, to go to her straight away and she would sort it out. Mrs Brookes said she was sure they had noticed they were aware they were at that age where they were becoming a bit more moody etc. She asked those who were v.sensitive, to try and be a little less sensitive to others comments. She said she does not like to mention names, but she was sure he would not mind - Roberto has said before in class meetings, it does not bother him when other children say things about him, he lets it go over his head – and that's good for him. She emphasised she did not like to continually discuss such matters as it interfered with the time, when she should be teaching them.

Roberto was asked to assist his best friend, who had missed quite a lot of sessions as he had been off ill. His friend had never used Microsoft power point before and I briefly observed Roberto showing him how to get onto the program; how to insert a new slide; how to insert motion clips.

Roberto designed a European poster, he inserted pictures of famous monuments within France (the Eiffel tower); Italy and England. He also included a picture, illustrating the Euro symbol. He told me he had finished it as I walked by him – I looked at his work and said, 'Why don't you write something on it?' and he replied, 'It's a poster!' with a raised voice. I commented that posters could have writing on them, so he asked 'What should I write?' I told him I did not know and that I was sure he could come up with something. A few minutes later, he called me over 'Miss, Miss, Miss' - as I was working with a pair of children sat near to him. He said, he still did not know what to write. I asked what ideas he had come up with, and he said, what about, 'Europe has many countries and they all have the Euro'. I replied that we were in Europe, but we did not yet have the Euro – he replied, that it was because we were going to see if it was any good, before we got it. I suggested another way to word his ideas 'Europe is made up of many countries'. Roberto added 'And they have many nice monuments?' I commented monuments was a v.good word, but there were much better words than 'nice' e.g. interesting or... Roberto suggested 'beautiful' and I replied, that it was a much better word than 'nice'

Roberto put his hand up and asked for my help later on during the session. He said he wanted to insert a flag, but could not find any on clip art. So we went onto clip art and there was a blank blue flag – I told him another child had made this into the European flag by adding stars himself, also taken from clip art. I took him over to view the other child's flag; I also took him to look at another child's work, where she had designed a German flag herself (I asked her to show us how she did it, as I was learning also).

He went back to his place and began to insert the stars on the blue flag. I said it was probably best to make the flag bigger, as he could fit the stars on it in the shape of a circle. The stars had a white square around them, which ruined the effect. So I used the techniques I had experimented with before and inserted a line border around the star. I used the same colour as the background, so it merged into the flag colour. When you printed it, you would not be able to tell. I asked Roberto if he was impressed and he replied no, because he would have been able to do it (laughing). I asked if he would have been able to do it himself without help and he replied probably not.

As I was working with Roberto, another pupil asked if the white lines would show up when you printed it – I replied yes, but we had worked out a method to hide it. Roberto was able to tell this class member, step by step, how to add the line border to the star. He remembered without

guidance every detail. He also told me he had found a quicker way of doing it, as his colour was under 'custom colours', and he could just click this instead of looking at all the colours and picking out a particular one.

At one point, when Roberto did not get my attention straight away, he began to click his fingers. I said to him he was being extremely rude and that I did not click my fingers at him to get his attention. He replied (sheepishly) that he had never been told that clicking his fingers was rude.

Roberto was v.chatty in the company he had chosen to be in at the CCC today - his best friend was back after numerous weeks away (off ill). Another boy sat with them and they were quite silly during the lesson. However, Roberto dipped in and out of chatting with them and still managed to get his work done.

#### ISABEL

This morning, Isabel waited at the bottom of the stairs for me to catch up with her, as I walked up the corridor. She gave me a big grin and told me she needed to tell me something. She said her mum was letting her have her haircut to just beneath her shoulder and she was going to have it feathered. She said her mum had told her not to tell anyone, but she had to tell someone. Her hair is v.long (to the bottom of her back) and I asked when she was having it done – at the weekend, she replied; she was v.excited. She added that she had her haircut before, but only a little bit. Isabel walked with her friend to the CCC and sat next to her within the CCC room. She spoke with her friend during Mrs Brookes's introduction and I asked them to be quite several times – it was her friend more than her, but Isabel was listening to her friend, rather than Mrs Brookes. Isabel designed a European poster, and had chosen a poster format instead of a blank page format (alongside her friends). When her friends came to print it out, it was on several pages that would have to be stuck together – she asked me to change it to landscape and I said we could print it out next week and she agreed. During the session, I asked one pupil how she had managed to get a background on her poster and she informed me that Isabel had shown her how to do it. I asked Isabel to show me – which she did. When I asked who had shown her, she replied she had done it herself, as she just knew. I asked, so you knew how to do this when you were born and she laughed and said no, I found out, just by pressing the buttons. I sought confirmation that my understanding was right, 'So, you learnt by experimenting and trying different buttons.' Isabel replied 'yes.'

#### JALEELA

Jaleela asked if she could walk at the front of the line to the CCC. She walked at the front of line with another girl, whom she also sat next to in the computer room. Jaleela asked when the next holidays were and I told her, they were in two weeks time. Her friend asked what she would be doing over the holidays, and Jaleela replied, she would be revising. She added she took lots of breaks every ten minutes, unless her Dad was there, as he made her revise for three hours. I asked her how she revise and she said her dad helped her with maths, English and science (as he said they were important). Her dad had bought her some science books and he let her write in them, adding that they contained summary pages with questions. I asked her what her dad does, and she replied 'computer stuff.'

At the CCC she designed a European poster – she worked independently and only asked me to type the word 'culture' for her. I told her I would spell it aloud to her and she could type it – so she did. When I went to look at her work later on, she said she had lost her work when she had added a background. I said I could have got her work back if she had asked me straight away – she looked disappointed. I added never mind, I can always try next time. So she asked me to spell 'culture' again.

At the end of the CCC session, she asked if could walk at the front again and I replied someone else had already asked – so she walked in the middle of the line with her partner.

#### CHARLOTTE

During the CCC session, Charlotte's best friend worked with her, as she did not have Microsoft publisher on the computer. Mrs Brookes chose them to copy out the story of three owls, in English

and German. As I walked around, Charlotte asked me I liked their pictures of owls – she said they have chosen three different owls because they wanted them to be individual! On the example they were working from, all the owls were exactly the same. E.g. they had chosen a picture of an owl with glasses and a book, as the intelligent owl.

At one point, they were trying to insert the pictures of the three owls onto a background. Each owl had a white box around it – which they were trying to get rid of, but were struggling. When they printed the page out, the white lines would show up. I experimented and told them I would undo my attempts if they did not work. I inserted a line border, the same colour as the background to cover the white line. They were v.impressed that it had worked and tried it on another owl – but it did not work. I tried and Charlotte said, why don't you try making the border thicker – we did and it worked. She said, "See, I told you."

Charlotte said the boys (Roberto and his two friends) were talking about her and saying things. I told her, it was best to ignore them and that I would talk to them about it. She said (her friend joining in) that Roberto was nice to them, when his best friend was not there – but now that he was back, he was being nasty and they were ganging up on her.

As the children lined up to walk back to Roseberry Hill, Roberto (and friend) and Charlotte (and friend) were bickering. Charlotte said (with Roberto listening) that Roberto was different with them and he was nicer when he was not with his friend. Roberto replied they were being horrible about his friend. I asked them to not speak to each other for the moment, if they were going to bicker.

Charlotte walked from the CCC back to Roseberry Hill, at the front of the line with her 'best friend' (the latter of which, had asked me at the end of the session, if they could go at the front of line on the way back). They both listened and followed my instructions, (where to stop and wait whilst I saw other pupils across the road etc.) demonstrating they were responsible.

They both talked to me as I walked with them. Charlotte talked about a dream she had the other night – hse was in Greenwood cafeteria and they had lots of lovely bottles of drink and different sandwiches. On that day, the special was a ham, tomato and lettuce sandwich, an she licked her lips as she said it. She said the food was so good at Greenwood that she was thinking about having dinners instead of sandwiches – but her friend was going to have sandwiches as she was vegetarian, so she was not sure. In Roseberry Hill, they separated those who ate sandwiches and dinners within the dinner hall and they thought it might be the same in Greenwood. I suggested they asked someone they knew in year 7, about the lunchtime arrangements.

They asked me if they got to choose one or two children, who they would like to be with in their Greenwood class. I said I was not sure, but I did not think so. Charlotte said she knew someone called Olivia in year seven, in Greenwood and she had chosen two people to be in her class and they were altogether. I replied perhaps I was wrong and that they should wait and see. Charlotte and her friend said they wanted to do everything together at Greenwood.

Charlotte said she was confused about something in the letter she had got – she asked me what 'form' meant. I said it was like the class she was in, e.g. 6B – it could be called a form class. She asked if her form class would be together all the time. I said I thought it depended on the lessons, sometimes they would be together and sometimes they would be mixed up. She looked disappointed, so I told them they would make lots of new friends. They said they both knew a lot of people going into year 7 and some boys that were already in year 7, so they would be okay.

Charlotte was v.much looking forward to going to Greenwood and had planned what type of coat and bag she was going to have, and what she was going to pack in the bag (umbrella, mobile phone, keys, folders, hairbrush and bobble). I asked if she wanted to be at Roseberry Hill anymore and she replied, that it was okay, adding it was a good school. But now she was growing up and she was ready to move on; adding it was a bit immature e.g. the school had painted a game on the junior playground that was babyish.

**Tuesday 12/03/02 11:00 → 12.00**

Literacy - comprehension

(Mrs Brookes, Mrs Walker and myself)

The teacher gave a brief introduction. I worked with a group of four, including two focal children: Jaleela and Isabel. The children were given two comprehensions to complete on A3 paper (taken from ReviseWise English), and another was available if they finished these. The first was an extract taken from 'The Butterfly Lion' by Michael Morpurgo. We read through it together and I asked them to complete the questions individually. Rather than discussing the questions if they were stuck, I told them to ask me. This comprehension consisted of multiple answer questions. The second comprehension was based on an extract taken from 'The Iron Woman' by Ted Hughes. These questions were varied, asking the children to write a word or phrase; a sentence or two or fill in a chart. Towards the end of the session, the class got together to discuss their answers, putting up their hands to volunteer the answers they had written down.

#### **CHARLOTTE**

During the answer session, Charlotte put her hand up several times and gave the answers she had written down. She completed the first and second comprehension and had gone onto the third during the lesson.

#### **JALEELA**

Jaleela worked independently during the first comprehension. When she had completed it, I asked to look at her work. I then asked her to look at question three again and she corrected her answer without assistance. During the second comprehension, Jaleela sought greater assistance off myself. Question three stated 'Write a description of the eel from the information in the story.' Jaleela described the eel's actions alongside its physical description. During the answer session after everyone had completed the first and second comprehension, Mrs Brookes said the question referred to a description of the eel i.e. a physical description small, pale inside its mouth etc. Mrs Brookes told the children, some of them had not read the question carefully and had written what the eel was doing. However, I had not understood the question to mean a physical description of the eel – I felt awful, as I had thought their description of the eel's actions was okay. During the answer session, I said to the girls I had been sat with, that all their hands should be up as they had all completed the work and had answers. Initially there was no response and gradually they began to put their hand up. Jaleela answered one question. Once she had marked her own work with red ticks, Jaleela had written 'v.good Jaleela' in red pen at the end of her work and given herself personal points – similar to how the teacher or I might mark a piece of work.

#### **ISABEL**

Isabel spoke with her friend whilst Mrs Brookes was addressing the class at the beginning of the lesson – I had to tell her several times to stop talking and listen. She completed the first comprehension without any assistance and had selected the correct answers. Isabel struggled more with several questions within the second comprehension. She was stuck on question four and asked to go to question five, and go back to it. I agreed and said this would be a good idea to do in a test. Her friend was also on question five and they struggled to put the events in the story, in the correct order. They chatted a lot and wanted me to tell them the answers, but I refused to and eventually Isabel did it without assistance off her friend (who copied her answers).

Question three stated 'Write a description of the eel from the information in the story.' Isabel described the eel's actions. During the answer session after everyone had completed the first and second comprehension, Mrs Brookes said the question referred to a description of the eel i.e. a physical description small, pale inside its mouth etc. Mrs Brookes told the children, some of them had not read the question carefully and had written what the eel was doing. However, I had not understood the question to mean a physical description of the eel – and had thought their answers referring to the eel's actions, was fine. During the answer session, I said to the girls I was working with, that all their hands should be up as they had all completed the work and had answers. Initially there was no response and gradually they began to put their hand up. Isabel had not been selected and quietly replied "She never picks anyone on this table. There is no point putting your hand up, if

she doesn't pick you." I said that I would like her to continue putting her hand up and that she would pick her soon – Isabel answered one question at the v.end of the session; she smiled at me after she had answered.

#### **ROBERTO**

During the answer session, Roberto put his hand up several times and gave the answers he had written down. He completed the first and second comprehension and had gone onto the third during the lesson.

#### **Comment**

Mrs Brookes and Mrs Walker had discussed several questions throughout the session and the possible answers – not once did they involve me in the conversation. I felt a bit out on the limb really. They were in close proximity during the answer session and made several jokes, as the children suggested their answers. Sophie looked more relaxed than usual. Mrs Walker did not normally go in with 6B during literacy; she was in place of Mrs Patel, who had taken her class to the CCC. I feel quite comfortable talking with Mrs Patel now, as we have worked together on numerous occasions. I do not know Mrs Walker and do not feel comfortable around her. Mrs Patel usually comments about the work with me. I also usually do the comprehension exercise twice (once in 6B and once in 6E) – this was the first time I had done this; whereas Mrs Walker had just done the same exercise in 6E before break.

**Tuesday 12/03/02 14:00 → 15.20**

❖ General observation notes during art: children sat where they wished and with whom

The children were asked to continue with their artwork. The teacher does not really have much input in these lessons as she feels that she is not v.good at art and leaves the children to it. She asked them finish work in the following order:

1. Finish their boxes in the style of Mondrain
2. Finish their poster design on flooding
3. Begin a portrait

#### **CHARLOTTE and ROBERTO**

Charlotte and Roberto sat on the same table after much deliberation. Charlotte was sat on a table with her best friend to begin with and then they moved onto a centre table with more seats. Most tables have four seats - this table has six seats. Roberto stood with his best friend and eventually sat on the same table. They bicker and complain about each other to me (so and so said that..) but really they like each others company. Both drew a portrait of their best friend and asked me individually if their work was okay – both were v.good. I asked Roberto if he was going to colour in his portrait and suggested he used pencil crayon. His best friend said that pencil crayon was old fashioned and that he should use felt tip. In response, Roberto asked his best friend, whether he should colour it in felt tip or pencil crayon – the portrait was of him and he left it up to him, to decide (felt tip of course). Mrs Brookes told Roberto he was being too noisy on several occasions.

#### **ISABEL**

Isabel chose to sit with her two best friends in the class and worked slowly on task 2 – they talked (when I overheard snippets, it was about many things that were not relevant to art or the poster design).

#### **JALEELA**

Jaleela sat with three other Asian girls on a table at the back of the classroom. She had finished tasks 1 and 2 and began task 3. She worked from an illustration given to her by Mrs Brookes. It was a copy of a piece of work by a German artist. I assisted her and said not to draw the picture, but to brake it up into pieces and draw the shapes she saw – I started her off. She worked v.fast and had begun to colour it in towards the end of the lesson.

**Wednesday 13/03/02**

- No observation notes made, as I did not work in this class today.

**Thursday 14/03/02 09:45 → 10:30**

- Numeracy: finding the area of rectangles
- 4 focal children present: colour groups

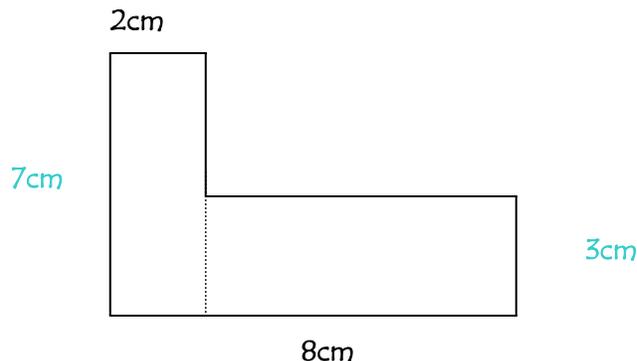
Mrs Brookes introduced the topic of area (09:45 – 10:00) she discussed it with the class and drew an example on the board (an L shape from the maths book). First she looked at rectangles, then an irregular shape (e.g. L shape) She asked the children to tell her what measurements she would multiply together to find the total area of the shape. To find the area of some shapes (e.g. 'L shapes) the children were told to break them up into rectangles/squares. All the measurements were given, but the length of some sides had to be worked out. At the end of her explanation, she suggested you could also find out the area of an irregular shape, by finding the area of the shape cut out and then taking this away from the total shape area. She added if anyone did not understand this, then it did not matter (it was aimed to extend those of 'higher' ability.) At the end she mentioned her last comment had confused some of the children and questioned whether she should have said it.

**CHARLOTTE**

During the introduction, Charlotte put her hand up several times and was selected to answer a question. She did not ask for any assistance, and worked independently. Mrs Brookes commented Charlotte got through a lot of work despite talking a lot on her table – I agreed and said she could multi-task effectively (she added she would tell her mum at parents evening).

**JALEELA**

During the introduction, Jaleela put her hand up several times and was selected to answer a question. Once they were asked to begin working, Jaleela put her hand up and asked a question about the work Mrs Brookes had done on the board – asking me to explain it to her. A question similar to this:



Jaleela understood why Mrs Brookes had written  $7 \times 2 = 14$  cm; but she did not understand where Mrs Brookes had got  $6 \times 3 = 18$ cm from, as on the diagram it said 8cm not 6cm. So I explained she had to break the shape into two bits and I covered one up and I asked how she would work out the area of it. When we came to the 8cm, I told her it was the length of the whole shape, but we had used some of the length already (2cm) and therefore had to take the 2cm off the 8cm. She replied 'Oh, I get it' and smiled. Jaleela then asked, 'So for the next question, it would be ... (stating the measurements)' Jaleela sought confirmation she had understood my explanation by describing how she would calculate the total area of the next shape (which she got correct).

Jaleela worked independently after this, she asked if she needed to draw out the shapes and I replied if it would help her, yes – so she decided to draw out the shapes within each question.

**ISABEL**

During the introduction, Isabel put her hand up once and answered one question. She did not ask for any assistance, and worked independently. She asked me if she had to draw out the diagrams as the example in the book did – I replied only if it helped her work out the area.

#### **ROBERTO**

During the introduction, Roberto did not put his hand up in response to any questions at all. Mrs Brookes sat with Roberto ten minutes into the session for approx fifteen minutes. As she went to sit down next to him, she asked him if he understood this, referring to the area work they had discussed in the introduction.

<b>Thursday 14/03/02</b> <b>13:20 → 13:50</b> Group reading 1 focal children present in a group of four: stair well
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#### **ROBERTO**

Roberto use of intonation was excellent and he read v.clearly – he brings a story alive. I did not single him out for it, but within the group, each child got 2pp for reading well and 3pp for excellent focus. I am aware the teacher does not usually give the children pp within reading time, but I find it is an effective method to get them to concentrate (e.g. 1pp each time they read well, or explain a term I select out of the book, that the others are unsure of etc). It especially works for this group. Today, Roberto explained ‘a posy of flowers’ and ‘accustomed.’

Another boy in the group was attempting to use expression as he read and I asked if he was trying to get a certificate off Alison and I, for his use of intonation and Roberto replied, I am. He added I have had two for that this year, ‘Can I have another one?’ I replied ‘Well you can’ t have another one for the same thing’ (thinking next time, I must aim to give Roberto a certificate within another area). He said ‘Ahh.’

After one member had read, I asked Roberto to continue, he did not know where to read from as he had read on. He began to say ‘No offence but..’ and I put my finger to my lip and shook my head – I was implying not to continue with his sentence (he was going to say that the girl who had been reading, read too slowly and I was not sure how she would react). He understood me and began reading when someone showed him where we were up to.

<b>Thursday 14/03/02</b> <b>14:00 → 15:00</b> Science: light 4 focal children present: colour groups
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Mrs Brookes introduced the lesson, looking at the proximity of the object to the source of light and the size of shadows formed. She said generally, that the children had not done v.well in this area on the test. She was going to show them an experiment to demonstrate the closer the object to a light source, the larger the shadow formed, as it blocked out more light. Mrs Brookes was unsure what to do and used me as a guide, as I had been present in Mrs Wadsworth class during the same session. We drew up a table on the white board, illustrating the height of the shadow and distance of the object from the projector. The children then had to draw a line graph illustrating the measurements recorded. As they were irregular, they found it difficult to think of a scale, Mrs Brookes assisted them, but they found the points difficult to plot as they were required to approximate in several instances.

### **CHARLOTTE**

During the introduction, Charlotte put her hand up several times. No further observation notes were made during the lesson.

### **JALEELA**

During the introduction, Jaleela put her hand up. She was asked to measure the first shadow of the clown, projected onto the wall – she had to stand on Mrs Brookes's chair. Mrs Brookes had to assist her, as it was quite difficult. After she had measured the shadow, she asked if I wanted her to hold the clown (perhaps as I was knelt on the floor) and I replied that it was okay. No further observation notes were made during the lesson.

### **ISABEL**

During the introduction, Isabel did not put her hand up. No further observation notes were made during the lesson.

### **ROBERTO**

During the introduction, Roberto did not put his hand up. I went to Roberto's table and helped another child with the graph, as I have observed Roberto does not always like to be approached and offered help. He does ask for help when he sees me assisting another. He found the points difficult to plot as they were at irregular intervals. I assisted him in labelling the axis, and suggested he went up in intervals of 25cm as opposed to 30cm, which is what he had done. He started to go up in 50cm intervals, I repeated go up in 25cm's and he got to 150cm and I continued to 250cm, as he looked agitated. Once we came to plot the points, not all the numbers lay on a line, so some of it was approximation. Roberto did not know how to plot the numbers (a little like co-ordinates). I reminded him to look at the x axis first, then the y axis, and plot where they crossed (I also labelled the measurements in the table, x and y axis). We plotted several together and I commented that some numbers were quite difficult to plot, as it was not clear but he to have a go. He showed it to me when he had completed it (rough draft). I adjusted two crosses slightly (unclear approximations) and gave it back to him, saying it was v.good.

### **Comments**

When Roberto got his homework to take home, he got out the table I had typed out for him and given him the previous day, containing the different numeracy terminology ( $\times \div + -$ ). He said he was taking it home and I preceded to ask what 'sum of' meant, he replied 'add.' I asked him what 'product' meant and I shook my head as he answered 'add' 'subtract' 'division' finally saying 'times', laughing. Some words he knew the meaning of 'plus' 'minus' 'total' and some words he needs to learn 'decrease' and 'product.'

At the end of the day, as a girl was giving out chocolates for her birthday, he asked me if the chocolate he had picked out was strawberry and I replied that it was. As he went out of the door, he said 'It had better be or ... you will get beats tomorrow.' I thought, what an odd thing to say – definitely not something you would say to a teacher. A week ago he wouldn't communicate with me and now he is v.chatty and cheeky. It is like he is testing the boundaries of our relationship.

**Thursday 12/03/02 1620 - 1630**

Roberto's parents evening

Setting: 6B classroom (2 tables grouped together)

Present: Mrs Brookes and myself

Notes made from headnotes

Roberto's mother came to see Mrs Brookes; Roberto did not attend. I observed she arrived early for the appointment and Mrs Brookes ran slightly over time with the previous appointment. She was dressed quite fashionably – twisted Levi jeans and a Miss sixty jumper. Although I waited outside the class with her, I did not feel comfortable introducing myself. She did not object to me sitting in on the meeting, when asked if it was okay by Mrs Brookes, Mrs Lazarus replied, "Of course, of course."

She remarked Roberto's maths was a 'disaster' several times and added that he had got a tutor to help him now, Sarah, who she referred to throughout the meeting. She added she had tried to teach him herself but she got mad and he got mad and ... Mrs Lazarus said Roberto had more trust in himself with Sarah. She asked for examples of test papers and Mrs Brookes replied they only had the papers they use as practice papers (although I later found out Mrs Wadsworth had been copying some papers for some of the children in her class, although she were not supposed to. Gillian remarked Sophie was quite right and that the parents could buy them in book format from any bookstore, adding there was a lot of money it. Sophie had not mentioned this possibility to Mrs Lazarus.)

Mrs Brookes said he got mixed up with the terminology sometimes. She asked me what was it the other day, I replied that he had done a take away calculation for a questioning asking him for 'the sum of'. She said they had spent time every day in Italy doing maths but he did not understand the 'fundamentals of maths, the simple things.' She commented the other day she had asked him the time and he did not know it – she said she thought she had taught him the time many times before as tapped her watch. Mrs Brookes agreed he needed to spend some time going over this area. She mentioned the time question he had got mixed up within the test (Roberto thought 14:30 was 4.30pm) and added I had discussed it with him. Mrs Brookes added Roberto was v.good at looking at other children's work.

Mrs Lazarus said she thought Roberto panicked when he saw numbers and Mrs Brookes agreed. Mrs Lazarus mentioned she had told Roberto that he would be in the lowest group in high school if he did not get better in maths. Mrs Brookes replied that she did think she should say this as Roberto already panicked.

Mrs Brookes commented that one of Roberto's targets from the last parents evening was to improve his listening skills, adding he had worked on this and listened more now. Mrs Lazarus said this might be because Jun had been off (Roberto's best friend). Mrs Brookes said 'well not really, because they do not sit together anyway.'

Several times during the meeting, Mrs Lazarus would comment with sympathy 'poor Roberto' and smile. She mentioned Roberto had told her before she came, what his teacher would say during parents evening (as Mrs Brookes had go over his review this afternoon).

On the way out, Mrs Lazarus turned to me commented, 'It's a good class, isn't it,' I nodded. I explained to her I was looking at different numeracy terms with children in the other class. I offered to type out a table for Roberto, containing the different words that meant addition, take away, division and multiplication. She replied 'Anything that would help, thank you' and asked if I would give it to Roberto.

Mrs Lazarus was coming in to school to help during European week, Mrs Brookes asked her to help out in year one as they were looking at Italy for the week. Mrs Brookes asked when was a good time for her to come in and she replied whatever was good for them. Mrs Brookes replied they could fit around her and she suggested see could stay after dropping of Roberto or come earlier before picking up Roberto. They decided she would come two afternoons to help out. When Mrs Brookes mentioned looking at the currency of Italy, Mrs Lazarus said but it's the Euro now, and exclaimed she found it difficult!

Mrs Lazarus asked about Roberto's spelling and handwriting mark, as she did not understand if it was a good mark. Mrs Brookes explained he had only dropped two marks on his spellings and his handwriting could be a little neater, perhaps he could use a pen.

## Week Ten

**Wednesday 20/03/02 15:00 - 15.10**  
Roberto – The Hungry Caterpillar  
(Year one)

## ROBERTO

As part of European Week within the school, Roberto was going to read 'The Hungry Caterpillar' in Italian, to children in a year one class today. I asked both his class teacher and Roberto if it would be okay to accompany him – both agreed. Roberto would read this story again tomorrow, to children in the other year one class. On the way to year one, I asked Roberto if he had been practicing reading the book in preparation. He said he had not practiced as he could read the book. His sister had made the book (written in English and Italian) two years ago, when she was in year six at the same school. Roberto said his sister could speak fluent Italian, when I asked if he could, he said he could speak some (shaking his hand from side to side).

Roberto appeared quite nervous at times and looked at me, perhaps for reassurance and I smiled at him. He read the book with a lot of enthusiasm and most of the children sat and listened quietly. He sat at the front of the class and read a page in Italian and then English. The teacher asked him to read slower several times as he was going to fast for the younger children. She also asked him to show the pictures of the caterpillar eating through the food. He found it difficult to show the pictures and read at the same time, as he needed to see the written text; so he read a little and then showed the corresponding picture. The children were able to guess the Italian word for strawberries, alongside other foods that the caterpillar ate through.

His mum had been in earlier on in the week and had taught the younger children some Italian. They had learnt to count from one to ten (which they did as a class); to say thank you and goodbye (which they said as a class and individually); and to ask what someone's name was (several children asked Roberto his name). To say thank you, Roberto was given a sticker from the class teacher. As we left the class said goodbye and thank you in Italian.

As we walked back to 6B, I told Roberto that I thought he had read the book v.well and that the children really seemed to enjoy it. I asked Roberto if he had enjoyed himself and he commented it was 'alright.' When I asked if he was embarrassed, he replied 'No, not really' and added he wouldn't be as embarrassed tomorrow, as he knew what it was going to be like (which implies he was embarrassed).

Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2002

Roberto went to read 'The hungry caterpillar' to the other year one class today and I observed he took his best friend with him. As they walked past Roberto said that Jun was going to translate and read the story in English. When he came back and I asked how it had gone, he said the class weren't as good as yesterday as they didn't speak to him in Italian or anything – he left as soon as he had read the book.

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**Thursday 21/03/02 09:20 → 11.45**  
Visit to CCC: European week (upstairs room – Mrs Brookes)  
(4 focal children present)

Mrs Brookes used this session to complete any outstanding work on 'Europe.' She was especially keen for the children who were writing the books to finish them off. Others created posters or power point presentations based on the European community or a specific country within this or wanting to join it. There was little structure within the session and the children were left to get in with their work. Mr Hepworth was present and assisted children when they put their hand up. He also showed a book to the class, written on power point by one 6B child, in German and English 'The little fire fly.'

#### **ROBERTO**

I overheard Roberto say to his best friend, lets sit together as they took their coats off in the CCC – they got two seats together. His friend had been off ill and had missed much of the background knowledge to using certain computer programs, which the class had covered in their visits to the CCC. I observed Roberto assisting him several times during the session. On one occasion I overheard him say to Jun, miss showed me this (i.e. Helen) and he went on to show him how to insert and use word art in Microsoft publisher. When I showed Jun how to change the colour of the text, Roberto exclaimed I had not shown him this. I told him I had mentioned in the last lesson, I would come back and I could show him how to change the colour, but he would need to put his hand up to remind me – he said I had not said this (I left it). During the lesson he was sat opposite Charlotte and her best friend, who were working together. Roberto and Jun spent some of the lesson talking about the girls and winding them up – they found it amusing. Roberto created a power point presentation on Italy, including slides on food and clothes.

#### **ISABEL**

Isabel created a power point presentation on Cyprus. When I asked why she had chosen Cyprus, she replied it was because one of her best friends had said it was nice (and was also doing a presentation on Cyprus). I asked her if she was aware my dad was from Cyprus – she was

surprised. She was copying big chunks of text from a tourist magazine. I asked her what several sentences meant and she did not know, so I suggested she left those sentences out. I assisted her in copying and pasting a Cypriot flag from the internet – this was trial and error, as some web sites would not let us copy their flags. I asked Rebecca (her friend also covering Cyprus) to show us how to get a flag off the internet – I had noticed she had done this without assistance.

#### **JALEELA**

Jaleela created a poster entitled 'Europe is.' This included a list of countries that were trying to become part of the E.C.; how they could join and what they would need to do. She was referring to a booklet, but had reworded the text into her own words. No further observation notes were made.

#### **CHARLOTTE**

Charlotte asked me about ice-skating on the way to and from the CCC – she walked at the front on the way back. She said they were thinking about going ice-skating and asked if it was good exercise, to which I replied yes, especially for the legs. She asked if she would have to wear a leotard, I said I was not sure but I would guess that they could wear leggings and a t-shirt and jumper.

I spent quite a lot of time with Charlotte and her best friend, as they needed to finish writing out a book in German and English – I assisted by typing for them; as I was quicker and we did not have a lot of time. Charlotte complained several times during the session, that Roberto and Jun were saying things about her and asked me to listen. I told her to ignore them as they were only trying to wind them up.

Charlotte asked me to show her how to get rid of the line surrounding the picture, once it had been inserted into the page from clip art. I had shown her how to do this last week and as I went over it again, she remembered what to do. She asked me how to rotate a picture as she had found a picture of a mouse and wanted to rotate it so it looked as though the owl was about to get it – I showed her.

Throughout the session, she asked me what I was writing down. I said to her that she knew I watched her in lessons and wrote things down. She replied she knew but she had never noticed it before. I told her I had written down if she asked for help (e.g. how do you rotate a picture) and the things she remembered (e.g. as I showed her how to disguise the line around the owl, she began to remember from last week). She wanted to look at my notes and I said I could not show her them and I had written down notes about the other children in my research. She was persistent but finally gave up.

<b>Thursday 21/03/02    1600 - 1610</b> Jaleela's parents evening Setting: 6B classroom (2 tables grouped together) Present: Mrs Brookes
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I missed Jaleela's parents evening, as Beth's in the other class, ran over slightly. Jaleela sat in with her father on her parents evening.

<b>Thursday 21/03/02    1700 - 1710</b> Charlotte's parents evening Setting: 6B classroom (2 tables grouped together) Present: Mrs Brookes and myself Observations from headnotes
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Charlotte attended with her father and I suspect, his partner (Mrs Brookes commented she had not seen her before and Charlotte's mother had attended the last parents evening). They hung around outside and when Mrs Brookes went to check, they said they thought she was still with a parent;

she commented 'Oh its only Helen.' She did not ask them if I could sit in on the meeting nor did she formally introduce me. Mrs Brookes did not really involve me during the discussion. Charlotte smiled at me throughout the meeting.

Mrs Brookes all Charlotte's work was fantastic and that she had no problems. She said Charlotte could be her sidekick, as her suggestions were valuable to everyone in the class.

If there was anything, she said she would ask Charlotte to talk less, as although it did not affect her work, it did affect others. Charlotte was able to listen simultaneously and pick up all the tips Mrs Brookes gave out, regarding answering questions on test papers. She said she listened and acted upon them, incorporating them into her work. She asked me what I had said the other day and I commented she could multitask effectively – they smiled. Mrs Brookes said others were not able to talk and listen at the same time and this showed in their work. Charlotte said it was not just her and that everyone else on the table talked as well. Mrs Brookes agreed and added she did not pick Charlotte out individually for talking, but her table was frequently getting told off for talking too much. Her dad said to Charlotte, he would have to gag her before she came to school.

During the meeting it was evident he was aware of the areas Charlotte was studying and what subjects she liked etc. For example he was aware it was European week this week; he knew she was pleased with her science mark and sought confirmation of this during the meeting. When Sophie asked if she had revised for the science test, Charlotte replied she had not. Mrs Brookes seemed surprised and said, well I was going to say you could revise to get a few more marks, but you got full marks anyway. Generally, Mrs Brookes did not talk directly to Charlotte during the meeting, but her dad and partner did. Charlotte grinned at me whenever I looked in her direction during the meeting.

Charlotte's father asked Mrs Brookes how Charlotte was socially, as she had talked about her academic work. She said she was v.good at ICT. Her dad mentioned power point and said Charlotte had found the program on the computer, although he had thought they did not had it. His partner said she wanted Charlotte to show her how to use power point so see could use it in her work.

Mrs Brookes went on to explain all the visits she would be going on with the class in the third term. Her father's partner commented, she thought the balance between the visits and the class work was particularly good within this school. Charlotte's father asked her if she wanted to ask anything and she said no. Charlotte said goodbye to me as they left.

<p><b>Thursday 21/03/02     1710 - 1720</b> Isabel's parents evening Setting: 6B classroom (2 tables grouped together) Present: Mrs Brookes and myself Observations from headnotes</p>
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Isabel's mum attended the meeting alone. Mrs Brookes said Isabel had worked on her previous targets, and now completed a greater amount of work within the allotted time. She said Isabel needed to work on her mental maths. Isabel's mum said she helped her with her school work. She had noticed when she asked Isabel a maths question; she was eager and quick to answer, without thinking about it. She said she tried to encourage her to slow down and think about it before she gave her answer.

Isabel's mum said she did not really have any problems except that she was concerned about the situation with Tracy. She commented Isabel tried to give her support in the class, as she knew she was not v.popular with the others. But she was receiving stick off them and was bearing the brunt of it, alongside Rebecca. She commented it was like Isabel was 'piggy in the middle'. She said she had advised Isabel to back away from it for a while and leave Tracy to it. Mrs Brookes said she was trying to sort out the problems connected with Tracy and that she had been brought up previously that night, in another parents meeting. She added it was being addressed within the class and that

she had told the class if there were any incidents, they were to be brought to her straight away so that she would deal with them, there and then. Isabel's mum said she hoped she was saying something of a similar nature, to Isabel.

Isabel's mum said at the beginning of any new year Isabel took time to adjust and find her feet. Her academic performance dipped and then came back up. It remained stable and she works at that level. Mrs Brookes seemed surprised. Her mum said although her scores in the first set of papers weren't so good, these were better as she now felt more settled within the class.

### TERM 3: WEEKS 1-8

OBSERVATIONAL RECORD SHEET		
WEEK	DATE	LESSONS
One	Monday 08/04	General notes - morning session
	Tuesday 09/04	Literacy - comprehension
Two	Monday 15/04	Literacy
	Tuesday 16/04	Literacy - comprehension
		Group reading
	Wednesday 17/04	ICT @ school - add and subtract
	Thursday 18/04	Numeracy – revision booklets
		Group reading
		Art
Three	Monday 22/04 – Friday 26/04	No observation notes made
Four	Monday 29/04 – Friday 03/05	No observation notes made
Five	Tuesday 07/05	Literacy - comprehension
		Group reading
		Handwriting and art
	Wednesday 08/05	ICT @ school – revisewise maths
	Thursday 09/05	Group reading
		Literacy – newspaper articles
Six	Monday 13/05	SATs: Maths paper A (Brief notes: Alison)
	Tuesday 14/05	SATs: Maths paper B (Brief notes: Alison)
		SATs: Science paper A (Brief notes: Alison)
		Group reading
		Design & technology: hats
Seven	Monday 20/05 – Friday 24/05	Bio-data collection
Eight	Monday 27/05/02 – 31/05/02	No observation notes made

## Week One

**Monday 08/04/02 09:00 → 10:30**

General notes (classroom)

Mrs Brookes had moved the desks about in the classroom and there were now five lots of six children, sat within each group. Charlotte had moved from the front left (of the teachers desk) of the classroom to front right. Isabel was now sat next to her and had moved from the middle right table. Jaleela had moved from the front right to the centre table and Roberto had moved from the centre to the left at the back of the class.

After the spellings and timestables tests, the children began the literacy lesson. They were required to write out sentences (which had been provided) without using the speech marks. The teacher gave a brief introduction and went over several examples on the worksheet they had all been given. She asked the children to put up there hand if they did not understand – and said she would let them get on with it as the all seemed to know what they were doing. I had marked their homework during the introduction and did not feel too confident about assisting them with their work.

### ROBERTO

During the lesson, Roberto asked me if he needed to use speech marks in his sentences. I explained that he would not need to use speech marks if he wrote out the original sentence in a past tense. As mentioned, I had missed some of the explanation as I had been marking work, but it appeared, Roberto had either not listened to or understood the introduction – the point of the exercise was to write out the sentences again without using the speech marks.

### ISABEL

Isabel was running a little late into school today. She did not ask for assistance during literacy.

### JALEELA

Jaleela was running a little late into school today. She asked me how to go about writing one sentence during the literacy lesson.

### CHARLOTTE

During registration, Charlotte asked if I had seen a boy in the class and added he had got his ear pierced again, so now it was pierced twice. She wrinkled her nose as she commented he looked

like a 'punk' and said 'he looks like a townie now.' I overheard her mentioning this to other children on her colour table. She also quizzed a boy on her table about how he had hurt himself, as one arm was in a sling and his other wrist was in plaster – I thought she looked on in disbelief. I heard her say to her best friend, that the table her friend sat on, was the best. I noticed Charlotte spoke to Isabel as soon as she sat down next to her – they do not generally choose to spend time together. She did not ask for assistance during literacy.

Tuesday 09/04/02 10:55 ( 12.00

Literacy – comprehension (classroom)

Mrs Brookes, Mrs Patel and myself

- ◆ Notes made from head notes and brief written notes

The teacher gave a brief introduction to the comprehension 'Visit to Belgrave Manor'. She highlighted the type of paper the letter was written on within the comprehension i.e. headed school paper. She added that examples of different letter formats could be found on Microsoft publisher. She explained that you could order headed paper and Christmas cards with printed addresses and messages on from publishers.

Mrs Brookes quickly read through the letter and queried what the 'house of destiny' meant within the text. I worked with a group of four, including two focal children: Jaleela and Isabel. I asked them to complete the questions individually and write neatly, remembering to use punctuation.

#### ROBERTO

During the introduction Roberto put his hand up three times in response to the teacher's questions. He was selected to answer twice. No further observations made.

#### ISABEL

During the introduction Isabel read through the letter as the teacher spoke, she did not put her hand to answer any questions posed by the teacher. Once the class had been told to start, Isabel asked me to pass her a pen and I offered her mine and said she must write v.neatly – she really tried hard. After most exercises, Mrs Brookes comments about her handwriting and the need to make it neater. She worked v.quietly and I asked several times if she was okay and she replied 'yes.' She then asked me to find out why another girl in the group was not her friend – it was sorted out and Isabel was more talkative.

Isabel checked her answers with me, question by question, by passing her book to me and asking if it was okay. She worked v.well during the lesson. Sometimes her answers were not quite full sentences and I asked her to change some before handing it in. She worked at a much faster pace compared to usual and finished the comprehension within the lesson – she was v.pleased with herself as that had been a previous target set by Mrs Brookes.

Isabel was silent during the two-minute silence for the Queen Mothers funeral.

#### JALEELA

Jaleela was moved from her colour table onto another to work with me. She had her back to Mrs Brookes during the introduction. Jaleela read through the letter as the teacher addressed the class during the introduction as when the teacher said she would read it through, Jaleela commented 'I've read it.' She put her hand up once in response to the teacher's questions and was selected to answer.

Once the class had been told to start, Jaleela asked to borrow a pen off another girl in the class. I commented her writing was v.neat as she began her work – she commented her dad helped her

with her handwriting. She added she had a book called Essential English at home and she worked through it without her dad's help, as it was easy. When I asked what he helped her with, she replied, 'Anything I need help with.'

Jaleela sought verbal confirmation from me that her answers were right, before beginning to write down her answers. She would either point to answers within the text or ask if such and such was the right answer. She finished the comprehension within the lesson and showed it to me. I asked her to add more detail to two questions as they had two parts to the question and she had only answered one. I also asked her to check some spellings that I underlined in pencil, before handing it in.

Jaleela was silent during the two-minute silence for the Queen Mothers funeral.

#### CHARLOTTE

Charlotte was moved from her colour table onto another. She turned to face Mrs Brookes during the introduction. Charlotte put her hand up once in response to the teacher's questions – she was not chosen to answer any questions. No further observations made.

### Week Two

**Monday 15/04/02 09:45 → 10:30**

Literacy – active and passive sentences

Mrs Brookes, Ms Thompson and myself

◆ Notes made from head notes

The assembly had run over and the teacher quickly addressed the meaning of active and passive sentences. Several children stood in a line at the front of the class and the pupils had to suggest ways to describe their actions (i.e. Richard nudged Hannah and Hannah nudged Kath or Kath was nudged by Hannah and Hannah was nudged by Richard). The person doing the action (nudging) was described as the active person. Each table received a set of laminated cards (representing phrases e.g. the big monster tripped over) and were required to create several different sentences.

Mrs Brookes left to attend a meeting with another member of staff (which I was unaware of as I had not been informed) and Ms Thompson continued with the lesson and selected children off each table to volunteer a sentence and explain why it was either passive or active. The children were then required to complete an exercise sheet, changing active sentences to passive sentences and vice versa.

#### ROBERTO

Roberto verbally contributed during the introduction session as Ms Thompson selected him to read aloud a sentence that the table had created (he did not have his hand up). He worked slowly during the lesson as he talked with the person sat next to him - not about the task at hand. I have observed they frequently distract each other from their work. I mentioned this to the teacher last week and although she agreed at the time, she has not moved either of them.

#### ISABEL

Isabel verbally contributed during the introduction session as Ms Thompson selected her to participate (she did not have her hand up). She was unable to explain why she thought the sentence was passive and Ms Thompson asked someone else to assist her, which they did. Isabel

did not put her hand up to seek assistance; but when I asked if she was okay as I walked around the class, she sought confirmation that her answer for the following question was okay.

#### JALEELA

Jaleela verbally contributed during the introduction session as Ms Thompson selected her to read aloud a sentence that the table had formed (she did not have her hand up). She put her hand up several times during the lesson to seek assistance; both guidance to transform sentences and confirmation that her written sentences were okay.

#### CHARLOTTE

Charlotte did not put her hand up to participate during the introduction nor was she selected by Ms Thompson to verbally contribute. She sought reassurance from me that one of her sentences was correct (changing the passive sentence to an active one). No further observations were made.

**Tuesday 16/04/02 10:55 → 12:00**

Literacy – comprehension (classroom)

Mrs Brookes, Mrs Patel and myself

- ◆ Notes made from head notes and brief written notes

The teacher gave an introduction to the comprehension 'Penpals' (10:55 → 11:20). She asked the class to define what a penpal was. She highlighted the different lengths of the two letters, the language used and the content (i.e. questions and information provided by the writer). Mrs Brookes also addressed the use of letters and the use of email as an alternative method of keeping in touch with others. She frequently asked the same girl to answer during the introduction, perhaps as she was the only child with her hand up.

Mrs Brookes quickly read through both letters and queried why the first letter might be considered as boring and how the author of the second letter was having a little 'fun' in her letter. I worked with a group of four children, including two focal children: Jaleela and Isabel. I asked them to ask for help as they went along and to write neatly. My group struggled with this comprehension and sought assistance from me for most of the questions within the exercise – on the whole, they lacked focus.

#### ROBERTO

Roberto was sat facing the teacher at the back of the classroom. During the introduction Roberto put his hand up five times in response to the teacher's questions. He was selected to answer twice. On numerous occasions during the introduction I observed him playing imaginary drums with pens – after a time, I asked him to put the pens down and listen. In response, he smiled, played the imaginary drum once more and put the pens down. Several minutes later I observed Roberto mouthing words across the classroom to another boy sat at the front of the class, but they stopped when I said their names aloud.

As the individual work began I overheard Mrs Brookes shouting Roberto's name, implying for him to get on with his work and stop talking. During the lesson Roberto put his hand up and I asked him to come over to the table at which I was sat. Both Mrs Brookes and Mrs Patel were sat closer to him, but both were assisting others. He sighed loudly in protest and came over to ask about question three. Compared to the children in my group who work at a slow pace, Roberto had done v.little work. I asked him to read aloud the question and then a relevant section of the text that I pointed out (i.e. containing the answer). I asked him the question again and he was able to answer the question – I reminded him to write it in a full sentence.

#### ISABEL

Isabel was sat facing the teacher. During the introduction Isabel put her hand semi-up once in response to the teacher's questions but was not selected to answer. She did mumble a couple of answers to her friend on the table. On numerous occasions throughout the introduction I observed

her messing with pens and asked her to stop and listen. When Mrs Brookes read through the letter, Isabel followed parts but was generally distracted throughout the introduction.

When I asked my group to write neatly, Isabel remarked that Mrs Brookes always wrote something at the end of her work and that it annoyed her. I asked to look through her book and on numerous occasions I noticed Mrs Brookes had written something along the lines of 'watch your presentation'. I asked her to do her best and that this would be good enough for me. Isabel crossed out several words and as it looked messy, she asked to start again, I told her that her work was okay and not to worry about it. She continued but got more and more worked up as she said 'I keep writing the wrong words' and thus there was more crossing out – I let her begin again.

She sought assistance throughout the comprehension exercise; both with guidance for answering questions and confirmation her written answers were okay. At one point, she threw her exercise book at me as I did not give her attention straight away and she was frustrated with the work. Just moments before her friend had said that Isabel was getting annoyed with the work but I had not responded as I was assisting another pupil within the group. I told her she would have to wait as Jaleela had asked for help first – she did not say anything and sat waiting for me to look at her work. She finished the comprehension just before lunchtime and had worked slowly during this session.

#### JALEELA

Jaleela asked me before the start of the lesson 'when are we going to do it' (i.e. the research activities including learning Spanish).

Jaleela moved to sit on the table I was sat at, she asked to move again and sit in the place next to me – I said this was fine. She was thus sat facing the teacher. During the introduction Jaleela put her hand up twice in response to the teacher's questions but was not selected to answer. She sought assistance throughout the comprehension exercise; both guidance when answering questions and confirmation her written answers were okay. I wanted her to approach the work with greater independence and asked her to have a go by herself. I asked her what she would do in a test if she were stuck, she replied 'Shout Helen'. I replied that I could not explain questions in tests only read them aloud and that in English, I could not do this at all. Thereafter she became more independent in her approach to her work as she worked through the exercise, asking for help on fewer questions. She was the first to complete the comprehension exercise within the group although she too, had worked at a slow pace.

I mentioned to Jaleela that she had worked more independently last week compared to this week and had asked for more assistance with this comprehension exercise - I asked her why she thought this was. She replied 'cos last week I was brainy and today I am not.' I asked if this (pointing to the sheet) was harder and she paused and replied that it was an easier sheet last week.

#### CHARLOTTE

Charlotte was moved from her colour table onto another, where she sat with a friend. She turned to face Mrs Brookes during the introduction and appeared to be listening. Charlotte put her hand up once in response to the teacher's questions – she was not chosen to answer any questions. Charlotte and her friend put their hand up for assistance with question four. The table were working together and I assisted them as a group. They were required to find a word within the second letter meaning 'to read in a leisurely manner' I asked them to look for a word around the word 'books' that they were unfamiliar with. They said 'peruse' and I gave them a dictionary to look the word up. To find a word in the passage meaning 'sparing with money' I asked them if they were unfamiliar with any other words, they said frugal. Charlotte amongst others suggested what she thought the word meant and I gave her the dictionary to check the meaning – her understanding was along the right lines.

**Tuesday 16/04/02      13:35 → 13:50**

Reading group – outside (playground)

One focal child in a group of five

◆ Notes made from head notes

Mrs Brookes had made up new reading groups for this term, each consisting of six pupils. Mrs Brookes had started off reading with the group, as I had to attend a meeting. When I got back to the classroom the children moved to read alongside myself and I chose to go outside, as it was warm.

**ROBERTO**

Roberto was one of five pupils present. He was impressed that we were going outside to read as no other group in his class had yet been given the opportunity to go outside to read (It was generally unusual practice). He read aloud with expression and enthusiasm. He laughed alongside his friend during the session, whom he sat next to on the bench and opposite me – they were making each other laugh whilst they read aloud or talked whilst others read. I said that they were lucky to have the opportunity to come outside to read and that they were spoiling it. I said it could be arranged for me to seat them boy, girl, boy girl etc if necessary and Roberto protested, he began concentrating immediately, ignoring his friend's initial provocation.

I mentioned I would be reading with the group each week from now on and that I would be checking comment books for ongoing short book reviews of the homework I set each week.

**Wednesday 17/04/02 10:45 → 11:15**

ICT – add and subtract (ICT suite)

Two focal children present

Alison and Myself

◆ Notes made from head notes

Alison and I put most children in boy and girl pairs as we have found that they work better 'on task' in these combinations (from knowledge of working with the children during ICT in the other class)

**ROBERTO and JALEELA**

*Roberto asked if he could go with a different partner and I was snappy with him. I had experienced a not so good ICT lesson during the previous session in 6E and was feeling worked up. He gave a look of surprise (he looked taken aback, he widened his eyes and raised his eyebrows) – I felt bad. In the lesson Jaleela asked if they could go with a different partner next week, as this was their second week together. I asked whom she would like to go with; Roberto replied he wanted to go with a specific boy and I said it must be a girl. So they agreed to stay in their pair. They worked together to answer the addition and subtraction sums but when they thought a question was hard ( $30 + 30 = (6 \times 6) - ?$ ) they did not even try it; Roberto complained that Jaleela was only answering the easy sums.*

I worked with them for ten minutes assisting them with the questions they found difficult as they had to answer within a set time limit and they wanted to get all the questions correct.

**Examples**

◆  $56 - 9 = ?$

To work out the above sum they used their fingers to count backwards. I asked them to try a quicker method:

$$56 - 10 = 46 \quad 46 + 1 = 47$$

Roberto got the hang of this method straight away whilst Jaleela took a little longer.

◆  $79 - 22 = ?$

To work out this sum, I asked them to take away twenty and then two – Jaleela used this more readily in comparison to Roberto

Between us we got all the sums right. To calculate the sum with two sides e.g.  $30 + 30 = (6 \times 6) - ?$

I asked Jaleela to work out one side and Roberto to work out the other and the difference between their answers was the answer to the sum. Roberto got v.excited answering the questions and was loud and waving his hands about whilst calculating the answer using his fingers or counting in his head, saying 'I know, I know' or 'Err.'

At the end of the session, the children all had their hand in the air (signalling they had stopped what they were doing, were not talking but listening to either Alison or myself giving instructions – we had taught the class this today). Although Roberto had his hand up he continued working and talking, I asked him to 'close this' (pointing to my mouth) and 'listen' (touching my ear) – he did what I had asked him to do.

**Wednesday 17/04/02 11:20 → 11:50**

ICT – add and subtract (ICT suite)

Two focal children present

Alison and myself

- ◆ Notes made from head notes

### ISABEL

Isabel was seated with the same boy as last week as they worked together v.well. They answered the sums together rather than having individual goes. Both used excellent communication and cooperation skills to work effectively as a team.

### CHARLOTTE

Charlotte worked in a different pair this week and I observed her partner (boy) tended to domineer the proceedings. I asked if they were working separately or together, Charlotte replied that he was to fast (laughing) and typed the answers in before she had worked them out. So I asked him to let Charlotte have a go at answering some questions and stayed to watch while she had a turn.

**Thursday 18/04/02 09:45 → 10:45**

Numeracy – revision booklets (classroom)

Four focal children present

- ◆ Notes made from head notes and brief written notes

Mrs Brookes was off school today presenting at a conference associated with European Week and Mr Berry was the supply teacher present. He works in different years within the school and has worked in 6B before. They had been left revision booklets to complete that they had started in a previous numeracy lesson. Several children mentioned Mrs Brookes had briefly gone over questions yesterday, although the majority of children did not recollect her going over questions within the booklet. Mr Berry briefly addressed the different procedures of finding the area of odd shapes and how to identify a prism. The children were then left to work independently at their own pace through the booklet. I observed many children sought my help and I could not provide the level of assistance required. Some children did not put their hand up to ask for assistance but caught my eye or came over to me to ask for help – it appeared they preferred to seek help from myself rather than Mr Berry. Those who did put their hand up for assistance generally received help from Mr Berry. He sat at the desk for the most part of the lesson and assisted v.few children – this frustrated me, as I could not provide the level help being sought.

It seemed obvious the questions needed to be explained to the class as a whole, as the majority were finding the same questions difficult – I did not feel it was my place to say something to Mr Berry; it would have been too awkward. As I do not usually assist during numeracy, I did not feel confident in my methods of calculation, I doubted my abilities to clearly explain questions to the children.

### ROBERTO

Roberto was sat facing the teacher at the back of the classroom. During the introduction Roberto messed with pens, as he saw me approach he stopped messing and put his pens in his pencil case and appeared to begin listening. He sought help straight away with a question that asked him to draw a given shape 90 degrees clockwise of point A. We did this together using tracing paper and asked questions to prompt him i.e. show me what direction is clockwise; do you know how much ninety degrees is? He had a go at moving the shape the requested amount independently and it was correct. I stated that he did not need my help as he had known all the necessary information to have a go at the question and he replied that he had needed my help. I went to assist someone else and when I looked over in his direction, I observed he was struggling with a question. I went over to help him, the question asked him to draw a reflection of a given shape in the mirror line and I directed him to trace the shape and the mirror line then turn over the tracing paper and draw over the lines. I asked him to remember this method as this was easier than actually using a mirror and that this type of question usually came up in the maths SAT paper. It appeared few children in the class knew of this method for drawing reflections in the mirror line and I demonstrated this method to quite a few pupils.

I spent the rest of my time on the other side of the classroom, as I could not move away from one table as all pupils asked for help (Isabel and Charlotte took up a lot of my time).

### JALEELA

Jaleela sought help for one question that required her to calculate the given area of shape and find out how many tiles could fit in it (they were given the tile area). I assisted the girl sat next to her with this question and Jaleela listened, she said she did not need my help anymore, as she now knew how to do it. The question was similar to that set out below:



### CHARLOTTE

Charlotte was sat next to Isabel and it appeared they had worked together for the initial questions as they were both stuck on the same question – they were required to calculate the given area of shape and find out how many tiles could fit in it (as above). Charlotte understood it as I explained it and did not require a calculator to work out the answer. She and Isabel then asked for help on the next question, something similar to that below:

Mr Chapel sells one pound of fish for £2.20      The market sells one kilogram of fish for £5.00  
Information: 1kg = 2  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb

They were required to find out who sold the cheaper fish. I showed Charlotte how to calculate how much one pound of fish was at the market:

i.e.  $£5.00 \div 2.25 = £2.22$  Mr Chapel's fish was cheaper by two pence per pound.

Mr Berry went over it differently and calculated how much 2  $\frac{1}{4}$  pounds of Mr Chapel's fish was and it confused Charlotte, as he did not explain that there was an alternative method of working out the answer (i.e. the way I had showed Charlotte). Although the answer was the same i.e. Mr Chapel's fish was cheaper the method Mr Berry used confused the children as he said Mr Chapel's fish was

cheaper by five pence – I said their calculations were correct and not to worry, but I doubted myself and my calculations.

Charlotte sought help on another question related to fractions. Sixty birds were counted in a garden – these were represented using fractions with different denominators. The children were asked to calculate how many of each bird were present:

E.g.  $\frac{3}{10}$  were pigeons (answer: 24 pigeons)       $\frac{1}{5}$  were robins (answer: 20 robins)  
 $\frac{1}{30}$  were sparrows (2 sparrows)       $\frac{1}{15}$  were blue-tit (answer: 4 blue-tit)  
 $\frac{1}{6}$  were thrush (10 thrush)

I read the information incorrectly when I went through it with Charlotte in the lesson and thought there were thirty birds in the garden, consequently I showed her how to change the denominators so they were all the same. After going over it in 6E, I realised my mistake and took a few minutes with Charlotte to explain the question again, apologising for my mistake.

Charlotte overheard me talking with Isabel (who was sat next to her) as I apologised for not explaining the questions and methods clearly, I added that I did not usually assist in numeracy and I felt a little unsure. Charlotte said she thought I was good at explaining as she understood and she thought it was clear.

#### ISABEL

Isabel followed the explanation of the first question with Charlotte but got lost on the second question re: converting kilograms to pounds, I went through the question three times; each time asking her how much she had understood. I apologised for not explaining it clearly as I did not usually assist in numeracy and she said that she understood some of it. Isabel followed the procedure to calculate the answer but struggled to understand why she needed to use division.

Towards the end of the lesson as Mr Berry read out the answers, Isabel had got one wrong re: calculating the area of an odd shape. She asked me to go through the question with her as the break bell went, as I went through it with her, she began to get upset. She said she had done it all wrong. I looked through her work and said it was all right except for this one question. Isabel replied that she had help for most of it and had found it v.difficult. I told her most of the children in the class had asked for help and asked if she had not heard everyone shouting my name during the lesson, trying to reinforce that others had struggled too.

For this question, she had calculated the length of the sides correctly but had not remembered how to calculate area - she had timed length by width twice on each shape, rather than once. I went over the method to find the area (length  $\times$  width) as she did not remember when I questioned her. I also went over the how to work out the perimeter (add all sides together) and volume (length $\times$  width $\times$  height). I was aware she had covered finding the area of shapes before in numeracy lessons this year. I wrote each definition down on her sheet and said I would ask her later on in the day to see if she could remember. She stopped crying and only had a couple of minutes left of break. She apologised for wasting my break time and I said 'not at all, and that she must come and talk to me if she was ever upset' and she said 'okay.' When she saw me later on, just before lunch, she said I could ask her – she remembered the procedure to calculate area, perimeter and volume; which put a big smile on her face.

**Thursday 18/04/02      13:55 → 15:00**

Art – making shapes (classroom)

Four focal children present

◆ Notes made from head notes

Mrs Brookes was off school today presenting at a conference and Mr Berry was the supply teacher present. He works in different years within the school and this was the second time he had worked in 6B. Mr Berry quickly went through the instructions of how to make a shape which when flexed

had a different pattern on its surface. He explained the instructions quickly and I had difficulty following. The lesson was quite informal, in that the children were chatting to each other and walking about in the classroom. I found it difficult to flex the finished shape correctly and several children had to show me numerous times until I understood how to flex it to produce the different surface patterns.

#### **ROBERTO**

During the introduction to the lesson, Roberto was told by Mr Berry to stop talking and listen (he sat facing the teacher at the back of the classroom). During the introduction Roberto messed with pens and as he saw me approach he stopped. He sought a lot of attention from me during this lesson. I assisted him initially and when I went to help others on another table, he would say loudly that I never helped him or anyone else on his table. I went over again to help him after assisting a couple of other pupils on a different table. I started him off, showing him how to bend the paper along the dotted lines and asked him to continue with it. Again he asked me to help him several minutes later, by shouting Helen aloud, adding I did not help on his table etc. I ignored him and he came over to me seeking assistance, as I was sat at another table.

I sent him to see Mr Berry, who showed him how to stick the paper together to form the shape. He did it incorrectly and I asked him to go back and ask again. He said he did not want to, as the teacher would think he was thick and asked me to help him. I did not know how to do it and said that he had to go back to Mr Berry – he did so and came to show me. I asked him to sit down and colour the patterns in. He brought it to me later and asked me to show him how to flex it, to see the different patterns. When I did not do it instantly he asked for it back and I asked him to be patient as I was learning how to flex the shape; adding that I was patient with him when I helped him with his maths. He gave me time to learn how to do it with Charlotte's assistance – who had come over to stand with us. Roberto sought a lot of attention from me and I asked him why, he replied it was because no one liked him and I said that he was being silly, as I knew he was v.popular in the class. He has not sought so much attention from me during a lesson this school year. On several occasions during the lesson, he had come over and stood with me as I talked with Charlotte.

#### **JALEELA**

Jaleela sought help regarding flexing the original paper and then I sent her to Mr Berry for help with the main shape. She came to show me her finished creation and I had a go at flexing it to show the different design of patterns. She asked if it was good or rubbish and I replied that I was v.impressed with it and thought it was v.good.

#### **CHARLOTTE**

Charlotte did not seek any help from me to create her shape – although I had seated myself at a table on the other side of the classroom. She showed me her finished product that had been coloured in v.neatly. Charlotte spent ten minutes or so, showing me how to flex the end shape. I struggled with this immensely as I am not v.good at spatial tasks (or that was my excuse). Towards the end of the lesson she came to stand with Roberto and I at the other side of the classroom.

Charlotte mentioned that she could not wait to leave this year and go to Greenwood as most the people in the class annoyed her. When Roberto came over she rolled her eyes at me. I asked if he was one of the people in the class who annoyed her and she said yes, as he and his friend were always being horrible to her and her friend – I replied it was probably just for attention (as she mentioned he had asked her out several times).

#### **ISABEL**

Isabel did not seek any help from me to create her shape. Her design in the shape was v.unusual as she had added to the original pattern on the paper – other members of the class had coloured it in basic colours.

**Thursday 18/04/02 13:35 → 13:50**

Reading group – staff room  
One focal child in a group of six  
◆ Notes made from head notes

Mrs Brookes had made up new reading groups for this term, each consisting of six pupils. Mrs Brookes was off school today presenting at a conference and Mr Berry was the supply teacher present. My group started a new book entitled 'The Children's Book of Stories 2002'. We began with 'Aliens do not eat bacon sandwiches' by Helen Dunmore – we did not read the short stories in order.

### ISABEL

Isabel was one of six pupils present. The group were generally quite loud and children talked over one another and interrupted each other and myself. One child had to be sent elsewhere to read, as he was disruptive and who not co-operate. Isabel was quiet throughout the session and followed the text as others read. Isabel read aloud quietly but with expression.

I mentioned I would be reading with the group alternate weeks from now on and would be checking comment books for ongoing short book reviews of the homework I set each week. I asked them to finish the short story and write a review for next week.

### Week Three

#### Monday 22/04/02 – Friday 26/04/02

- No observation notes made
- I was off school Wednesday 24/04/02 – Friday 26/04/02

### Week Four

#### Monday 29/04/02 – Friday 03/05/02

- No observation notes made – I was off school all week (not well).
- Both Thursday 02/05/02 and Friday 03/05/02 were staff training days.

### Week Five

#### Tuesday 07/05/02 10:50 → 12:10

Literacy – comprehension  
Mrs Brookes, Mrs Patel and myself  
◆ Notes made from head notes

The teacher read aloud to the class, an extract taken from 'The mouse and his child' by Russell Hoban. She had mentioned to me during break, that the comprehension was difficult as it was a level five exercise. Mrs Brookes then discussed with the class the meaning of several unfamiliar words and phrases, including diverge; prophet of good or bad luck; placate. The children were then asked to work through the questions on the sheet independently and to ask for assistance when required. I worked with two focal children in a group of five. Towards the end of the lesson, Mrs Brookes quickly went through the answers and asked the children to take their work home, adding they could go through the paper with their parents if they wanted for further practice.

### ROBERTO

No observation notes made

### ISABEL

Isabel had good focus as the teacher read through the extract. I asked her to read it through again independently before she attempted any of the questions. She answered the initial questions without support (one to four) and sought assistance from myself, for questions thereafter. This involved both discussion of the text and the assurance that her written answers were okay. Isabel did not finish the comprehension during the lesson. She mentioned that she had found the exercise hard.

### JALEELA

Jaleela had good focus as the teacher read through the extract. I asked her to read it through again independently before she attempted any of the questions and she replied that she already knew the answers, so I asked her to check them against the text. She answered the initial questions without support (one to four) and sought assistance from myself, for questions thereafter - this involved discussion of the text. Jaleela rushed through the comprehension and did not seem to take care over her sentence structure or details within her answers. She seemed content to put part of the answer down – as long as something was written she appeared satisfied. Thus the quantity of the work completed seemed more significant than its quality. When I asked her to add more detail to her answers, she did so begrudgingly, asking what else she should write. She did not finish the comprehension during the allotted time and as the teacher talked through the answers, she chose to continue working through the questions rather than listen and check her answers.

### CHARLOTTE

No observation notes made

**Tuesday 07/05/02 13:30 → 13:50**

Group reading (staff room)

(One focal child present in a group of six)

◆ Notes made from head notes

### ROBERTO

Roberto had completed his homework and written his review. He was distracted at times during this session and looked about the room or engaged in conversation with the boy sat next to him. This opportunity had arisen as I had asked them to share Roberto's book as his fellow pupil had forgot his. Both put on silly voices whilst reading aloud their parts and others in the group giggled – I asked Roberto to read properly. He eventually sat still and listened to the others as they read aloud. He contributed alongside other members in the group, when I asked them to summarise what had occurred in the chapter we had read during the session.

**Tuesday 07/05/02 14:00 → 15:15**

Handwriting and Art (classroom – colour tables)

(Four focal children present)

◆ Notes made from head notes

### HANDWRITING

The children were asked to copy an extract from 'The Hobbit' in their best handwriting. I observed, as each child gave his/her work to Mrs Brookes, she looked at it and commented. I do not recall the children frequently practicing handwriting skills.

### ROBERTO

Roberto focused well and worked at a steady pace. When Roberto handed his work in, I overheard Mrs Brookes tell him that he needed to work on forming his letters.

### ISABEL

Isabel wrote slowly and concentrated throughout the session. She reported Mrs Brookes has asked her to write in letters of the same size.

### JALEELA

Jaleela did not rush her work as she usually does and it looked v.neat. She mentioned she had bought herself a pen for the SATs next week (she did not have her own pencil case or pens etc. but borrowed off others or used school pens). She reported Mrs Brookes said her handwriting was good.

### CHARLOTTE

Charlotte took her time to complete her work. In the title, she had used small letters rather than capitals at the start of every word and sought reassurance from me that this was okay. I replied that it was fine, adding that it was v.neat. I overheard Mrs Brookes say 'Good, thank you' as Charlotte handed it in.

### ART

The children were continuing art work from the previous week, where they had begun copying a L. S. Lowry picture using a grid format. They were only allowed to continue with this, once they had completed the handwriting exercise, thus everyone was working at different paces.

### ROBERTO

I observed Roberto was sat doing nothing, I asked him to get on with his work. When I later went over, I noticed he was drawing characters from the Simpson's cartoon. When I asked why he wasn't continuing with the work from last week, he said a girl on his table had ruined his work (which he had been close to finishing) by emptying pencil sharpenings over it and scrunching it up. He added that he could not be bothered to start it again and I over heard him say, that he found it boring. I started Roberto off again, drawing the grid for him, as he did not seem to understand how it was used (it seemed there were numerous children unsure of how the grid worked). I asked him to help me calculate the length and width of the grid squares and drew it out. I left him to begin to draw from the Lowry picture. When I went back at the end of the lesson to see his work, it was evident that he was trying and had spent his time drawing.

### ISABEL

No observation notes made

### JALEELA

Jaleela had finished her drawing ten minutes into the art lesson - it appeared she had rushed it. I asked if she would like to start again and that I would help draw the grid outline and start her off. She agreed and wanted me to do as much of her art work as possible. Once I had drawn the part I had agreed to, I left her to continue whilst I assisted others on her table.

### CHARLOTTE

No observation notes made

**Wednesday 08/05/02 11:00 → 11:30**

ICT @ school (ICT suite)

(Two focal children working together within half the class)

◆ Notes made from head notes and brief written notes

I paired Roberto and Jaleela to work together during revisewise – maths.

### ROBERTO & JALEELA

Roberto and Jaleela did not seem happy to be working together. I had been absent last week and they had been allowed to work with whom they chose. I observed they discussed questions more

when I was not present. When I was in close proximity to them or assisting them, they bickered more and raised their voices, both stating they did not want to work with each other again. Jaleela stated 'He keeps doing every question' and Roberto stated 'When I want to do the answers, she tell me them, it's a bit annoying.' It seemed that when each received attention from me in equal amounts and alternately, there focus was good and they attempted the questions, each waiting his/her turn. On several occasions Roberto and Jaleela sought confirmation from me that they had calculated their answers correctly.

**Wednesday 08/05/02 11:30 → 12:00**

ICT @ school (ICT suite)

(Two focal children working in a trio within half the class)

- ◆ Notes made from head notes and brief written notes

I paired Isabel and Charlotte to work together alongside another girl, during revisewise – maths.

### ISABEL & CHARLOTTE

Charlotte initially pulled her face when I asked her to work with Isabel, after raising my eyebrows in surprise, she agreed. I also asked another girl to sit and work with them. There were numerous problems with the internet during this session, in particular with the computer they were working at – they were patient and after a while began to get frustrated. I asked them to go on science explorer instead and they loaded the computer disk and set the program up without assistance. Charlotte was domineering in this group, stating she found the work 'boring' and 'I have done all these' (clicking through the exercises). I observed that once she found something she had not done, the girls worked through it together, discussing the answers and laughing – her manner changed. During the session Charlotte also chatted with the boy sat next to her, who was working alongside someone else, on revisewise maths – they were discussing anything other than the work at hand.

**Thursday 09/05/02 13:30 → 13:50**

Group reading (staff room)

One focal child in a group of six

- ◆ Notes made from head notes

### JALEELA

Jaleela had completed her reading homework and written a short summary, which I asked her to read aloud. She asked another girl in the group to speak up as she read aloud as she could not hear her; she asked her again at the end of the session, with regards to next week, as she said she still could not hear her. I commented that I thought she had done v.well as she had tried to raise her voice.

Jaleela struggled with the pronunciation of several words including 'oozing' and 'distinguish' and although I encouraged her to have a go, the others helped her out almost immediately, stating the correct pronunciation. I asked the group to give the person reading, a chance to say it themselves, but it seems all children have been encouraged to correct each other's mistakes. The children seem embarrassed to have a go at pronouncing unfamiliar words and others in the group generally seem to find it amusing when pronunciation is incorrect. She also commented 'that doesn't make sense' after reading aloud part of the text (something along the lines of 'Charlie willed his body to move'). As Jaleela appeared a little confused re: what had occurred in the story, I asked her to explain her understanding as to what had happened. She had picked up the main themes and I added a little more detail to clarify the groups understanding.

I gave most group members a target and asked Jaleela to have a go at pronouncing unfamiliar and difficult words, stating that it did not matter if she made a mistake, but that it was a way to learn.

**Thursday 09/05/02 14:00 → 15:10**

Literacy – newspaper articles Four focal children present ◆ Notes made from head notes
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The children were continuing with their newspaper articles, which were written in association with a story they had watched on video 'own goal'. They were asked to write two articles portraying the main character as a villain and as an innocent victim. Mrs Brookes asked me to go round the class and assist pupils. I found this difficult, as I had not watched the series. So I picked up the general themes of the story by asking children to explain the characters and story. I found this also aided them to write the newspaper articles, perhaps as they were able to pick the main themes out and write about them. I spent a lot of time on one table in particular, as they seemed to lack confidence in their ability to write a 'good' article.

#### ROBERTO

Roberto had completed one neat copy of an article, which he showed me before handing it in to Mrs Brookes. He went on to write an article portraying the character as a villain. He asked for my help and I said I would be with him in several minutes as I was helping someone else at the moment. After ten minutes I turned round to see him messing and that he had not written one word. I told him to get on with it and he said he had been planning in his head and proceeded to complain that I spent all my time helping people on a given table and had not helped anyone on his. I went over to assist him, to which he said, 'you haven't even seen the video have you?' I replied that I had not, but that I understood the basics of the story and that he could fill in the details. After several minutes there were numerous children with hands up shouting my name and children stood by Roberto and myself, requesting help. He said to one child 'Why don't you just go and ask Mrs Brookes?' and she continued to stand silently. I asked the children to sit down and said I would go to them individually after I had helped Roberto. We discussed the beginning of the story and picked out the basic points. We wrote several sentences together and I encouraged him to use more descriptive words to provide a more detailed picture as to what had occurred. I left him to continue writing in relation to one specific set of circumstances and went to assist several other pupils. I went back to Roberto to see how he had got on and he had managed to write another sentence. He was asked to finish it off for homework.

#### ISABEL

No observation notes made

#### JALEELA

Jaleela was sat at the table I spent most of my time at, assisting others around her. Jaleela had finished one article and was copying it out in neat. She did not really need my assistance but commented that she could not read the teachers handwriting and needed me to help her spell several words. Once she had finished her articles she asked me to help draw an illustration. I drew a picture lightly and asked her to add more detail to it, as she wanted me to draw the while illustration for her.

#### CHARLOTTE

Charlotte finished typing her neat copy of one article on the computer and finished the other article in rough, working independently throughout.

The children were continuing with their newspaper articles, which were written in association with a story they had watched on video 'own goal'. They were asked to write two articles portraying the main character as a villain and as an innocent victim. Mrs Brookes asked me to go round the class and assist pupils. I found this difficult, as I had not watched the series. So I picked up the general themes of the story by asking children to explain the characters and story. I found this also aided

them to write the newspaper articles, perhaps as they were able to pick the main themes out and write about them. I spent a lot of time on one table in particular, as they seemed to lack confidence in their ability to write a 'good' article.

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### ISABEL

No observation notes made

### JALEELA

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### CHARLOTTE

Charlotte finished typing her neat copy of one article on the computer and finished the other article in rough, working independently throughout.

## Week Six

### Monday 13/05/02

SAT papers:

- Maths Paper A (45 minutes)
- Mental Maths (20 minutes)

(4 focal children present)

♦ **Alison's notes:** head notes and brief written notes

### ROBERTO

Roberto was sat alongside a girl in the test, who told Alison that he was being bossy. He replied 'I only told her not to be nervous about the SATs. God, they're only SATs. Year nine is the worst or so my sister said.'

Roberto did not ask for any questions to be read aloud. He finished the test before the allotted time was up.

### ISABEL

Isabel finished the test within the allotted time, she did not ask for any questions to be read aloud.

### JALEELA

Jaleela asked for several questions to be read aloud. No further observations made.

### CHARLOTTE

Charlotte did not ask for any questions to be read aloud. No further observations made.

## Week Seven

### Monday 20/05/02

Visit to the Hattie Museum, Stockport

09:30 – 14:30

(3 focal children present)

- Notes made from head notes

The children went to visit the Hattie Museum to experience a day in the life of an apprentice at a hat factory in the Victorian times. The girls and boys were separated and were each led off to take part in separate activities by a woman/man 'in role.' All children were asked to dress the part (e.g. long dark skirt, apron and white blouse or dark trousers, shirt and waistcoat with flat cap) and contribute towards the cost of trip (£6.00). Eight boys and sixteen girls attended the visit.

I supervised the girls during the day and Mrs Brookes supervised the boys. We met up for lunch and the latter afternoons activities. The mistress took the girls to explain they would be working in the 'lashings and trimmings' area of the factory. Each sewed a bow to go onto a hat (which they were able to take home). The mistress discussed the terms of pay and expectations of employers etc. The children were asked to sign a contract, stating they agreed to the terms of employment. The girls had the opportunity to look at some of the machines used to make hats – the mistress briefly explained how each worked. She handed round examples of materials used to make hats, which most girls were reluctant to touch.

- felt (sheep wool and rabbit fur).
- beaver fur

During the afternoon, the girls had the opportunity to work in a stock room and each pupil was given a particular activity to complete. E.g. checking amounts of ribbons; noting down codes and names of ribbons, measuring head sizes for hats; sending parcels of hoods and other materials to various addresses etc. The final activity was cleaning Bessy's cottage. Bessy was a character introduced numerous times during the day and we learnt her late husband had also worked at the factory. The children were each given tasks to do, which they alternated, e.g. washing clothes, removing the excess water, hanging clothes outside, rag rugging, cleaning the back step, cleaning windows, cleaning the stove etc. Generally the girls enjoyed the afternoon's activities the most.

In the latter half of the afternoon, we then met up with Mrs Brookes and the boys and went around a hat exhibition – it was the first days showing of the Queens and Queen Mothers hats.

### ROBERTO

I did not spend any time with Roberto during the day. Roberto was dressed the part in dark trousers, white shirt and waistcoat – he looked the part. Mrs Brookes mentioned he had previously complained he did not have anything to wear. For his lunch he had brought an Italian pasta salad from Tesco's and a yoghurt.

### ISABEL

Dressed the part in a long black skirt, white shirt, cardigan and white apron – she looked the part. Isabel was fairly quite during the day. She appeared to enjoy her time helping to clean Bessy's cottage.

### JALEELA

Not in today. Mrs Brookes mentioned she had said she and her family would be going to the mosque as it was the anniversary of her Grandfathers death.

### CHARLOTTE

Dressed the part – long black skirt (made from a long piece of material and a safety pin) and top. She had also used a white pillowcase as an apron, folded over a belt (v.inventive). Charlotte was v.attentive during the sessions and listened to the mistress's instructions and information. She experienced some trouble whilst sewing her ribbon and asked me for assistance. She did not like touching the different materials used to make hats and especially avoided the beaver fur and rabbit felt (pulling a face when they came her way). The girls were shown how the machines worked together to create a hat –several stages were highlighted. Charlotte explained to me how one of the machines worked as I had been distracted by another pupil. Charlotte appeared to thoroughly enjoy cleaning Bessy's house and had a go at numerous different tasks, laughing throughout. She also seemed to enjoy her time in the stockroom. For her lunch, Charlotte brought a cream cheese bagel and apple juice, which she drank a little of.

#### **Tuesday 21/05/02 – Friday 24/05/02**

- ◆ No observation notes made during lessons
- ◆ Time spent collecting bio-data pertaining to focal children

### Week Eight

#### **Monday 27/05/02 – Friday 31/05/02**

- ◆ No observation notes made this week
- ◆ I spent time preparing materials for displays etc.
- ◆ Majority of lessons were unstructured e.g. design and technology (designing hats)

**TERM 3: WEEKS 9-14**

<b>OBSERVATIONAL RECORD SHEET</b>		
<b>WEEK</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>LESSONS</b>
Nine	Monday 10/06-Friday 14/06	General notes
Ten	Monday 17/06	Visit to the CCC
	Tuesday 18/06- Friday 21/06	General observation notes
Eleven	Monday 24/06	Visit to the CCC
Twelve	Monday 01/07 – Friday 05/07	No observation notes made
Thirteen	Monday 08/07 – Friday 12/07	No observation notes made
Fourteen	Monday 15/07 – Friday 19/07	No observation notes made

## Week Nine

**Monday 10/06/02 – Friday 14/06/02**

◆ General notes

This week I have spent most of my time in 6E consequently having little time to take observation notes in 6B. This was partly due to a change in role i.e. as of 10<sup>th</sup> June I was appointed support worker to Jane in 6E. So far she had attended school only for the morning sessions and would now be attending for the whole school day (the afternoon sessions consist of unstructured lessons). Also I visited the Hattie museum (10<sup>th</sup> June 2002) and the CCC (13<sup>th</sup> June 2002) with 6E and I took time off to attend the faculty research conference at MMU on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2002.

Helen Redpath (Beth's mum) will take my place as a classroom assistant in 6B during Tuesday and Thursday afternoon sessions.

### ROBERTO

No observations notes made. Roberto returned the slip from the letter requesting that I meet up and talk with his parents/carers

### ISABEL

Isabel went on holiday abroad on Tuesday with her family.

### JALEELA

No observations notes made. Jaleela sought confirmation as to whether her dad 'had' to come and meet up with me. I told her that he did not have to but I would like it if he could.

### CHARLOTTE

Charlotte was off school on Monday coming back from her holiday abroad.

I worked alongside her group during the design and technology session (one hour) – making hats. The group had previously come up with a hat design, which their group would make. Each colour group in the class had designed a hat (the materials available were shown before hand to the class) and were spending time creating it. Charlotte tried to delegate tasks to other group members, who generally ignored her. She asked one member to go on the computer and design the eagle motive to go on the hat; three members went to do it. She continually asked for assistance (from myself) in cutting the hat to size (she stretched the material over another members head, who 'posed' as a

model) pinning it and sewing it. I was unsure how to go about it (I have never attempted to make a hat before) and made up each step as I went along. Charlotte asked me to start her off and show her how to sew and then she continued, seeking continual reassurance throughout; other members also had a go at sewing. Charlotte usually works independently and I was surprised that she asked for assistance throughout the activity and stated several times that she did not know what to do.

## Week Ten

### Monday 17/06/02

- ◆ Visit to the CCC

Visit to the CCC: the session was took by Mrs. Brookes. The appropriate science program had not been installed on the computers and the children began work for the Roseberry Hill files instead. Initially the children were supposed to begin some science work provided by Greenwood (transition work) that would be continued in year seven.

### ROBERTO

Roberto asked for assistance throughout the session and remarked I was 'sexist' if I went to help a girl before going to him; he was rather loud and received attention from the boys, sat in close proximity to him as he did this. He did not know what to write about, so I suggested writing something about one of the year six trips, he decided to write about the trip to Tintwistle and asked if he could comment on the mass of sheep droppings there were. He repeatedly made comments about clowns and escaping from the circus re: me teaching juggling to several children for the year six production.

### CHARLOTTE

Charlotte wrote a recipe for summer drinks i.e. the equivalent of a slush puppy. She asked for assistance on a couple of occasions. Alongside her best friend, she chatted with me, especially on the way back to school.

When I asked about her parents coming to talk with me, she seemed to get agitated and said 'I have to organise it.'

### JALEELA

Jaleela chatted with me a little on the way there. She appears more distant with me now and increasingly hangs round with her friendship group in the class (all Asian girls) who form a definite clique with 6B.

### ISABEL

Isabel is away on holiday all week this week.

### Tuesday 18/06/02 – Friday 21<sup>st</sup> June

- ◆ General observation notes

### ROBERTO

Roberto has been chatty with me this week. His comments are increasingly cheeky and he does not appear to know when to stop. He is aware he would not say some things that he does to me, to Mrs. Brookes (as I asked him directly).

On Wednesday morning, the school put on an I.C.T. morning, where parents were invited to see the children working on computers. Mrs. Brookes chose Roberto and Charlotte to work together and produce a power point presentation on 'racism' – they produced an excellent presentation and received a classroom assistant award for 'your communication and cooperation skill resulting in outstanding teamwork'.

On Friday morning when the school had the opportunity to watch the world cup football match between England and Brazil, Roberto and his best friend chose not to watch it. Initially he went into Mrs Brookes's class and then came in with Miss Holt and myself – with his friend, they worked on the ventriloquist part of the year six production. They asked for assistance as they were struggling with the script – I gave them a couple of joke books to look through and get some ideas. Again he made cheeky remarks – when I remark to him, that he is taking it too far, he stops.

### **Sponsored walk**

Roberto dressed up as a bunny! All the money raised would be divided between the school and Barnardos.

### **CHARLOTTE**

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She has not mentioned her parents coming in to talk with me and I have not brought it up again – I don't want to appear too pushy and it seems to be a touchy subject. On Thursday afternoon, Mrs. Leahy worked in 6B as the new classroom assistant. She worked only with red group on their group hat (the rest of the class were split up and out into different classes, as Mrs. Brookes went out on a Indian music trip). Charlotte and Tracy were 'the only ones in the group to assist, whilst the others ignored Mrs. Leahy, she commented 'it was as if I wasn't really there.'

### **Sponsored walk**

Charlotte dressed up as a hippie alongside her best friend, whose mother had made them both the same hippie top.

### **JALEELA**

I would say the majority of children are increasingly losing interest in lessons at the moment. Jaleela's listening skills in Literacy were outstanding and she participated in the lesson more than she normally does and more than any other pupil in the class – as a consequence she also received more positive attention from Mrs. Brookes.

I have observed Jaleela 'hangs round' with the same girls in the class and they have formed a strong friendship group e.g. that frequently sit together at break. When she first came into the year I recall at times, her commenting that she did not have any friends in the class. She is not as 'chatty' with me anymore, although I spend less time in her class now. Moreover, I do not sit with my regular group during literacy anymore (which included her) – the focus is on more independent work and I assist those children who ask for it in the class. In one literacy lesson this week, I observed she asked for help with questions alongside her friend who she was sat next to – they were working together.

Jaleela seems to prioritise finishing the work that is set, I have observed she rushes through it and I personally think that it is not to her best standard. This is evident in several areas of her work e.g. untidy designing/drawing/colouring or when I worked alongside her during literacy, I observed she chose to write very brief answers, with little detail that sometimes only answered part of the

question. When I would bring this to her attention, she would sigh and sometimes add to it and other times leave it. I think it is still evident that Jaleela rushes through the majority of her work.

### **Sponsored walk**

I am not sure what Jaleela dressed up as, it appeared that she was in her own clothes rather than in a role as a character.

### **ISABEL**

Isabel is away on holiday all week this week.

## **Week Eleven**

### **Monday 24<sup>th</sup> June**

◆ Visit to the CCC

Visit to the CCC: the session was took by Mrs. Brookes. The appropriate science program had been installed on the computers and the children began work on it. Unfortunately the children could only read information on the screen and were unable to write in answers to questions posed – Mrs Brookes decided they could write the answers out on paper and would copy it out in the booklets, back at school. After several tasks listed by Mrs. Brookes they continued with their work on the Roseberry Hill files... poems; reviews of visits; word searches and 'goodbye year six' pages.

### **ROBERTO**

Roberto called out and put his hand up for assistance throughout the session – he made remarks if I did not go and assist him immediately. When I remarked that he was v.demanding, he remarked that was how he got things in life (not word for word). He worked v.slowly alongside his friend and they spent the best part of the lesson laughing and messing about. I observed Roberto looked at the 'written in' answers on the computer rather than working them out for himself (by reading the accompanying text)– I commented that he would not learn this way.

They did not sit in their 'usual place' in the room as other pupils had sat there and they were initially disgruntled. Once he had completed the tasks on the science program, he continued with his review of the trip to Tintwistle. He asked for assistance re: the illustrations and I advised him to choose individual pictures from clip art rather than scenic pictures, as the pages would be copied in black and white ink; explaining they would look best if they were simple rather than detailed.

During break the boys played football and afterwards Roberto complained that another boy in the class was calling everyone 'shit'. The other boy heard Roberto telling me and went to confront him, Roberto repeated what he had said to me; the boy then bumped into him purposefully. I relayed Roberto's comments on to Mrs. Brookes who said she would keep her eye out – she did not seem too bothered.

Roberto was repeatedly cheeky in the way that he spoke to me this morning - not malicious, but continually pushing me. When I told him that he was taking it too far and to stop or 'tone it down' he backed off. He chose to talk with me at break and during the morning session.

### **CHARLOTTE**

Charlotte asked for assistance whilst working on the science program. As she worked through the questions, she did not need help but appeared to enjoy the attention as I read the questions aloud – she answered each verbally. Some questions were based on a video they had watched and she remembered the answers without any assistance (including the answers 'written in' on the program). She continued to write her summer drinks recipes – she commented that she did not know of another recipe. Her friend suggested a smoothie (explaining how to do it) and I suggested

a milkshake (going off her friends suggestion). She opted for the milkshake recipe and finished it during the session.

Although her partner (and best friend) walked and chatted with me on the way there, Charlotte chose to walk with Roberto and his partner – there method of communication appeared to be bickering.

#### **JALEELA**

Jaleela was off school today.

#### **ISABEL**

Isabel is away on holiday all week this week.

***No further observations made this week (Tuesday 25/06/02 – Friday 28/06/02)***

<b>APPENDIX</b> <b>4.P</b>	<b>INTERVIEW SCHEDULES</b>
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Each participant was presented with a copy of the topic cues at the outset of the interview.

#### ***i) Headteacher***

- Research contextualisation and completion of research contract
- School philosophy
- How children learn
- How do you think your role contributes towards the goal of helping children to learn?
- LEA and government policies – how do these impact upon the school?
- Role of SATs
- Strengths and areas to be developed within the school
- The way forward

#### ***ii) Year 6 teaching staff***

- Research contextualisation
- The role of the teacher/classroom assistant
- How children learn (general to specific)
  - 6B: Charlotte, Isabel, Jaleela and Roberto
  - 6E: Beth, Daniel, Leanne and Tariq
- Teaching style (strengths and limitations)
- Roles of SATs
- The role of LEA and government policies
- The way forward

#### ***iii) Parents/carers***

- Research contextualisation and completion of research contract
- Parental thoughts about school
- How learning occurs
- Wider influences on a child's learning

**iv) School Governing Body Representative**

- Research contextualisation and completion of research contract
- The role of the governing body
- Target setting: percentage of children to acquire a level four in the SATs
- What strengths and limitations do the governing body offer to the school?
- LEA and government policies – how do these impact upon the school?
- How do you think the role of the governing body contributes towards the goal of helping children to learn?

**v) Link Advisor**

- Research contextualisation and completion of research contract
- About the participant
- The role and function of the LEA
- Lea policies
- The impact of LEA and government policies upon children's experiences in the classroom and wider school space
- The strengths and limitations that the LEA offers the school

**Appendix****4.Q****Interviews with teaching staff****INTERVIEW WITH YEAR 6 TEACHER: MRS EASTWOOD****Date:** 25/03/2002**Location:** Helen's house**Key:** Helen (H); Mrs Gillian Eastwood (G)

- H: Okay, so it's going to be an informal discussion, so please just chip in when you want to. You are the expert, because I'm the researcher and I am learning about your role, okay?
- G: (Interrupting) No, I don't like the word expert.
- H: Well, expert on your life experience, can I say that?
- G: (Pause) ... I don't like the word expert
- H: Alright
- G: I just think... it's just that
- H: Okay fair enough.
- G: 'cos I'm a learner too.
- H: Err
- G: I might know more than you, but I am not an expert.
- H: Okay. So it's going to be about teaching and learning,
- G: Right.
- H: And how you think about them.
- G: Right.
- H: Okay, so how long have you been teaching?
- G: Eight years.
- H: And have you spent all those years at Roseberry Hill Primary School?
- G: Yeah.
- H: I didn't know that. How would you describe the area in which the school is situated?
- G: (Pause) I thought you were going to ask me about the classroom err ... you live here (Helen and Mrs Eastwood laugh). Sorry, I didn't expect that... err well it's very mixed isn't it? Do you mean the area or the area that serves the school as far as the children coming to that school? What do you mean?
- H: Both

G: Both? Well its very pleasant err... lovely environment for children, a safe environment err, not many schools have playing fields like ours

H: No

G: I don't think the children realise that. They would get quite a shock if they went to some of the schools and saw (name of another area)

H: Yeah

G: The area where I live (name) is just concrete. Err most parents are quite well off but not all, 'cos there is different catchment areas

H: Right

G: And some children come from further a field than this area.

H: Yeah

G: Some come from quite a way away, (names an area) to come to school

H: And how does that work? Do the children choose? Would they just apply to go to the school?

G: The children apply to go to school and there is this rule about being a certain radius from the school, err but if we are not full, they take children outside that radius. And also, even if we are full and they go to appeal, children can get into school as well, on appeal. One lad just has.

H: Daniel lives quite far.

G: Daniel lives in (names the area)

H: How did he get a place? Because that is quite far

G: I should imagine that Daniel, his Mum will have just applied to this school 'cos she wanted to take him out of (name's areas). Because we had a place available because we didn't have enough numbers,

H: Oh right

G: People can automatically have a place as long as we have got one free.

H: So do you have a certain amount of numbers to fill?

G: Yeah

H: In Year 6?

G: Yeah

H: Do you know what they are?

G: Thirty

H: Thirty?

G: But we do go over that as well. If you go over... thirty one, you can if you wanted to, get the union involved then to say you have too many children in your classroom. Nobody ever has done though. But that's less, that's just Year 6, its less lower down the school, I think its twenty-five in KS1.

H: Why is it more in Year 6?

G: I think the younger the children are, they need more ratio peer adult.

H: Right

G: I don't know quite why, it's to do with space as well.

H: Right. So how long have you been teaching in Year 6?

G: Four years.

H: What other school years did you teach in?

G: I have taught in Year 3 here but I've done full teaching practices in different years.

H: Right and... can you tell me what the ethos of the school is, or what you believe the ethos of the school is?

G: Well, it is based on equal opportunity about giving every child, fulfilling every child's right to an education for them individually... tailored to them individually.

H: Okay so that was just a bit of background information.

G: Mm, right.

H: Okay, so I am going to go on to teaching now, okay?

G: Right

H: Start in general and then focus in on you more.

G: Yeah, okay.

H: So in general how would you define the role of a teacher?

G: In general, so you want lots of different roles or a role 'cos its not a role you see or are you looking for the fact that teachers are to educate children?

H: Err (Mrs Eastwood laughs) you can tell me about the multiple roles if you want.

G: I suppose err... is this my role or a teacher's role?

H: Generally a teacher's role.

G: Generally a teacher's role... is to educate children, I mean not just academically but socially as well.

H: Right, okay. So what would you say is your role within that school?

G: In my Year 6 teaching role?

H: You have several roles within the school don't you? So your Year 6 teaching role is to educate the children...

G: Yeah.

H: Socially and academically.

G: Yeah, to serve the children. A lot of people wouldn't say that but I think mine is to serve the children.

H: What do you mean by that?

G: Well, if you say you're going to educate kids, you've got this thing that you've got something in your head and you're going to fill them with facts and different things, but you have got to find out what children need.

H: Right.

G: And so I, I mean I prefer the word to serve which I should imagine quite a lot of people would laugh about it. It is... so valuable are children and you've got to make. I mean they have a year with me we are just talking about me. And in that year with me I do my very best for them educationally, socially and personally... and I don't know why I'm saying that (laughing).

H: What are your other roles within the school?

G: Err... oh management roles, Head of KS2, the roles within the different management roles, I have different jobs as well. Like anything to do with, any new forms that are to be developed, anything to do with I.T.

H: Right

G: That isn't teaching, that is a management role I take, I do that now.

H: Isn't there an ICT co-ordinator?

G: Yeah, but that's curriculum.

H: Oh right.

G: Management side of it is different. I do the management side of I.T.

H: So do the management and the Year six teaching role, ever, you know clash or are they ever in conflict?

G: They are never in conflict, no.

H: Right

G: No, 'cos teaching comes first whenever I am in school.

H: Right

G: It has to take priority, children in the classroom really have to take priority, although at times, yeah, yeah. A little bit difficult this isn't it? I didn't realize.

H: (Laughing)

G: Yeah, yeah its just, I mean thinking about it really I should have thought about it all before, I'd prefer to answer this in writing

H: Oh well I can give you the questions if you want.

G: I mean you'd get a better response

H: Okay

G: From me if I did it in writing

H: Right

G: And I could think about it.

H: Okay, do you mind if we carry on with this anyway?

G: Oh cause you can, yeah.

H: Then I'll give you the questions

G: Yeah you can use this as well whatever's said

H: Okay

G: But I would like to do it better than I am doing it now, 'cos I'd like to be able to think about it.

H: Alright, I should have given you more of an idea of the areas I wanted to discuss with you beforehand

G: I should have asked for them, yeah.

H: Err do you feel that the ethos of the school encourages or hinders your teaching?

G: No it encourages me. The ethos of the school encourages me, my teaching.  
H: How does it encourage you?  
G: Because... if you just take positive behaviour discipline, which is a big, I've not even mentioned, which is a big err area within the school.  
H: Mm  
G: I believe that positive behaviour change, positive behaviour management  
H: Mm  
G: Changes children's opinions about themselves and if you can change children's feelings about themselves and make them feel good about themselves, I reckon they learn better and I have seen it work. I mean, I really know it works, if you carry it out consistently and fairly  
H: Mm  
G: Got to be fairly done and consistently, both of them yeah, then it works and once you have got children liking themselves and wanting to learn, the rest of it does become easier.  
H: How do you get them to want to learn though?  
G: Success isn't it?  
H: Mm  
G: If you're successful, its not just success, its success with a challenge 'cos you have children in school that are successful anyway. They are always at the top of the class, every class they go in. There is no use denying that, you know people say they don't know when they're sat in these groups, whether they are top or not  
H: Mm  
G: But they know. I mean I knew when I was at school and err so with them you've got to present... they already like learning or they like being good and they like, they are used to the praise.  
H: Mm  
G: They like more of that and you have got to do something different and finding a way into that. Like they love, like if you make mistakes, they love it. So you can make them deliberately  
H: Right  
G: So their challenge is there. But with other children that have never... that have been at the bottom of the pile, for want of better words,  
H: Mm  
G: I mean don't use that phrase (laughing) but for the children that haven't had success in school  
H: Mm  
G: And people would say that they all do, there is success for them all, there isn't.  
H: Mm  
G: There is children that each time they get their book back, think oh no, not again or I can sit there and count (unclear word) and there is children by the time they get to Year 6, that have learnt as you've seen, to be seen to look like they are listening and they are not listening.  
H: Yeah  
G: So you have got to awaken something in them  
H: Right  
G: And it might be by making them feel better about themselves, making them know that they can achieve and succeed, nothing breeds success like success, as somebody once said.  
H: Mm  
G: It's true and err... I'm getting parents' involved with that, informing parents and all members of your staff within the class and within school and encouraging and behaviour... if kids are always told off and always shouted at, they, they loose interest in school so they loose interest in you. They are not interested in their work either.  
H: Mm  
G: So you have got to improve that haven't you?  
H: Yeah  
G: Before you can even start learning. That's why I say to serve, that's why I use the phrase to serve, because you have got to find out what they need and service and give them the requirements that they need.  
H: So you have to work on the behaviour before you can work on...

G: Its not just behaviour it might be behaviour, you have to work on what the problem is.

H: Right

G: It might be behaviour, it might be poor self image and nothing to do with behaviour.

H: Mm

G: You can have children with poor self-image that are as good as gold err but they still don't think they can achieve.

H: Mm

G: The only way they have found to achieve is by being good but you have got to look at them academically as well.

H: Mm

G: So you've got to look at, so you have got to look at individual needs and see what makes a child tick and what can make it move on.

H: Is it difficult to look at individual needs? Because there are, say there are thirty children in the class, you know like time constraints and the time you get to spend with them.

G: Its difficult, no it is not difficult to look at individual needs, in the sense that to find out what each child needs to motivate them or what each yeah that, oh to find out what every child needs to motivate them is a little bit time consuming but it's achievable.

H: Mm

G: People tend to think that when you say individual needs, that you have got to give every child a piece of individual work.

H: Mm

G: I'm not talking about that. I am talking about them personally and finding out what makes them work, what makes them, what they enjoy, and what you can, that makes them start working themselves. So then you can group children in groups to give work and stretch others.

H: Right, okay. Err this is going back to this now, which is a bit off the track. Err do you feel that there is any practical limitations to your teaching role?

G: Time, time and err... I think time is a big one because you get so tired 'cos you have so much work to do outside school or I do

H: Mm

G: 'Cos...perhaps it is me, I find difficult as you know, marking in class. I find it difficult to sit down at my desk

H: Mm

G: And ignore what's going on around me. I cannot do that.

H: Mm

G: Whereas some people can do that, sit at their desk, mark work and I won't criticise them

H: Mm

G: Because that is how they manage things.

H: Mm

G: I can't do anything within the classroom, I just can't do it. So I have all that to do after school. I suppose I am just tired sometimes, I suppose, that is what restricts me, is tiredness.

H: Right. Do you think that the time you have in the school day, the structure of the day is okay? You know the amount of time you have teaching them?

G: Err... I think so yeah. I don't know I have never really thought of it. I think mornings is better for teaching

H: Right

G: Because children are more alert in the morning when they come in, they are more receptive to what you are doing in the morning. Whether it is that because that's how school is geared

H: Mm

G: Particularly now with numeracy and literacy

H: Mm

G: That you do that every morning so that right, they know they work and then you do other activities in the afternoon that aren't so concentrated. So perhaps it's us that make it like that

H: Mm

G: Rather than it being like that, rather than it being children that aren't that attentive in the afternoon

H: Mm

G: It might be that the way we structure it makes them like that.

H: Are the lessons in the morning, do you think, more structured than the ones in the afternoon?

G: Oh, definitely, yeah. And they are like that in every class I would say, but I think that's numeracy and literacy

H: Mm

G: So we, from right from early on, we get them into the habit of your mornings work and you have activities in an afternoon. So perhaps we give the wrong impression.

H: Okay, now I wasn't quite sure how to phrase this, but how do you approach teaching, how do you go about it, are there different methods that you use to teach?

G: Different strategies you use

H: Mm

G: Within teaching. I don't... well I plan for it, its planning and you have got to use different ones and I do. I do lots of reflexive writing.

H: Right

G: In the file we have, evaluation file, have you seen the file? Have I shown it you? Have you ever?

H: No

G: Oh I should show it you then 'cos people use it differently 'cos I mark other people's files now

H: Right

G: Which is very interesting 'cos I see how different people are or how differently the files are done. You do your lessons each week and Kath (the Head Teacher) likes to see an evaluation of your numeracy and literacy.

H: Mm

G: Well, I suppose whatever you want to really and I choose to do personal err personal and social in the class and teaching of specific lessons, whether things have gone right or gone wrong, or how I could improve things. So I do spend a lot of time reflecting to change the strategies if something hasn't worked. And again I suppose I spend a lot of time on that outside school

H: Mm... so did you come up with that idea?

G: Of reflecting? No, that is how I was taught to do it at err (name of the university)

H: Oh right, in teaching training.

G: In the teacher training, yeah. It was brilliant. I did educational studies there... which I really enjoyed

H: Mm

G: Because you did talk about the teaching. You've got to learn how to do things err strategies and different things, but the idea is to look at what you are doing yourself and reflect upon it and how could you change it, how could you make it better, how did it work, how could you, if it worked, how could you use that in some of your other teaching.

H: Oh right

G: And looking at other peoples teaching is brilliant and going on courses. I wish I could go on more courses

H: Mm

G: Although it's annoying within the classroom. You do get ideas and that's when you have other people in. In fact just doing this, the fact that you can talk about it helps develop strategies and you've got to use all different ones obviously 'cos it would be dead boring if you didn't.

H: Mm

G: You'd be a boring teacher. People... children learn things in different ways.

H: When you say children learn things in different ways

G: Yeah

H: Were you aware of that when you first came into teaching?

G: Yeah, yeah

H: Were you taught that or did you just know?

G: Some of it you are taught, but I do think I have always had, sounds pompous that. I do think I have always had an ability to understand even when I was small

H: Mm

G: When I was small, you know I used to have all kids in garden, I'll be doing stuff with them then, you know, telling them stories and things... and I think, yeah, I can relate to kids.

H: What kind of different ways to you think children learn?

G: The multisensory approach

H: Is that the technique that you try to use in your lessons?

G: Yeah it is doing things in different ways and one of, ah, one of the ways that is brilliant is if you are explaining, take maths 'cos you know that's my subject really. But if you take maths and you are explaining something to a child, the point that I make to them that if they don't understand it, it's my fault

H: Mm

G: Not their fault, that I haven't explained it 'cos children tend to think they're stupid because they don't understand, when it's the teacher really at fault.

H: Mm

G: Well I think that a lot but (unclear word) I do. And then if you can get another child to come explain what you're saying, they do it ever so well, you know

H: Mm

G: And you learn from that, you know. We say things like prime numbers, an excellent example the other day. I said every child in the class should know what a prime number was. And one child said, well I know it's, a number can divide by itself and one and I said, ah that's right, but I have no idea what that means (laughing). So you know, you think 'cos you can repeat the phrase

H: Mm

G: They understand what you have told them, but its not, you've got to challenge that, well explain to me what it means.

H: Mm

G: And then another child came to the board and just did the factors and gave the definition, if a number has only got two factors in it, it is a prime number.

H: Right

G: I'd never even thought of that

H: Mm

G: And if you don't give the children opportunity, not just children, adults as well, opportunity to show you things and see it in a different manner... err then you don't learn yourself do you? You're learning, that's what I said before, I'm learning all the time that's why I never like the word expert

H: Right

G: Because you are learning... and if I wasn't learning I give up doing it I think. But you can't get into a child's mind and see what they're seeing or you, they can't get into your mind should I say and expect you to see what you're seeing

H: Mm

G: Unless you sometimes physically shown them which you can do, but you can't always do that.

H: Mm

G: So you've got to work out a way of discussing and the moment they say 'ah' you know the ah, ah factor you know (Helen laughs) they've got it and its brilliant when a kid says I understand that now and you think thank god for that (Mrs Eastwood and Helen laugh). Stuff like that, its brilliant.

H: Okay. Err... what expectations do you have as a teacher, of the children in your class?

G: High expectations, I really do. Perhaps sometimes I think perhaps they are too high (laughs) expectations. I don't know, I don't know, but perhaps I feel sometimes I do challenge children too much, perhaps I am expecting too much. But they always surprise you and err

H: Like you said before, is challenging children one of your ways of getting them to learn?

G: Oh yeah, it's the only way to get them to learn in a sense. Challenging and explaining and having fun and enjoying it and making mistakes and letting them know you're vulnerable instead of, you know. And getting them, I mean, see you have got me talking now. I mean there is this big thing now that called 'accelerated learning.'

H: Mm

G: And one of the things that has come out of that is that children don't like asking questions. And, oh I don't like saying they don't, I don't understand.

H: Mm

G: So now you give them a disk and they can turn this to either green if they understand or red if they don't and then you can be behind and see them, which everybody thinks is wonderful and I didn't. I got quite involved because I think you should teach children not to be embarrassed to ask questions and not to be ashamed that they can't do something. Doing it like that is teaching them that there is something to be hidden away

H: Mm

G: And that you know, alright you're not making a fuss but you're not teaching them there's nothing wrong with not knowing or not understanding and you've got to allow them to know that.

H: Mm

G: You know I really believe that.

H: You mean you, everyone else in the school though it was a good idea?

G: Not everybody but quite a few people did. Kathryn (the Head Teacher) to be obeyed thought it was and she couldn't understand my point of view. She said, but some children are shy and don't want to do that and said yes, but I think you can alter that in children.

H: Mm

G: If you can make the environment safe and secure for them, so that they know they're not going to be ridiculed and so that they understand that you're pleased if they tell you, if you say to them... no... they'll know I'll be pleased if they tell me they don't understand

H: Mm

G: Rather than upset if they keep it to themselves. They know it's safe for them to tell me

H: Yeah

G: All kids will ask, they all will, you know. Even if they don't ask at the time, alright, there's a bit of privacy they'll come back and ask you, but eventually they'll ask you. Whereas if you have got it with a card and you're not telling me that people aren't goner say, turn the card over again

H: Mm

G: And it's obvious then. I don't see why you have to hide that you don't understand, I don't... I can't, that's what I can't understand.

H: Mm. A lot of children, I think children now in your class put there hand up a lot more than when they first came to the class.

G: Yeah

H: And compared to the other class as well, more children put their hand up.

G: I would never let a child be ridiculed who's in my class, which they can be for saying something silly. If a child gives a silly answer which other people deem silly

H: Mm

G: Or appears to be, I will always say well, yeah, I can see your point, and I will always try to make out that, try and find a way of making out that that wasn't a silly answer, I could see where it came from and it was great that you had an answer rather than sitting there and saying (unclear word) unfortunately that won't carry on... always

H: No. Err... do you have any expectations of the children regarding err abilities?

G: In what way?

H: Do you think that they should be at a certain level?

G: National curriculum says they should be

H: What Level do they say they should be at?

G: Level 4 so, at least

H: Level 4, when they leave your year or when they come into your year?

G: Err... when they leave I suppose. The average, word I don't like again but, you know if you see the thing on the television, they expect every child to come out of my year with a Level 4, but you'd expect a lot of Level 5's in that. And then again, we have children with a lot less Levels than that. I would think, I would say that if a child isn't at the sort of top end of Level 3 when it comes into Year 6

H: Mm

G: Something should have been done,

H: Right

G: As far as referral to special needs.

H: Mm

G: Not that the kid is special needs, but the kid is having problems, that we have to find out why he's having problems long before they get to Year 6.

H: Mm, does it frustrate you, because I know there have been examples where children have come into your year and it hasn't previously been acknowledged, you know, that they are having difficulties.

G: Yeah, I can't understand why it hasn't been acknowledged. You know I mean some people, perhaps I'm wrong, I don't expect that children can't do, that they are lower ability, you know unless they have got a problem. Alright we can't all be Level 5's and above,

H: Mm

G: But we should be all at Level 3, we should be all at Level 4's I think by the time we get to Year 6, because I don't think low end of level four, I don't think that's demanding.

H: Right

G: So I would expect children to be at that and to achieve that. To have to achieve that to go on to the next school

H: Right

G: 'Cos going on to secondary, if we haven't picked them up by then, they're going to struggle at the next school aren't they?

H: Mm. But if they are coming into your class lower than a Level 3, do you not think it is difficult to pull them up to the Level 4?

G: I don't think, yeah oh it's terribly difficult and if they came in at a Level 2, I'd be happy if I got them to a Level 3. But not 'cos of the Levels, I am only talking about Levels 'cos of this, err but for their own sake, to even start to achieve at the next school.

H: Okay

G: Children aren't, they can all read

H: Mm

G: Which I think is brilliant, the fact that they can all read. What upsets me as well, is that English is targeted more than mathematics and if a kid with, it appears to be, that children with lower ability in maths or poor, not low but really poor standard

H: Mm

G: What I think they come into Year 6, if they aren't knowing what add means and subtract

H: Mm

G: You know I would have expected that to have been picked up.

H: Mm

G: I'd have picked that up in year 3 three when I was a Year 3 teacher... you know.

H: Why do you think it's not picked up?

G: Err why do I think its not picked up? I don't know, I don't know. Perhaps...I don't know, perhaps until it gets to Year 6 the gap isn't wide enough.

H: Right, mm

G: I don't know, that's, I don't know, having not worked in other years it's difficult to say.

H: Okay err, regarding the behaviours that you value and promote in your class, one of the things you've mentioned is children, you know you encourage them to put their hand up. Are there any other err things you promote in your class... behaviours.

G: Well its actual engagement in learning. Well it's got to be, if you can't engage your children in whatever you are doing, you might and well give up. You know quite honestly because if they are not engaged in it, they're not taking part, they're not learning.

H: How do you spot the children? 'Cos some children do sit there and it looks like they are listening and you know they are looking at you, looking in your direction and it looks like they are listening

G: Yeah

H: But how do you know that they are not listening. How do you pick it up or how did you pick it up?

G: How do you pick? Well you question them all the time don't you and you do pick up straight, I don't know it's something you do, do. You pick up straightaway the children that... it's work, it's everything innt it? It's the work you get in, it's talking to them. The most significant thing is when you set them off to do a task and they've no idea what the task is

H: Right

G: And whether they're copying everybody else's, kids that copy.

H: Mm

G: Kids have learnt to sit there, as we know, you know, sit there as if they're engaged and quite happy and you think aren't they good. And they give you a book and you can mark the book and the book can have all the right answers in, tick, tick, tick. And then when you question them they can't do it

H: Mm

G: 'Cos they've copied off other people. It's a lot of factors really, but you have to pick up on it and they can't answer the... if you get to the point where you say... 'Cos at the beginning of the year I always say it doesn't matter if you can't answer a question, you've got to be able to repeat the question. If you can't repeat the question they're not engaged in their learning are they?

H: No. Err, okay, what do you feel your strengths are as a teacher? (Mrs Eastwood groans) I sense you will find this difficult to answer because you are so critical of yourself

G: Err... perhaps the fact that I am critical of myself

H: Right

G: And...

H: Of yourself or of your teaching methods?

G: Me teaching methods, as a teacher, because if the children aren't understanding it's got to be my fault, hasn't it

H: In your opinion...

G: Yeah, well yeah, I mean unless they've got a problem if you're building on knowledge they've already got perhaps they haven't sometimes you pick it up. You've got to reflect on what you are doing

H: Mm

G: It's not a job that you can't

H: Mm

G: Reflect on and change things. It'd just be organised chaos if you, well it'd either be organised chaos or it'd be totally boring. So I think that the fact that I do reflect on the work and that I am never satisfied really.

H: Right

G: Err... I'm quite organised although having said that, as well.

H: Very organised

G: (Laughing) I am yeah, you've got to be organised, you've got to know what you are doing. You know the lessons yourself and everybody has them, that go wrong, they're usually 'cos you haven't organised them yourself properly.

H: Do you plan for every single lesson?

G: (Mrs Eastwood shakes her head to imply no, laughing) Err...yeah most, mainly. There might be an occasion when you don't err yeah but you've got to plan for every lesson really

H: Okay, what areas do you feel you could improve upon as a teacher?

G: Mm, every one, every one, err... everything

H: Okay, the main ones

G: Main ones, oh I'm sorry. But you're always striving to improve in what you're doing. One I am most comfortable with but one I always want to improve is maths and ICT. Err, what, I have forgotten the question now, Helen.

H: Areas to improve upon

G: Oh, areas to improve upon. I'd like to improve on them all, but yeah but I'm competent, so confident, I'm confident in maths and IT and D&T I am competent. Not competent, confident not competent.

H: What about in literacy?

G: Literacy I'd like to improve more because the literacy scheme has changed so much

H: Right

G: And I would like to do a course like I've just done the numeracy, I think I need updating a bit.

H: Right

G: I'd like to change literacy only 'cos I feel less confident in it. Err...

H: Science

G: Science I'd like to change, yeah, I need more, I'm doing that at the moment but it's because I haven't done the topics before.

H: Right

G: So its brand new topics, so you need, I need more practice at that.

H: Okay. So err were going on to how you have developed you're teaching style. So you've mentioned courses, that you've got ideas from courses.

G: Yeah, reading

H: Reading and do you observe other teachers' lessons?

G: Yeah, observing other teachers lessons that's best because I have done quite a lot err... I have only been at the school eight years as long as I have been teaching, but I've (starts counting) I have had six students in that time, in eight years I have had six students in the classroom from (names three local universities). So on all their courses I've been mentor

H: Oh right

G: I have actually been a mentor to them. And so you get all new up to date materials with that and I have been on mentor courses and different things, so that's quite...

H: I didn't know you did that, have you done that while I have been at Roseberry Hill?

G: Err... no I did Janet, err yeah I did Suzanne was the last one I did when she was an NQT. Where you there when Suzanne was there in Year 3? You were there weren't you?

H: Yeah

G: Yeah if we get any NQT's I've always been mentor for them for some reason

H: Do you err, you know suggest, put yourself forward?

G: No I don't, I'm always asked.

H: So what type of opportunities do you receive to develop and maintain your skills? So for example you have been on that maths course

G: You can go on courses

H: Are you given a lot of opportunity to go on courses or...

G: Well it's been quite difficult until this year, because until this year I had the IT role as well as the management role as well as teaching the classroom assistants, so and as mentor to the NQT year before. So time was a big factor, but now I am just management and class teacher, I'm going to ask to go on courses more

H: Right

G: 'Cos I do want to. The literacy course is the one I want to go on next

H: Right

G: Err so its courses, it's talking to colleagues, we have inset, regular inset you see

H: Right. Do you ask for the people to come in for those insets, can you specify whom you want?

G: Yeah, yeah we can do and we do, do and I have arranged insets. All staff have a go, you know if you are interested in one you can arrange insets as well so you can have speakers in. The big thing is, we always have a theme, of course it is gifted and talented and drama studies at the moment in school. I don't agree with it, well I do to a certain extent, but what they seem to do with gifted and talented kids is give them more of the opportunities they already have when it is the other ones that need the opportunity to make them...

H: Is it a big thing now in the government?

G: Well you get lots of money for it that's why. The school gets lots of money for it, it's political

H: Err you have just mentioned going on a literacy course.

H: Mm

G: Now, in Year 6 there are two classes with two teaches in. Can you describe your relationship between yourself and the other teacher in Year 6 in relation to the curriculum? For example who decides what framework to use and who will be responsible for different subjects. Isn't literacy Sophie's (Mrs Brookes)?

G: That's Sophie's now. It used to be... yeah, its Sophie's because Sophie is the literacy co-ordinator. I am link coordinator for numeracy. Oh, I should have said that's my job as well shouldn't I? I'm link coordinator numeracy 'cos I got my degree in numeracy and ICT

H: Right

G: Those were my two subjects. So I do the ICT, I do science and I do design and technology. Sophie does R.E. 'cos she goes to church on a Sunday (laughs). No 'cos she's more interested in that in R.E. than I am. No, well yeah, she is more interested I suppose. Sophie does music obviously because of her talent

H: Mm

G: So I do PE 'cos Sophie hates it and I don't mind doing PE. Err... so we split it up quite fairly I think, into what we like doing

H: Right

G: Or what we don't like doing I get to do (laughs)

H: So if Sophie does the literacy, why do you want to go on the literacy course?  
G: To improve my teaching, it's not the planning.  
H: Right  
G: Its, you go on courses...alright you might go on a course to find out about planning 'cos that's part of it. But one of the main reasons I want to go on a course is to be updated in developments  
H: Right  
G: To talk to other teachers who totally inspire you just by little sideways conversations that you have, that suggest different things and you think ah, that's great and you see videos and you do get time out to think.  
H: Mm  
G: You need time out to think and talk to other colleagues and argue. Strangely enough teachers, not argue discuss, but teachers, a lot of teachers don't like doing that.  
H: Mm  
G: I can't understand that. That's something I do miss about university. I used to like discussing things  
H: Mm  
G: And people not getting offended just 'cos you were saying a different point of view to them.  
H: Mm  
G: People tend to get a bit offended.  
H: Okay  
G: (Unclear) I don't mind (unclear word) them  
H: Right, how do you believe learning occurs?  
G: Engagement  
H: Engagement, so for example, is it within the child or is it in relation to others  
G: It can be yeah ... both  
H: Both?  
G: Yeah 'cos a child can be motivated to learn themselves and want to find out.  
H: Mm  
G: Now that might have been initiated by a teacher or another in the first place err... but it yeah, if you are talking about teaching I think I am different... it's biased (laughs)  
H: Because before when you were, when we were talking about learning  
G: Yeah  
H: You said if a child doesn't understand what you do on the board  
G: Yeah  
H: You ask another child to explain it. So... do you think it is in groups, it occurs in interaction as well?  
G: Oh god yeah, sorry, yeah course it does. Yeah, yeah, obviously it's talking to get, it's got to be, that's what mean I by engagement I think as well. Not just the actually physically doing something  
H: Mm  
G: But actually talking about it, 'cos I do this talking in pairs now and that brilliant. It really is ace.  
H: Is that when you ask them err to say what they've got to do for homework or?  
G: Yeah as well it's just.... say you take a main activity and you have explained the main activity and you think you have done it really well, you know. You have questioned children and some children can answer it and you think everybody learns and then I give them a sample of now whatever they've got to do  
H: Mm  
G: And they have to do that and talk to the other person and explain it, take turns and then you stop 'em. And then I say is there anybody that can't do that now and for first time, I mean it's one of the only first times, I'm getting lessons where they can start off and work on their own; which is something I have changed which is terrible after such a long time. But they are, you know, I think all teachers will say, you know we say right get on with it and then there's fifty million hands go up.  
H: Yeah  
G: But this talking in pairs where you're actually letting them physically have a go at doing it  
H: Mm  
G: And talk about it first, should always be included I think in anything.

H: Where was that idea from?

G: It was talking to Kathryn. Another teacher was doing it within school. It came of the literacy video, talking in pairs it's for literacy but I use it in every subject now.

H: Okay what circumstances or factors do you think promote or encourage learning? ...'cos I know for example in your class you give a lot of rewards don't you?

G: Yeah

H: Personal points and groups points and such like.

G: Well its activities inn't it? It's getting children involved in personal achievement. I have forgotten the question Helen, sorry ask me the question again

H: What things do you think promote or encourage learning?

G: Oh right. Personal achievement when they want to achieve for themselves. If you've got a task then you set them a target. Target setting is one of the main things, if you can set children targets in their books. Err... I like two-way communication between books not just marking work so you ask them a question so they've got to answer you, so they've gotta read back. Err... obviously reward systems, obviously motivational tasks, tasks that they get err... involved again this engagement, this is my big thing that they get involved with and want to learn, things that are fun and different. Err but also teaching collaboration and cooperation

H: Do you think that input from home is important?

G: Oh yeah, input from home is totally, without it you struggle. It doesn't mean it stops you, but err 'cos generally I'd say in most cases you get input from home. I mean it might not be input, the most important, the only input you really need, not the only that's wrong, but one of the best inputs is just reward at home as well. It doesn't have to be educational input 'cos you can help them. If it is it's great 'cos it makes teaching easier in a sense 'cos they already know facts and they can help other people and children working together and children you know, children as teachers. But parents at home if they're positive and want their children to succeed, but can't help them 'cos I've got quite a few parents who are second language learners

H: Mm

G: Not just second language learners but other ones that can't do the work that we're doing in Year 6 and that's fine, that's fair. People tend to forget that and think the parents don't care 'cos they can't, they don't help them, but they can't help 'cos they can't do it themselves. But if you have got a parent that err is positive and joins in with the reward systems, it's great.

H: Mm, okay, this is last one. I've got a few more things to discuss but we are running short of time.

G: I will write it out

H: Err, how do you manage the diversity amongst pupils in your class?

G: Diversity in learning?

H: Abilities.

G: Abilities? ...Yeah you manage it by. You do start at a... It's not so bad though I mean if you're starting a new topic, a new area, there isn't any children in my class that don't have problems learning.

H: Right

G: I don't feel... I don't think there is any children

H: What about if someone said, what about those of higher ability

G: Yeah but, you can extend, to extend... I did feel last year that I wasn't extending the more able children so I have focused on that in this year and I've found it is quite easy to challenge the more able err...

H: Do you feel you challenge them?

G: Yeah you can challenge them quite easily if you challenge them individually as well you know, your target setting and what I realised about teaching is, any year group, whatever year group you are teaching, most of the topics are new for the children

H: Right

G: So you can start at a level that people have this thing that you start at a middle level.

H: Mm

G: You don't have to start, you start at a new point you know, so you are starting across the board to everybody. You don't have to make it too easy, you know, you start across the board and you can challenge it and actually the more able children will bring things out that

challenge you within the lesson. They challenge themselves really 'cos they question you as long as... I think the most important thing is questioning

H: In a lot of classes, do you feel that children are encouraged to challenge, because that's one of the things ...

G: (Interrupting) I don't, I don't know, I can't say about other classes

H: When they first came into your class did they challenge you?

G: No

H: So it is something you have encouraged?

G: Yeah, yeah

H: Okay. We will have to stop because we have gone over the time we agreed. Thanks for agreeing to be interviewed.

G: It's alright

*A second interview was carried out in order to discuss some further issues which were not touched upon in the first interview. Because of the noisy atmosphere I made written notes.*

**Date:** 08/07/2002

**Location:** Café of Gillian's choice

### **SATs**

The SATs are compulsory and cover three subjects: English, maths and science. Gillian felt that children in Year 6 were too young to take the SAT's and that they were damaging in terms of the self-fulfilling prophecy, as they tell children that they are or that they are not capable of doing things. She said that the SAT's tell children their level and the children are then streamed from the infants. Sophie (Mrs Brookes) sometimes groups her children according to ability and sits them together in the class. Gillian chooses not to as she thinks *'it's not conducive to learning'* because if children are streamed, *'then they do not have a model to aspire to because they work at the level of a given group. The children do not think they can go beyond the group's boundaries.'* Gillian stated the *'can do'* group thus *'becomes the voice of the class in the room and others learn to be quiet.'* She noted that children who are streamed become *'disenchanted'* by education because they know they can't achieve, as they have no goals. The average result expected in the SATs is Level 4; thus the Level 3 label is below average. Gillian noted that each child enters secondary school with a label, adding that it was not good to start at a secondary school with failure (i.e. Level 3). She suggests teacher assessment is the alternative to the SATs. Gillian felt that the league tables were *'disgusting'* as they did not show the progress that a child had made. She also noted that some children stood an unfair advantage in that they could be prepared to a greater extent than others for the SATS, *'particularly now tutoring is rife for those who can afford it.'*

Gillian believed the SATs were like the 11+, which was disregarded years ago. Comprehensive systems base their setting of children by league tables. She stated that children had to take SATs as *'it prepares them for life'*. Gillian suggested that in Year 6 *'children are too immature to cope with failure'*. She remarked that SATs were about learning techniques rather than knowledge areas and she felt she was teaching accordingly. She added *'I'm becoming more prepared for SATs and I want to get out of Year 6.'* She added that she wanted to teach maths for the knowledge of how to do maths. The teachers spend the autumn term and the first part of the spring term preparing for the SATs. The teacher thought the SAT papers were bias toward old-fashioned society, with a white middle class base. She noted that they were patronising and she questioned whether the inclusion of an Asian name was supposed to reflect a multicultural approach. She felt the papers reflected only an English and American style and cited the content of the reading paper this year which was about fire fighters.

### **The National Curriculum**

Gillian thought the NC dictated teaching and that it provided no leeway. She felt it was good that all schools no matter where they were based within England would be covering the same subject areas. In theory, this meant that a child who moved schools would not miss out. But she commented that there was too much to teach and that the curriculum was too broad, with not enough time to cover the material. Gillian felt the children were doing work which they would cover at secondary school; adding the children had to do too much, too soon. Gillian thought she had too much paper work to record and complete. She explained that at the end of the year the paperwork was not continued or built upon, but was thrown away. She thought the paper work involved too much of writing the same thing in different ways.

### **Relationships**

When questioned about her relationship with Sophie and its influence upon the children, Gillian felt it would only have an affect upon the children if they let it (i.e. Sophie and Gillian). She said the children could be oblivious to it. Gillian and Sophie plan for their lessons together, so both classes receive the same work. Gillian accepts that both teachers utilise different teaching styles, each teacher had her successes and areas to build on. She added that the teachers used their strengths to support each other. She felt that everyone in the school community was equal but had a different role. This included the parents, children, cleaners, lunch time organisers and classroom assistants. She used to be a dinner lady. Gillian believes relationships were profoundly affected by how people treat and respect each other. She believes everyone is equal to her. She reflected upon her interaction with myself and Alison (the other Year 6 teaching assistant) and said she liked it that we were sometimes *'daft.'* She hoped that we were role models for the children in terms of how to treat others. She reported she was a *'tiny piece of clog'* in each of the children's lives. In terms of

respect, the teacher believes in giving respect to others in the first place and then they may lose it (as opposed to earning it). She believes shouting is awful and although she does do it on rare occasions, she stated that she apologises to the children. The teacher said she felt privileged to be a teacher as it was a big responsibility, stating that children are '*precious things*'. She commented the job would be '*brilliant*' if she could just teach without the policies etc.

### **Supervision**

I suggested to Gillian the need for supervision within the school, an idea which she supported. As a KS manager she addresses others' problems but she felt there was no one for her to turn to in confidence. She would like to go the Deputy Head Teacher '*not to complain but to talk about issues*' but instead, she chooses to talk to the two classroom assistants who work alongside her (Alison and myself). In terms of supervision, she feels it would be best if there was someone present in school at all times.

### **The focal children**

#### **Tariq**

Gillian felt she currently had a good relationship with Tariq, which had taken a long time to build. She noted Tariq didn't want to work or challenge himself and set himself easy targets. The teacher set Tariq higher targets to challenge him, which he thought was demanding and unfair. To receive attention in the past, Gillian noted that he engaged in silly behaviour. She felt that he craved attention off the other children in the class and liked to feel part of the incrowd, to fit in, in the eyes of the children in his class. She suggested that if he worked he did not receive this attention. She felt he had a low self-opinion of himself and was insecure. Gillian thought he liked the Year 6 teaching assistants. I commented that Tariq does not take any teaching assistant certificates home that he receives but throws them away in the classroom. Gillian noted that Tariq had a more visual learning style. He does not have good attention in class and gets bored quickly so Gillian has to home him in, she has to let him know she is going to choose him. He responds straight away to one-to-one. He likes competition. Gillian felt the communication with his parents over the past school year, had improved. Both parents had been ill and she said the communication had been slower because of this. Tariq only started to talk about his parents' illness when the teacher brought it up with him. From this point she felt their relationship then improved. She said his parents did a lot for him. She said that they did not express a lack of interest and that they prioritised their children's thoughts over their own work. Gillian was unsure as to how Tariq would progress at the forthcoming high school as he liked attention. She noted that Tariq has no definite friendship group and she observed that no other child in the class picked him when they get into pairs. She noted several times during the interview that Tariq '*craved attention*.'

#### **Beth**

Gillian stated '*she's lovely*.' She felt they had a very good relationship and that Beth regularly went to the teacher for a cuddle. Gillian believed she had no problems talking to Beth and thought Beth had a good relationship with adults generally. She felt Beth had grown up over the last year; she had matured and grown in confidence. Beth now asked questions and was at the '*forefront of the class*.' The teacher noted Beth's friendship group consisted of boys, who she played football with on a regular basis. She said Beth preferred the company of boys and was used to their company because of the time she spent with her brothers at home.

Gillian noted that Beth was excluded from the middle class group of girls in the class, '*the clique*'; this put her with a smaller group of girls which included Leanne. She noted Beth was a slower learner compared with others and that she worked at her own speed and level. In terms of learning style, Gillian believed Beth enjoyed a multisensory approach as she learnt in different ways. She remarked Beth was enthusiastic about learning and wanted to learn. She said Beth would be '*a star in the future*.' Because Gillian had previously taught Beth's brothers' Gillian had time to build a good relationship with her parents, particularly her mum. She felt she had excellent communication with Beth's home. Gillian stated '*I have given her confidence in herself no matter what others say*.' I commented that Beth had recently been coming to talk to me on a regular basis and Gillian said that children can come to me as a classroom assistant with their problems because they know I will not say anything

#### **Leanne**

Gillian felt she had a good relationship with Leanne. She said that Leanne was aware of the boundaries. Leanne experienced problems in Year 5 and although Gillian has asked Leanne's mother about it, she has not elaborated. She stated that Leanne was on *'the periphery of the incrowd'*. She is close friends with Jane and is now *'relaxed'* for the first time. Leanne likes silliness and previously the class have not allowed this behaviour but *'Jane says it's okay'*. She explained this was why Leanne's behaviour at times seemed silly, not naughty or disruptive but silly. And she felt this was good as there were times when you should be silly. She felt Leanne got on very well with the teaching assistants and the care worker in the class. Gillian believed Leanne had a multisensory learning style, noting that Leanne pleases herself and sets her own targets; *'Leanne always strives to do her utmost.'* Gillian felt the communication with Leanne's mum was fairly good. She noted that at the first parents evening, her mum was quite aggressive re: matters when Leanne was in Mr Tate's class in Year 5. Leanne's Mum had told Gillian that she had been prepared to go and see the Head Teacher, but Leanne had said it was okay.

### **Daniel**

Gillian felt she had a good relationship with Daniel. She said that he comes with problems, but once he gets to know you he's very good. Gillian felt it was important *'to build up trust with him, he needs to be able to trust adults to have a good relationship'*. She said he likes being part of the class. Gillian noted that Daniel was very popular with both boys and girls and was part of the *'incrowd.'* She said Daniel had gained in confidence over the school year and had realised he needed support. Gillian felt a big breakthrough was when I sat with him during a chalk and talk numeracy lesson just before Christmas. He was having difficulty joining in the activity with the rest of the class and he burst into tears. Gillian felt this was when he changed as he let the rest of the class know *'I've got problems.'* She said Daniel had no strategy for learning and he thought there was something wrong with him and that's why he couldn't learn. Gillian commented that Daniel needed *'positive praise all the time'* and *'success.'* She said he needed to have faith in himself. Although he has been tested and found not to have special needs, Gillian felt Daniel did have special needs, as he had problems processing and transferring. For example, she said he has difficulty following instructions. Gillian said Daniel had missed out on a lot. She felt he had come on tremendously this past school year e.g. his handwriting. She noted he worked well on a one to one basis. Gillian said Daniel had reported that he had enjoyed Year 6 and that it had been his best year. She felt Daniel's mum had over expectations which did not help him. She felt the communication with Daniel's parents was fairly good. Gillian thought Daniel's parents were intimidated by the educational system.

## INTERVIEW WITH YEAR 6 TEACHER: MRS BROOKES

Date: 10/07/2002

Location: 6B classroom

**Key:** Helen (H); Mrs Sophie Brookes (S)

- H: This list notes the subject areas that I want to talk about, so we will just question them as we go along and see where we go, okay.
- S: Yeah
- H: So contextualisation... how long have you been teaching?
- S: 23 years
- H: 23 years
- S: Mm.
- H: And that's not just in primary school is it?
- S: No, err till 1990, so that's what 21, 22 years in secondary and then I did a years exchange. Oh, I did training, training err more training at (name of university) and then a years exchange with a primary school teacher.
- H: Right
- S: And here, it's my tenth year
- H: Tenth year?
- S: Yeah
- H: I didn't realise you'd been here that long. And what years have you taught in this school?
- S: In this school?
- H: Yeah
- S: Err first all of all I had a Year 5/6 class and then Year 6
- H: Right
- S: And that's it really
- H: Okay err how would you describe the ethos of this school?
- S: I think it's a happy school and it's... everybody's very hardworking and it recognises all the different mixes of children that we've got and err... just that really
- H: Okay and how would you describe the area in which it's located?
- S: Err it's quite a mix, mixed really I think it was once, you know at one time, sort of an affluent area. It's more, more of a leafy suburb really.
- H: Yeah, right
- S: But it's quite mixed, from the point of view of the intake that we've got.
- H: Yeah okay, now... err I'm going to go on to the role of the teacher.
- S: Mm
- H: Okay, so how would you describe the role generally of a teacher, a primary teacher? What is their role?
- S: Err... where do you start? (laughs) well first of all, I think its important that the children are happy because err if they're not then nothing else, nothing else can happen really or not effectively anyway, so I think first of all to make sure the children feel happy and secure before you start anything else.
- H: Right
- S: Err and I always try to make that point when I get a new class, you know because they have ideas of what you are like by the bits that they see of you and things that, that children say
- H: Yeah
- S: You know, things like my children have said in the past is '*Oh when you get into Year 6 you get shouted at if you drop a pencil on the floor*' and things like this, to frighten them really. Sort of a ...that's a (laughs). It's like when they go to high school and the children say '*Oh when you go there you get your head pushed down the toilet*'
- H: Yeah
- S: And they flush it and things like that, so, so that's the first thing really.
- H: Right
- S: And then to err... to sort of say a little bit about how you work, you know with the class
- H: Yeah

S: And how, and how the years going to be. I think to make, to make them feel happy and secure really you've got to give them a sort of overview of what they're going to do before you start to do anything really

H: Right

S: And err so within that you know they can ask you anything they like and then I think its important to err sort of set ground rules, that the class set ground rules for themselves

H: Right

S: Before you start to teach because you've got to get the right environment really before you actually start to teach anything, so

H: (Interrupting) Sorry, so they do that together?

S: Yeah, yeah we do a sort of rights and responsibilities exercise where err, you know, they say, what I say is what do you think peoples rights are and then we work it down to the school and we work it down to the classroom and in order to have these rights you've got to have, you have responsibilities and they do this little exercise like matching responsibilities to rights

H: Right

S: And then we come up with some sort of ground rules for the class that they've actually, you know, come up with and then you know, I usually outline what the structure is and then you can start to do the curriculum things. But I think it's important to do all that first really

H: Right okay

S: Because also with that, they get the idea that the works going to be hard and they've got this to do and that to do, you know and then to sort of, err, teach them you know, with well the curriculum I suppose, but keeping that going all the time, you know that the actual environment and the security there

H: Yeah

S: And err I think its... you've got to be a listener as well, you've got to listen to the children and you've got to be seen to be fair, that's really important

H: Right

S: You know to be actually fair with both sexes. I mean I've been in schools where people have said '*Oo, she doesn't like boys or he doesn't like boys*' or you know and that, that's generally more than doesn't like girls

H: Mm

S: That generally comes across

H: Right

S: Err, so

H: Okay err, what are you're other roles in the school besides Year 6 teacher? Don't you have a literacy role?

S: Yeah, Literacy Co-ordinator err Extra-Curricula Music Co-ordinator, European Awareness and Modern Language Co-ordinator

H: Right, so you have multiple roles

S: Yeah

H: Okay, can you tell me how you think children learn

S: Well children, children learn in different ways really. Some people err can learn err by finding things out more and other people like to be told and find things out. I don't know, just different ways really. Some people learn from discussion and talking with others and so you've got to allow for all the different ways that children learn within your teaching.

H: Would you say that you did that?

S: I hope so (laughs)

H: Do you think that err genes have a role and what they inherit?

S: Err I think they do yeah, yeah, not wholly but I think there is, I think there is something there

H: Mm

S: You know

H: Okay, so if we talk about the children involved in the research, how would you say that Roberto learns?

S: I think he's, I think he learns more by finding out rather than sitting and listening

H: Right

S: I think he has problems in sitting and listening to somebody and he'd learn more with finding out. Err, Isabel... do you want me to go through these?

H: Yeah

S: Well Isabel's err... she would sit and listen

H: Right

S: But she, I mean all children learn by finding things out and by experimentation and that but she would and Jaleela too and Charlotte, will just learn by just being there 'cos she absorbs everything

H: Mm

S: Like a sponge really.

H: Would you say that they are confident children in their work, their belief...

S: (Interrupting) I think the least, I think err... Charlotte's very confident in everything

H: Right

S: Roberto I would say is not confident in maths 'cos he has a problem with maths

H: Mm

S: And he knows he's got a problem with maths and that actually stops him progressing perhaps as quickly as he would do

H: Mm

S: Because he thinks he's not going to succeed. Because this morning he'd just got his SATs results

H: Mm

S: And he had actually got a Level 3 for maths and I'd assessed him as a level four, err but he does panic a bit when he comes to a maths test

H: Mm

S: And he and I actually went through his paper because he missed it by one mark and his Mum came to see me this morning and said oh, he was upset about his maths. I said well I wanted to see her, because I have gone through his paper and he has missed it by one mark so she was quite pleased at that and Roberto was quite pleased

H: Mm

S: With that when I told him and also when I told him the marks would go to (name of secondary school) so they'd know he missed it by one mark

H: Yeah

S: Because he was he was barely a Level 3, he wasn't even a Level 3 when he first came in

H: So he has progressed

S: Yeah, I mean his mental maths score in the SATs I think was about 15

H: Right

S: He was getting 2's and 3's when he first came in, so he has progressed

H: Mm

S: But there's still that panic there when it comes to tests

H: Because when he first came into the class I did observe that he copied others' work

S: Well he copied, he copied all the time, yeah and when he hadn't got the chance to copy he was getting twos and threes

H: Mm

S: So I tried to make sure he couldn't copy after that really

H: Mm

S: He has improved but he does if he's in a situation where he can copy, he will copy

H: Mm

S: So although he's improved, he's still not got that confidence really

H: Mm. Would you say he was confident in literacy?

S: Yeah, yeah he's confident in everything else really

H: Mm

S: But it's the maths

H: Mm

S: He's just got this block now you know and he'll have to get over that

H: Mm, how about Isabel?

S: Isabel's improved quite a lot in everything, she's got more confident. She wasn't confident at all, at first. Both her and Jaleela are very similar

H: Right

S: Mm I think Jaleela has gained in confidence in everything

H: Mm

S: You know in her work and in her, err speaking out because she was very quiet at first

H: Yeah

S: And now she will speak out and everything  
H: Do you think their friends have a role?  
S: Yeah  
H: And encourage them at all?  
S: Yeah, yeah. Isabel and Alice have worked very well together with their homework and they've both really improved  
H: Yeah  
S: Jaleela doesn't really rely, she does in a way, Isabel relies more on her friends to help her  
H: Mm  
S: Jaleela tries to do it herself  
H: Mm  
S: She does have you know, she will discuss it with her friends and that, but she does like to know that she's  
H: Mm  
S: Got there herself and she'll ask, she didn't used to ask when she got stuck, but she does now.  
H: Okay  
S: I mean just thinking about Jaleela, when you think about it, what she was like in the beginning her confidence is really, really  
H: Mm, I remember when she came into the class she didn't speak at all,  
S: No, no  
H: She just looked at you  
S: Mm, yeah  
H: How about Charlotte, would you say she was confident when she first came into the class  
S: Yeah  
H: And she's continued to be so?  
S: Yeah, yeah I think so, yeah. Charlotte, she's just one of those children that will just, she'll just work hard. She's not one that will just does the minimum but she doesn't work too hard either.  
H: No  
S: You know with, Laura works too hard  
H: Right  
S: But Charlotte won't work too hard  
H: She's got the right balance hasn't she?  
S: She has yeah, she has got the right balance  
H: And she mixes well with the rest of the class  
S: Yeah, yeah  
H: Do you think the others mix quite well?  
S: Yeah, Roberto mixes very well, he's laid back  
H: Mm  
S: Charlotte's quite laid back but no so much as Roberto and Roberto's a very good person to have as a sort of mediator  
H: Yeah  
S: I mean this thing with the football and the referees, he's the one they all want as the referee because they all see that he's fair. Whatever they say, oh he's bias and that, they know he isn't really.  
H: Right  
S: And they always, whenever they've swapped referees, they've always wanted him to be referee back again 'cos he is quite fair  
H: Right, okay. Would you say you had a good relationship with each of those children?  
S: I think so yeah  
H: Okay moving on to talk about your teaching style  
S: Yeah  
H: How would you describe it?  
  
S: Err... I suppose, different styles for different things really depends err...what that I like?  
H: What methods do you use?  
S: What?  
H: Methods, what strategies do you use?

S: Err...I like to get the children involved as much as possible you know sort of, get them to, rather than just to, talking at them

H: Mm

S: I mean I, we tend to spend a lot of time sometimes I think, we spent too much time discussing but it is discussing and they do get it from them. And I think if something crops up in the discussion I think that needs doing now and I'll do it now, that's why, these very prescriptive set plans

H: Mm

S: Are not really good, I allow myself to have a bit of ...

H: Leeway

S: Leeway because sometimes I can completely change what I wanted to do because of something that's been said

H: Mm

S: Which I think is important not to let that moment go you know, I don't, I wouldn't sort of say right oh, I want to talk about that later and stick to the plan that I've got because the moments gone then and it needs to be done right away.

H: Right, yeah

S: So I think you've really got to be prepared and planned but I think you shouldn't just stick to it rigidly

H: Right

S: 'Cos you should use what comes up and sometimes if I think of something, like if they're getting something particularly easily, I think right I can go along with this, so I'll go beyond what I've planned

H: Mm

S: Even if a lot of them don't understand it and I will actually say, I'll say, if you don't understand this, if you've only just understood this, don't worry if you don't understand anything else

H: Mm

S: If you haven't understood this, tell me, if you've understood it, well, keep listening you know. If you haven't

H: Yeah

S: If you've only just understood it I'll usually say, if you've only just understood it listen and you might get some more

H: Mm

S: But don't worry if you don't, you know, so they're not feeling oh what's she talking about

H: Mm

S: I'm feeling really inadequate

H: Is that to extend the?

S: Yeah to extend the brighter ones really and err, I'll sometimes say this is a GCSE question

H: Mm

S: And they do rise to that, they'll say, I know the answer to this oh I'll be alright in my GCSEs, you know so its like extending them and this is really high school work but I think you can cope with it and they do respond to that I think

H: Mm

S: I think it does push them on that bit more without pushing them on. It makes them want to do it, you know.

H: Who would you say that would challenge then out of the group?

S: Charlotte

H: Charlotte

S: And Roberto possibly

H: Right

S: Isabel and Jaleela would, Isabel would perhaps think well I've only just understood that so I won't bother about that

H: Mm

S: Err... probably both of those two

H: Right, but the other two will have a go

S: But you see, you see Charlotte she is a high, she is a high achiever and she's got high ability so,

H: Mm

S: So she would want to go on, I mean the more able children want to go on anyway

H: Mm

S: So you know, I sort of aim that at them really

H: What areas would you say your strengths lay, which subjects?

S: Err

H: 'Cos literacy you're...

S: Yeah, literacy and ... I think I'm not, although my own personal maths was never very good, I think I'm quite okay at teaching it,

H: Yeah

S: When I understand it properly, you know a bit like shape I'm not too hot on and I say to the children this is not an area I'm confident in and I always do tell them that. Like D&T, I say I'm hopeless with D&T and I know I am and you're probably better than me so we can help one another sort of thing

H: Right

S: And you know things like that really and music I'm okay and dance as well, those are my subjects... I'm pretty confident in most things apart from D&T and art and P.E. (laughs)

H: But you swap with Gillian, don't you, to do the P.E. and music?

S: Yeah I do, yeah, yeah, we swap P.E. and music, yeah and I use classroom assistants for D&T and art (Sophie and Helen laugh)

H: Okay would you say that your focus in teaching was on bringing children who struggle up or to extend?

S: I would say that, err... I go more to extend the more able ones

H: Mm

S: Mm as in a class lesson you can do that easier in a class lesson

H: Mm

S: Because you can say right if you don't understand don't worry, if you do, we'll go on

H: Yeah

S: And the others will listen anyway

H: Mm

S: Whereas if you addressed your lesson to the less able, that doesn't work, you have to give them work separate or help them individually

H: Right

S: And I think err... and I mean I'm thinking about the reading sessions now, I think those times in that we have half a hour for reading is you know err I think its good to if you've got a good classroom assistant to do that

H: Mm

S: Then I can work with the less able who are struggling

H: Mm

S: That's a good time to help them. I've found that when I've done that on a Friday it's invaluable

H: Mm

S: Because sometimes they're okay and sometimes they're not

H: Mm

S: And you can do it at the time rather than saying okay, this group is less able so that's the work they're going to do and they're going to do some work in a small group with bits, that particular week they might not be struggling with that

H: Mm

S: But another week, others might be struggling

H: Right

S: And it's rather than having a less able group

H: Mm

S: Having children who are less able in what you're doing that week

H: Yeah

S: I'd like to use that time to do work with them, and I think that would pull them up a bit

H: Mm

S: Because it could be done more on a one to one or a two to one basis, even in a small group of less able

H: Mm

S: You get somebody who's just not understanding or you know, below the others and you can't ignore the others and just have that one

H: Mm

S: So that time, if I have the opportunity to use that time every day I think that would be invaluable really, but you can do the more able easier as a class, you know

H: Mm

S: Not all the time obviously, you've got to give them some extension work, but you can extend your actual class teaching to the more able rather than the less able

H: Yeah. So, how do you arrange your seating, is it in groups?

S: Yeah, the seating is in people who will work together well

H: Mm

S: Sometimes having people of a similar ability working together but I think a lot of the time its good to have mixed ability, particularly in the beginning of the lesson

H: Mm

S: Because if you've got paired work or discussion work on the table then they can give ideas to the others really

H: Right. Okay, we'll go onto the role of the SATs. What do you think of the tests?

S: I think its too much pressure at this age and it's to restricting with the rest of the curriculum you know. You're teaching to the SATs and your teaching exam techniques and your teaching them what you know is going to be coming up and it doesn't give you time to do a lot of the things like discussion and you know some of the things that they've done after the SATs that has been really useful

H: Mm

S: And it has extended them and you think well you know if you could only do more of that, like the racism thing

H: Yeah

S: I mean that improved the their actual written work as well

H: Mm

S: But the children who are not very academic or not very good at getting things down can actually give their ideas and feel you know, feel as though their contributing and feel as though they know what they're talking about

H: Mm

S: And the SATs stop that really. So okay, they're useful to actually say right well, this is what the children have achieved in a way but in another way is just an hour out of the whole thing and I think the teachers assessments are fairly accurate. For instance, Harjit got a 4 in his English, there is no way he's a 4, no way, absolutely not, so it's not a true reflection of his work

H: Mm so would you think that the teacher assessment is more appropriate

S: Yeah

H: Do you think the children get worried?

S: I think they do get worried. And I think that teachers assessments, people will say oh well, they're not as accurate as the SATs because somebody else has marked who doesn't know the children and they think, oh you know, you give them a bit of leeway but its not giving them leeway because some of my, like Harjit for instance I'd assessed him lower than the SATs and he is lower than that level

H: Mm

S: But some of them I've assessed higher 'cos they are higher

H: Yeah

S: And I know that's their level

H: Yeah

S: So I think its people having, people haven't got the confidence that teachers will assess them properly and probably some teachers won't

H: Mm

S: You know, but that's human nature I suppose and it's difficult if your school reputation, I mean we had this discussion yesterday

H: Mm

S: Err...in this co-ordinator meeting because we haven't reached our targets

H: Mm

S: As a school but the targets were unrealistic and err... I was under the impression that the Local Education Authority said right these are your targets because you got eighty odd percent last time your getting ninety two percent this time which is ridiculous because you've got a different set of children and I know the children have really improved if you look at their results last year

H: Yeah

S: And the results this year so I actually said this at the meeting 'cos part of the first half of the meeting was about setting targets and I said but our children have achieved really well, they've improved tremendously this year but we haven't reached our targets and I don't understand why this is. Why can we not set our targets based on what we've done

H: Mm

S: And not on what the school did last year. So I was told, I set your targets with your Head and Chair of Governors. I didn't know that you see and I said but what were they based on and they were based on the children's work two years ago. Well I can't see that because I just can't see it.

H: No

S: And then the answer was well I don't know what the targets were and I said I would have liked to know what the targets were, in fact I would have liked to have been involved in setting the targets being their teacher and was told, yes you could be involved in setting the targets so I'm going to ask this year can I be involved in setting the targets and was told that well, you've got to set err the word wasn't challenging, I can't remember what the word was, but it was you know, you've got to strive for these

H: Mm

S: Targets and its not very good if you don't reach your targets. I said all the time we're telling the children, we're giving the children targets and saying this is what your target is and if they don't reach it, they fail

H: Yeah

S: We're only the same

H: Yeah

S: If we don't reach our targets. It's like oh you don't look at it like that and I said well why set targets that were not to reach

H: Yeah

S: It's nonsense

H: Mm

S: And that really annoyed me yesterday

H: Do you think it reflects on you if you don't?

S: Well they said no, it doesn't but it does because oh people will say, like last year because we achieved our targets... oh well done, you've achieved your targets. Nobody's said anything to us this year, nobody and that, okay it's not just us but people do think it

H: Mm

S: I know it isn't and everybody knows it isn't but you've got that, its there

H: Mm

S: So why haven't people said this year oh well done for the SATs because we haven't achieved our targets that why and we felt you know when we looked at the results these are really good but because we haven't reached our targets was very demoralising for us

H: Mm

S: So you know

H: Do you think the papers were more difficult than last year or?

S: Err I think possibly a little bit yeah, but they achieved what we thought they'd achieve and in some cases better

H: Yeah

S: So you know they're not

H: So in your eyes they have done well

S: Yeah they've done well so why do we feel as though we've failed? Because we haven't reached our school targets, so how are these school targets tests set, not on what the children could do, can't have been

H: No

S: So that's why its so frustrating

H: Mm

S: And it's all political

H: Okay

S: Laughs. I don't know whether I should say that, but anyway

H: Okay. So the role of the LEA and government policies

S: Well there we are, well yeah

H: And the National Curriculum as well

S: Well the national curriculum, the role of the L.E.A. I mean they're in a difficult position, 'cos I know people who work in the L.E.A. and they're in a difficult position, they're getting it from the politicians

H: Mm

S: And they're getting it from school so they're sort of stuck in the middle really err from the point of view of the literacy team won't go into school... when I was saying this yesterday, no one else said anything about it and I felt as though I was being bolshy but I've asked for help with planning for literacy 'cos I've had no training on planning. Well you're a successful school we can't come into you. Now that doesn't make sense.

H: No

S: If I've asked for help from my literacy advisory team in my authority, I should get the help whether we're successful or not

H: Mm

S: So that annoys me

H: How do they expect you to move forward though?

S: Well they're not interested as long as your getting this good, I mean perhaps we should, I mean we haven't achieved our targets but we've still done well so they still can't come in. I mean I could have said but we haven't achieved our targets this year can you come in this year? Well, no your results are such a thing, you know, so it's ridiculous really. And government policies I mean the literacy strategy, err... they're now coming up with different plans

H: Right

S: Now, they'll be on the net by, Year 6 are on the net already, all the others will be on the net by the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August so teachers can dash back from their holidays and do all this planning from the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August till the 1<sup>st</sup> of September you know, but in 2004 the literacy strategy and the numeracy strategy are going and they're being replaced by the primary strategy so things will change again

H: Right. Do you feel that they dictate your teaching?

S: Err ...less for us because we're a successful school

H: Right

S: So there's that advantage of it because they're not constantly coming in saying you should be doing this that and the other and all the things like, yesterday they talked about the plenary and improving the plenary and everything and all these things that your supposed to do are things that that I do automatically

H: Mm

S: I don't write down that I'm, you're supposed to write down that you're doing it

H: Mm

S: Ask this question ask that question, well I just ask it. It just comes... naturally because you're an experienced teacher

H: Mm

S: And all they've done really with a lot of this, is they've written it down what teachers do

H: Mm

S: And said this is what your supposed to do. Well we know what we're supposed to do, we do it, but we just don't write it down in that form and we don't have to write it down in that form 'cos we're a successful school but err you know... that's it really. They do dictate a bit too much really what we've got, I think we've got to cover too much academic work. I mean at ten they expect so much of them at ten and eleven they expect them to know so much.

H: Mm

S: About science and maths and some of the English they're doing, it is secondary level

H: Mm. Why do you think it's only these three subjects science, maths and literacy that are assessed, do you think the other ones (unclear)

S: To study I don't know about the university requirements but to study other things you've got to have maths and English

H: Yeah you have  
S: So you know, you, you can't get on anywhere unless you've got them  
H: Mm do you think this school gives opportunities to children who aren't ... perhaps that academic  
S: Yeah  
H: But are more creative  
S: I think it does err... I think it does but less so as you get into Year 6 because of the pressure of the SATs really  
H: Mm  
S: Err and, and in fact like the drama this year we've sort of said there's too much drama because we've no time to do it.  
H: Mm  
S: And it's a shame really, we've hardly done any dance and it's a shame  
H: Mm  
S: So you know  
H: Okay  
S: It's gone from the extreme. I know before when you just planned your own curriculum  
H: Mm  
S: Okay I can see that a lot of people didn't you know, that the standards have improved because err it was, its like going from one extreme to the other. It's gone from that to this  
H: Mm  
S: And we want something in the middle really  
H: Okay, so what would you say was the way forward?  
S: Well that  
H: What, do you think we should have less of... and more  
S: Yeah less that but more creative work and more, more left to the teacher. I mean you might get a class who you think well these, these children need more of this  
H: Mm  
S: So you give them more of that  
H: Mm  
S: Err... these children they don't get on socially, the atmosphere isn't right so you need more of that  
H: Mm  
S: So really you should really fit the curriculum to the children that you've got  
H: Yeah  
S: And err... you know you should use your experience to do that. I mean the way forward is to have less pressure from, less political pressure, less authority pressure, less competition with other schools and other areas  
H: Mm  
S: And just concentrate on, I mean your not going to say, okay we haven't any targets, we haven't got any, we haven't got to compete with anybody, we haven't got any league tables, so I'm not going to bother teaching this year, your not doing to do that  
H: No  
S: Whatever you do, you're teaching the children that you've got there and you're doing your best for them.  
H: Mm  
S: It doesn't matter what you reach for or what your results are,  
H: Mm  
S: You're doing your best for those children, so you know  
H: Okay. And the last thing I wanted to discuss with you is your partnership with Gillian as Year 6 teachers  
S: Yeah  
H: How important do you think the relationship is?  
S: I think it's extremely important 'cos if you get two people in the same, who are working, well even if you don't work together, as much as say we do  
H: Mm  
S: Err if you don't have some sort of communication between you, then the children see that as divisive and they don't see working together as being important  
H: Mm

S: And I think that, I suppose going back to err this, I think that's another important thing getting them to work together and to actually respect one another

H: Mm

S: And to be tolerant

H: Mm

S: And if you're not showing respect and if you don't show respect and you're not tolerant and you're obviously, there are things about the person you're working with that maybe err oh well, I wouldn't do it like that

H: Mm

S: But you know, you've obviously got to appear

H: Mm

S: You know it's easier if you do get on but even if you don't get on you've got to address that before anything else I would say

H: Okay and the other thing I haven't mentioned is, how important do you think the home input is for children?

S: Yeah I think that's important, I think that's very important and I try to err...involve parents in everything or at least inform them of everything were doing and generally make it clear on the first parents evening or if not before at the open evening, say anytime you want to come in, just come in, you know

H: Mm

H: Would you say your communication with their, each of their homes is okay?

S: Yeah

H: Yeah?

S: Yeah, yeah

H: Okay that's it

S: Right

H: Unless there's anything you want to add

S: I don't think so

H: Okay, thanks very much for agreeing to be interviewed.

## INTERVIEW WITH YEAR 6 TEACHING ASSISTANT: ALISON

Date: June 2002

Location: 6E classroom

**Key:** Helen (H); Alison (A)

*Partly because of Alison's part-time working hours and her dual roles in the school and because we were both busy in our respective classes, it was difficult to schedule in time for an interview during school hours. Hence, this discussion took place after break when the children and Year 6 teachers were a late assembly and we had completed the necessary preparation for both classes. Because Alison felt uncomfortable about the prospect of being formally interviewed we decided it was best to have an informal chat.*

H: Okay, so can you tell me about your role as a Teaching Assistant?

A: Err...

H: Maybe we can start with what activities you do with the children and what tasks you do in each class

A: Err... well, in Gillian's class, I read with two reading groups on a weekly basis, Mondays and Fridays. Generally, I'll read out the questions for the mental maths and photocopy so that the works prepared for the children. On Monday mornings actually I normally have a set routine, where I'll mark the homework. In fact, I have a spelling group which I take outside. I do that and mark their work, and then I'll mark all the spelling groups' tests. Then I will mark all of the other homework and that's basically what I do on the Monday.

H: Okay. And what do you do in Sophie's class?

A: In Sophie's class, I don't really do anything like that.

H: Okay, but you do numeracy in both classes.

A: Yeah

H: So what do you do on Monday during the numeracy lesson in Sophie's class?

A: Sometimes I'll read out the (mental maths) questions and sometimes I won't... it's not fixed. But I do mark it... I do mark it most of the time unless on the odd occasion she asks the children to mark it themselves.

H: How long have you been working with Gillian and Sophie

A: This is my third year with Sophie and I've worked about five years with Gillian

H: Have you observed any differences in approach between the teachers?

A: What... do you mean towards the children?

H: Yes, towards the children and also perhaps their teaching

A: In their teaching? Yeah, they're both different. They both have different styles. I think ones more relaxed than the other... I think Gillian's more relaxed than Sophie.

H: Mm

A: Not that I'm saying she's informal, she's not, she does get the teaching across. But Sophie seems to be more formal... more old-fashioned. Gillian is sort of more modern in her teaching and the way she views the kids I think.

H: Mm

A: And I think Sophie is more set in her ways but Gillian will allow for diversion, you know, she'll go off on a different thing is that's what's necessary.

H: Mm. And what about their relationships with the children in their class, have you observed any differences?

A: Yeah.

H: Can you give me some examples?

A: Mm... Sophie is I think more...formal, if I have to have a word (unclear). And she has a few favourites; you can tell that more than you can with Gillian.

H: Right

A: And I do mean that

H: Mm. Do you think that Gillian has favourites?

A: I think she does although she doesn't... how can I...they're not as prominent

H: Right

A: You know you can walk into Sophie's class and be there for a week and know who her favourites are

H: Mm and what do you think the implications are for the children. Do you think the favourites have advantages over other children in the class?

A: Mm...yeah, more so in Sophie's class

H: Can you give me an example?

A: Err...I think they're given more opportunities, I mean obviously.... Sophie's favourites are the brighter ones

H: Mm

A: And if they've got their hands up, she'll go straight to them to answer questions or for them to ask questions.

H: Right

A: Err and they seem to be involved in all the other stuff, you know if people need to put their hands up for Indian music for example, or whatever, it always seems to be you know, a few of the favourite ones that are included

H: Right

A: Not that I am saying they should be excluded, but that's my observation

H: Right, okay... and what about Gillian's class?

A: In Gillian's class there's not... I mean I think she does have her favourites, its just hard not to...but I think there not as prominent and I think she treats the whole class as a whole class and not as individual kids

H: Right, so she tries to include them all?

A: Yeah, yeah

H: Okay, so if we move on to discuss the children that are involved in the research

A: Right

H: Okay, so do you think that Daniel is involved in Gillian's class?

A: Yeah I do, err (asks for tape to be turned off while she considers the question). Okay Daniel, err... well as you know he needs help so she doesn't, she doesn't sort of focus in on him as much as she does on the brighter ones. You know, not just because its Daniel, you know, not any of them

H: What do you mean that she doesn't focus on them much?

A: She doesn't ask... I mean obviously he'll put his hand up and she won't sort of automatically ask him to answer a question but...

H: (Interrupting) Right, would she ask a brighter person

A: Yeah, I think so, definitely

H: Right

A: But err I also think that she'll explain things and not... if she can see he doesn't understand then I think she'll explain things again

H: Mm

A: Particularly with Daniel

H: Mm

A: But to the whole class not just to him...she tries not to single them out

H: Right

A: (Unclear)

H: How about Tariq?

A: Oh Tariq, now he's a tough one because I think he's challenging Tariq

H: Mm

A: And his behaviour especially

H: What do you mean by that? What is his behaviour like?

A: I just think he's in a word, I think he's bolshy

H: Mm

A: As in... he can be argumentative and you know silly

H: Mm

A: I think he does put his hand up but I think he'll leave it until (unclear)

H: Mm... so would you say that Daniel had behaviour problems?

A: No, when he sits and focuses, he will focus on a lesson, what sinks in I don't know, not all of it does

H: Mm... do you think that Tariq listens?

A: ... sometimes but not a much

H: And do you think that Gillian relates to Daniel

A: Yeah

H: In a different way to Tariq?  
A: Yeah, yeah  
H: Do you think Gillian relates to Tariq in a good way?  
A: I think she relates to Tariq in a good way but I think in a different way as in... because he's a bit more challenging then I suppose she's got less patience for him  
H: Right  
A: Whereas Daniel... he tries Daniel... you know, he does try and he does what to learn  
H: And so do you think that makes a difference in the way you relate to them?  
A: Yeah, yeah. I think that in all kids, you know  
H: Okay, Leanne  
A: Leanne, well what can I say about Leanne. Err... yeah I think she's one of those again that ... I mean she sticks in our minds 'cos she just does with everybody  
H: Mm  
A: But during lessons she will put her hand up but she's not you know, she not focused on I don't think as such  
H: No  
A: I really don't think so but...  
H: Mm... she's does put her hand up a lot to talk, to offer answers  
A: Yeah  
H: But no, she's not really selected is she?  
A: No, no  
H: What about Beth?  
A: Oh...err... she's another one that doesn't really stick in your mind because she's quiet. I mean she will put her hand up, she will sit and listen but shoe doesn't.... you know, like they can sit and fidget can't they?  
H: Mm  
A: And you can see whose not paying attention  
H: Mm  
A: She's pays attention but...you can't always see what sinks in and what isn't.  
H: Mm  
A: But I do think she puts her hand up but doesn't always get chosen  
H: Do you think she receives attention off Gillian  
A: Yeah but not as much as some kids  
H: Right okay. Going back to Tariq, do you think Tariq comes across as though he wants to learn? You know, he does tend to fidget quite a lot doesn't he?  
A: Mm, I'm wondering if it's his concentration. You know if he can't do it, maybe, I can't actually say I've ever worked with him as such, you know I've helped him but I've not sat down and worked with him, but maybe once he lost his concentration he can't carry on. Or if he can't do something, like I used to be like that at school, you know if I couldn't do something then I'd stop listening and just  
H: Mm  
A: ... not fidget and disruptive but I'd just go off on one and you know (laughs)  
H: Mm. Okay, so do you think that Gillian relates to each of those children in a positive way?  
A: I think she does, but maybe some more than others... 'cos I think Beth and...Leanne although they put their hands up and they are by no means shy  
H: Mm  
A: But because they are quieter and better behaved  
H: Mm  
A: and don't need to be engaged as much as the others, then she doesn't chose them as much as she chooses the others  
H: Okay  
A: Daniel and Tariq, she'll choose Daniel err... because he'll be seen to be having a go  
H: Right  
A: And Tariq... I can't think now (laughs)  
H: You know when you work in groups with children  
A: Yeah  
H: Have you worked with Daniel? Has he been selected?  
A: Yeah  
H: Has Tariq ever been selected to work with you?

A: .... no, I don't think so

H: What about Leanne and Beth?

A: No

H: Okay, let's go on to talk about Sophie's class

A: Right, Sophie's class. It sounds awful but I don't feel like, I mean I've worked with them equally in there, but I don't feel I know the children as I do know them in here... in terms of personally and in terms of their work

H: Mm

A: Because I only do maths anyway...numeracy and I do spend a lot of time with a certain group... which includes Jaleela occasionally, err.... Roberto very, very occasionally but that's it

H: Right

A: Although Isabel, Jaleela and Charlotte are all sat on the same table in maths

H: Mm interesting, how do you think she has grouped the children? Is it mixed ability or sets?

A: I don't know... I can't work it out. I know in Gillian's class, she has mixed ability and I think she takes into account behaviour as well.

H: Right

A: But in Sophie's class, I think she's got it in mixed ability but her version of mixed ability

H: Right

A: So she's put the quieter ones I think rather than whether they've got the ability or not

H: So she puts the quiet one together?

A: Yeah but there's one particular table you probably know which one I'm on about and there all very bright aren't they

H: Mm

A: And quiet and well behaved

H: Unclear. Err... so Isabel, how would you describe Isabel?

A: Oh Isabel, she's a little sweetheart, she's not shy but she's not outspoken either

H: Mm

A: And she has been really helpful to (name of girl who struggles considerably in class). Err she was doing it again today, you know, really mother hen sort of thing

H: Mm, what do you think her relationship with Sophie is like?

A: To tell you the truth, I don't know. I think she might be one of those that gets overlooked because she's quiet

H: Mm

A: Same goes for Jaleela. Roberto gets attention because he does chat

H: Is it positive attention or negative attention?

A: More negative attention. I think that's because he's sat next to Ziad as well.

H: Does Ziad get told off?

A: Yeah, but no as much as Roberto and that's honest, honestly speaking...err

H: Why do you think that might be?

A: I don't know, I think Ziad is more, he seems to be more outgoing, I mean it hard for me because I've know Roberto since he was that big. Err...I think Roberto is a bit more outgoing and a bit more popular, although Roberto is well popular, he's really popular

H: In the class?

A: Yeah, I think do because he's funny and I think he just makes everyone laugh, you know the way he comes out with things

H: Yeah

A: Ziad I'd say the same but in a different way

H: Right. Do you think Sophie has a better relationship with Ziad or Roberto?

A: Err...Ziad, a better relationship with Ziad, yeah.

H: Right, mm. Do you think he has more patience with him?

A: Yeah, yeah. Maybe because either she knew what he was like, knows what he's like... I don't know I can't put my finger on why

H: Mm, okay. So does she talk to Isabel a lot

A: Well she does but not, how can I put it, she doesn't go out of her way, you know

H: Right

A: You know if Isabel's got her hand up she will be chosen but not straight away, you know

H: Mm... do you think Isabel's chatty with other children? You know like with Roberto, is it the same kind of thing or...

A: No, no. She's quiet, she'll stick to her table. She dead helpful like I say with (name of girl) and she's got the patience of a saint as well, you know she'll sit and she'll keep going until (name of girl) has got what she's trying to explain to her. In fact today, just an observation, we were doing about these shapes which I'm not very good at, but they wanted to have a shape of a... trapezium and Isabel did one out of pencils on the table in front of her. But she didn't say Miss, Miss look at this, look at this, she just did it. And I saw it because I was on their table and I said that's good, well done. So she'll do stuff but not sort of sell herself, you know (unclear)

H: So do you mean that you have to be quite... loud to get attention?

A: Yeah, yeah I think so, I think do

H: Or be a favourite?

A: Yeah, both

H: Okay and what about Charlotte?

A: Charlotte, she's in between isn't she? If there was a scale it would be Isabel, Jaleela and Charlotte. Charlotte's quieter than Roberto, for example, Roberto's quieter than Ziad although it's Roberto that gets it (laughs).

H: Right

A: But Charlotte's I think has got a bit more confidence than Isabel

H: Right, in herself?

A: In herself, yeah. And she'll question things, she did today. You know, is this right, is that right?

H: Mm

A: Whereas Isabel just got on with doing the shape herself and worked it out in her head

H: Mm

A: But Charlotte, she's popular but...yeah, I think she gets chosen when she puts her hand up

H: Mm

A: More so than the others

H: And she's not on the back table

A: No, but they get chosen a lot

H: So that's (lists six names). So would you say that Charlotte had a good relationship with Mrs Brookes or...

A: Yeah, just run of the mill again, nothing special

H: Okay and Jaleela. How would you describe Jaleela?

A: Jaleela

H: Would you say that she has good social skills or...

A: I'm not sure about Jaleela, I think she comes across as more confident than what she is

H: Mm

A: I really do and I think that sometimes she says things that she thinks people want to hear rather than what she means

H: Yeah

A: But I mean I don't really know her that much (laughs)

H: Mm

A: Because I thought she would be one that I would work with, you know because she might need a bit more help, but I don't really work with her

H: Because she's not selected by Sophie

A: Yeah, yeah. Like I'll work with err...Isabel's table occasionally in maths but sometimes she'll change who sits there, you know she'll change people around.

H: Did you say Charlotte's sat on that table?

A: Yes she is, but I don't focus on Charlotte

H: Right

A: But Jaleela, she's a funny one, I don't know. Again I think she's quiet and I think she'll know the answer sometimes but not put her hand up

H: Do you think she has confidence in herself?

A: No, not much, not as much as she lets on she does

H: Oh, we didn't talk about confidence in relations to the children in the other class. Do you think Daniel has confidence?

A: More now than he did, yeah but he still err... if the teacher asks a question, you can see him thinking it and thinking shall I, shall I. Sometimes if I'm sat next to him, you probably do the

same; he whispers the answer and asks if he should put his hand up I encourage him to put his hand up

H: Mm

A: Where as he might not have done that before

H: Mm

A: But saying that, you sort of look at the teacher and you think pick him as he's just worked hard on it, but it doesn't always happen which is fair enough if you've got to...

H: How about Tariq? Do you think he's confident?

A: Yeah, I think he's confident in himself but

H: Do you think he's popular?

A: I think he is actually. But I couldn't tell you who he hangs round with, he plays football at lunchtimes, but I don't know who he plays with so...

H: Is Daniel popular?

A: Yeah, yeah but I think for his footballing skills. 'Cos they're always coming up to me, well there was a few weeks when he kept getting the prize unknown (unclear) because of his football skills. And I think in this class, if you're good at football, then you're in the crowd

H: Is Tariq good at football?

A: I don't think he always plays. I don't know who picks who, but I know Gillian picks the captains to save any arguments but I don't know how they go about picking the teams.

H: Right. What about Leanne, do you think she is popular?

A: I think she's popular yeah, but she's a bit babyish as well isn't she? You know but I think that sort of draws people to her.

H: Mm, can you give me an example of how she is babyish

A: Oh, by the way she speaks (laughs) err...yeah, all the time. I don't know if she puts it on you know, but don't you think that she speaks like that all the time?

H: Overemphasising

A: Yeah, yeah. All the time, even when she's asking questions

H: Mm, what about Beth?

A: Err... she's quiet. I just think she's one of the groups; I don't think she's like err a leader

H: In this class at the start of the year, they didn't really get on. But now they are working together more, they get on better

A: Yeah, yeah but I think a lot of it is sport. Again the girls, that includes Beth plays basketball at lunchtime

H: So do you think it makes them more popular if they play sport?

A: You are more included, yeah. But there are cliques amongst the girls aren't there? (Lists girls names)

H: Mm. So when they play sports they become more included?

A: Yeah, yeah. And this class (6E) is the only class out of the whole lunch time perspective that actually play, you know most of them play sport. If you let just our class out

H: Mm

A: They're playing together because they play sport, but if they didn't have sport they would probably walk round in those particular little groups

H: Right. And do the other class play together?

A: They play football, most of the boys and one or two of the girls... I don't know about the rest

H: Mm

A: Gillian, everyday before lunch will pick the captains and pay attention and she'll listen to them as well afterwards, after lunch. For Sophie lunchtime is lunchtime. I'm not saying she doesn't do anything I am sure she is dead busy and everything. She's just not interested; I think she thinks lunchtime is (unclear). It's her lunchtime you know (unclear) she doesn't see the kids unless she's brought in to sort something out

H: Mm, mm

A: Whereas Gillian, she'd organise the lunch if she had to (laughs). Gillian will go and sit with them in the canteen as well. In fact, I don't know if this is any use to you, but Gillian sat in on the lunchtime music group to see who was turning up and who wasn't and she had the bell and shaker and all sorts. And Sophie turned round this morning and said I know Mrs Eastwood has sat in to check who in her class is turning up to the lunchtime music group but I haven't got the time to do that, I don't want to have to do that.

H: Mm

A: So I think that's the difference, one is more involved than the other.

H: Mm. Would you say they talked to or treated you differently or...

A: Gillian is constant. I mean, maybe I'm bias but I have been working with Gillian for four years but without being bias, Gillian is constant, she'll say '*hiya chuck*' or you know whatever, apart from you know when she's mega stressed

H: Mm

A: But with Sophie, you'll either get a hello or you won't and you just learnt to deal with that, you just learn to accept it, you know that's the way she is. She wouldn't tell me what she's done at the weekend or do you know what I mean

H: Mm

A: She is not as involved as Gillian

H: Okay, err... how do you think that what is happening at home affects how the teacher is in the classroom? For example Sophie's Mum became ill not so long ago and they were changes with difficult decisions to make

A: Yeah

H: Do you think during those times that Sophie was the same or different with the children?

A: No, she was different with the children. She err... I'll deal with them individuality but I find her more open with problems than Gillian. You have to delve in with Gillian, you have to say is there something wrong, what's the problem, you know

H: Mm

A: But Sophie, she will tell you what's going on but she....she seemed very tired and she got...quite shouty didn't she?

H: Mm

A: I don't want to say aggressive because that's too strong but she got short tempered or she was... it didn't take much. Like now, she's okay and everything, it takes more for her to get you know, to loose it she did then

H: Mm

A: (Unclear) we all do it don't we (unclear) sometimes she was shouting at them because they weren't listening (unclear) so yeah I think it did impact on her job

H: Mm

A: Yeah, and I think she knew it as well and everybody else around her, Gillian knew it, we knew it (laughs)

H: Laughs

A: Also, I mean I am scatty person as well, but she err... I mean one incident as you know, really pissed me off. She said that she had given me this photocopying to do and she hadn't (laughing) so stuff like that

H: Mm

A: But like I say, we're all like that

H: Yeah, yeah. And how do you thin it affects Gillian?

A: Now Gillian, she's more in herself. You'll she it in the morning, she's tired and I think sometimes she can, if there is a reason to go to town on the kids then she will

H: Mm. It's the same for me, if things are going on at home or whatever and I am unhappy, I do bring it into work and it does impact on how I am with teaching staff and children

A: Yeah but I mean it's hard for me because I don't work with you, you know we don't generally work in the same class together at the same time

H: Mm

A: But we are both like that, I know I can get arsy

H: All part of being human

A: Yeah, yeah. But I suppose it's because we are not on the teacher's level, so maybe weren't not as...I mean I feel different to the teachers, Sophie will do something (unclear) you know, you do don't you?

H: Mm

A: Or Gillian might do something but... we can't get off doing that

H: No

A: I feel that, that sort of thing is not my responsibility

H: No

A: You know, anything that big I will pass it off to Gillian

H: Right and she will deal with it?

A: Yeah, she will deal with it

H: When you approach Sophie, does she deal with it?  
A: No, she will just say right and then you won't get any feedback. Whereas I had an incident with this class yesterday which you probably know about when she went mad at them, I don't know what she did but  
H: Mm  
A: But I did turn round to her and say its been dealt with, not because I was concerned the children were going to get told off twice but because I don't want to be passing things on to Gillian  
H: Mm  
A: That I should be dealing with myself  
H: Mm  
A: But I did want her to know that they were chucking things around. And I really just said don't deal with because I have dealt with it, err... and she did deal with it  
H: Did that annoy you?  
A: No, because I know she realised that's the way I did it. And you know it wasn't something that's trivial; its something she thinks is very serious and is stamping down on (unclear)  
H: Okay, lastly, let's talk about the SATs  
A: Right  
H: Have you noticed any differences in the nature of teaching before and after the tests?  
A: Well you can tell by the work that they are giving the children. You know like now, they are doing the rivers, they are doing this and that but before, they were doing specific work, you know like the answers to specific work sheets and when you looked a the SATs papers questions, they were just the same. Not the same questions obviously but the same sort of thing  
H: Structure  
A: Yeah  
H: So do you think it's more relaxed now?  
A: Yeah, yeah definitely. In fact Sophie just turned round to her class and, well... she's let them mark their own work, their own mental maths, which is unusual for Sophie and she said this the reason she was going to let them mark their own stuff was because all the assessments had been done and she had a record of their marks and levels... something along those lines.  
H: Right  
A: But in places like silent reading she told them that she'd prefer if they silent read at home and caught up with the work during silent reading time here, such as if they needed to get up to a certain point with making their hats. Have I gone off the subject now?  
H: No, no. I was thinking about how they structure the school lessons to accommodate...  
A: (Interrupting) yeah, well it's like today... I mean like I said before, Sophie is down the line, if she's planned something, she'll stick to it rigidly although because of this fire thing and this assembly thing, she got the telly out not because she wanted them to sit and watch the telly (laughs) but because she thought it would be more useful....  
H: Okay. We are going to stop there because I can hear the children coming back up. Thanks very much for agreeing to talk to me.  
A: That's okay.

**INTERVIEW WITH MR AND MRS RICHARDSON, DANIEL'S PARENTS****Date:** 08/07/2002**Location:** Daniel's family home

**Notes:** *Expressing her reservations about the area in which Daniel lived, Mrs Eastwood insisted on accompanying me to Daniel's house. Upon entering the house, I did note the numerous bolts on the front door and the scruffy paintwork in the hallway and front room. There was constant background noise during the interview: Mrs Eastwood who was sat next to me throughout the interview, talked to Daniel whilst he played on his computer; two dogs were barking in the room and multiple fans were on as I was a warm day. This made it particularly difficult circumstances for audio taping, hence the many gaps in the transcription of the interview. Brief written notes were made during the interview, but these were patchy.*

**Key:** Helen (H); Mrs Gillian Eastwood (G); Daniel (D); Mrs Sarah Richardson (S); Mr Brian Richardson (B).

- H: Okay, so the things we discuss here will be anonymous in my research write-up, even though Mrs Eastwood's here (laughing)
- G: I'm watching him (Daniel)
- H: Err
- G: Is that alright me being here, I'll sit in the car if you want
- S: Nooo (emphasis)
- H: So what year did Daniel come to Roseberry Hill Primary School?
- S: Year 3
- H: Year 3
- S: Yeah
- H: And would you say that the communication between you and the school has been good or...
- S: It was very good up until... Year...
- D: Year 5
- S: Year 5 and then it went (noise signifying down) straight through the floor
- H: Right. Were you able to go in and talk to the teacher or
- S: Yeah we went in to talk to the teacher, but it sort of...
- G: Just say what you want... (unclear)
- S: It didn't get, it didn't get, how can I put it without it sounding, followed, followed
- B: Followed up on
- S: (Talking over Daniel's Dad) followed up upon
- H: Right
- S: It just got left and we discussed Daniel's problems and it was err, yeah, err, err, well we know about that yeah
- B: (Unclear)
- S: But nothing got followed up on
- H: Right okay err, so you discussed problems with him and you brought them to his attention and they weren't, nothing was done
- S: Mm
- H: Would you have felt uncomfortable going to the Head Teacher to discuss it or did you feel very...
- S: (Interrupting) at the time everything was happening with me. That I was poorly and that added onto it.
- H: Yeah
- S: But err and that put things behind with seeing people
- H: Yeah

S: On seeing teachers and seeing and what have you, so I was ... (unclear) there but that was my health problem

H: Right, would you say it's been better in Year 6?

S: Very much so (laughing) and the previous years before that were excellent

H: In year 3 and 4?

S: Year 4

H: Yeah, okay err... can I ask why you decided to take Daniel to (name of area in which the school is located)

S: Err yeah... I moved from (area name) and moved in with my Mum when my Dad died

H: Right

S: And err... it's a big house, so we all went to live there and that. She lived in (area name)

H: Right

S: And that's how we got him in

H: To Roseberry Hill?

S: Yeah, the school he was at before was (unclear)

H: Was that here

S: Yeah (area and school name)

H: (Unclear) do you think he's been happy?

S: Yeah I do, very happy

H: Big improvement?

S: Yeah, yeah

H: Err... has he got a group of friends?

S: He has...

B: (Speaks but it is unclear as Mum speaks over the top)

S: And I am very sad that he's not going to Greenwood with them. But having said that, he didn't get into (another secondary school name) err the school he's going to is (school name). (Looks to Daniel and asks) is it (school name)?

D: Yeah

S: (Tells dogs to sit down) Err... he hasn't done, he hasn't been there yet to view it or anything so

H: Right

S: So hopefully we'll get him there one day this week

H: Right

S: (Addressing Mrs Eastwood) you've got an open day for Greenwood on the?

G: Wednesday

S: Wednesday, well he won't be going in for that day

G: Right, yeah, fine. He'd only be doing jobs and stuff

S: So err so what I will do is ring the head up and ask if I can get, if he can go to that school on that day. Should be alright as they have (unclear)

H: Right

S: Err

H: Does he know anyone going there?

S: Yeah. A couple of err... a couple of the children that were outside playing that you will have seen are going (I note that I did not see any children playing outside)

H: Right

S: And one of your friends is starting this year isn't he, err

D: Alex

S: Alex and there's an older friend

H: Right

S: Who's already there, so

H: Err... so how would you describe Daniel's relationship with the teacher last year, was it good or not so good?

S: No, not so good

H: Not so good. And how would you say he got on with the adults that he's worked with this year?

S: Excellent

H: Okay

S: Last year we had temper tantrums

H: Do you mean at home?

S: Yeah at home... I could find and I could see that we were looking (Dad speaks but again unclear as mum spoke over) at a child that was very... angry

H: Right

S: He wasn't being listened to or

H: Right

S: He even went as far to say I'm not being explained to

H: Right

S: Now that

H: Mm

S: Or I put my hand up and I've never been asked when I've put my hand up

H: Right

S: So there, that sort of thing

H: Is he more, is he more involved in the lessons now or

S: (Unclear) he's got a good report

H: Laughs

S: Yeah

H: Err... does he, do you think he enjoys it?

S: Yeah

H: (Unclear) and does he say that he is happy

S: Yeah

H: And does he talk about it at home?

S: A lot more at home, yeah

H: So how do you think that learning happens? Do you think its something to do with (unclear) or do you think it is the environment or

S: It's a bit of each I feel it's a) on what you inherit

H: Yeah

S: And I know that for a fact because dyslexia is within the family and b) on the other

H: The environment?

S: The environment

H: Do you think that's at home and at school or

S: Both, both

H: So what do you think will encourage Daniel to learn more, to encourage him to learn more?

S: To learn more would be erm a teacher who was prepared to listen when he, he was saying he didn't quite understand. If that teacher shows him that they were interested in him they (unclear)

H: Yeah

S: Daniel would then want to learn more because that teacher is there to

H: Right (unclear)

S: Yeah

H: Err do you think that... Daniel has done quite a lot of work with Alison and I, the classroom assistants

S: Yeah

H: Did he do work with, did he receive help last year?

S: You know, I can't remember that one

H: Did you have a classroom assistant last year Daniel?

B: I thought he did

D: Yeah, Bryce

H: Mrs Bryce

S: Yeah he did, yeah but he didn't get on very well

D: (Unclear – all adults laughed)

H: What about home, what things can encourage him to learn at home?

S: Err we try to get, I try to get him involved in things err... he's brilliant at art and drawing and he's just done a fantastic picture that I'll get you in a sec (unclear) he's got to finish it yet

D: I haven't

S: No you've got, you've got some more work on that to do

D: On yeah

S: (Unclear) there's a friend who gives him an hour a night, not every night, when he can and helps him to draw

H: Oh right, is that the one who lives

S: Next door but one  
H: Right  
S: And the computer, since I've had this it's been an added bonus (laughing - unclear) we have a playstation so there's that. We plays cards, monopoly, he loves  
H: Mm  
S: Err  
H: So you do family things together like games, cards...  
S: Because I don't just think it's down to machinery to help them to learn  
H: No  
S: You've got to learn by doing difficult things between the groups  
H: Yeah  
S: 'Cos Brian doesn't live with me, we're divorced and I remarried  
H: Right  
S: And I don't live with my second husband  
H: Right  
S: So it's just the four of us in the environment. And then when he goes to his Dad's at weekend, there's just him and his Dad  
H: Right  
S: 'Cos the girls just stay with, you know how girls are at fifteen (unclear)  
H: Mm  
S: Not cool  
H: Mm  
S: Err he's so he mends things, he's driven a Land Rover  
H: Has he? Is that at your house?  
B: Yeah  
S: Yeah, he's driven a Land Rover and he's got a motorbike  
H: Is that at your house too?  
S: Not yet, nearly (laughing) he wanted it for Christmas so we put the money together  
H: Right  
S: He can ride a motorbike (unclear) err but that's only on moor land, it can only be taken out on moor land.  
H: Yeah  
S: So yeah and he's very, very interested in taking things apart, I don't think (unclear) car  
H: Is that what you do?  
B: Yeah  
H: Where do you live?  
B: Err (name of place and wider area)  
H: So does he do things like that with you? (unclear)  
B: Sometimes yeah  
H: So he likes (unclear)  
B: Yeah  
H: Will he get to do that in high school, things like that?  
B: Yeah probably  
(Unclear – mum, dad and myself talking)  
S: I'm hoping he'll take a, I think, err work at Fuji's, they have (raised voices from Daniel and his teacher) driving lessons and things  
H: Oh, right  
S: I've told him as soon as he's seventeen I want him to go for his driving lessons  
H: Yeah  
B: Yeah (unclear)  
H: What other influences do you think there are upon learning then? Like the home, do you think friends...  
S: (Interrupting) Friends outside err grandparents, not that there's many of them left now, but yes, definitely grandparents  
H: Do you see them...  
S: See Grandma don't you and you're Granddad, my Mum and his Father  
H: Right

S: Oh Brian's Father sorry, err yeah, there's things there... Mum will, Mum will (unclear) about her life and growing up and err about things in my life

H: Mm

S: That sort of thing, so they learn that way

H: Mm

B: (Speaks but it is unclear)

H: Does he get on with his sisters?

S: (Laughing) (unclear) Err

D: He does, he does

S: He does yes (Dad in background talking, but it is unclear) it's just normal family, he'll wind them up like on Sat... Sunday he was singing and that was winding them up

H: (Laughing) Unclear as Mum spoke over

S: No it wasn't, it was Friday wasn't it? And it's Mum he's winding me up tell him to shut up or he'll play jokes on them. Like this morning he sat there and err (unclear as teacher raises her voice)

H: (Laughing). You know when we were doing the tests (unclear as teacher speaking)

B: Yeah he did, yeah, yeah, yeah

H: Yeah, did he get upset, you know

S: Err yes he did, he did, very upset over it

H: When he came back was he was worried?

B: He was worried, he was worried about it

S: Yeah exactly. He was worried that he'd not done very well and I said to him try your best that's all you can do (unclear)

H: Was he upset when he came back after the (unclear)

S: Yeah he came home and he said to me Mum I didn't do very well on this one. Preceded to tell me what he though he hadn't done very well on and I said, well you've tried

H: Yeah. What do you think of the tests? Do you think they are a good thing or what do you think the point of them is?

S: I couldn't fully agree that there a good thing... and I also can't say there a bad thing, so I'm stuck on that one

H: Why do you think they are not a good thing?

S: Because I think it's

B: Puts too much pressure

S: Too much pressure

B: Pressure (unclear as Mum speaks over him)

S: (Speaking over Dad) at the time and at the age they are because they're not that far off leaving primary school (unclear) and they've got a lot going on in that year

H: Mm

S: If it was to be done out of primary school, then I'd be pleased

H: Right

S: I could see, what he's, say when you've got to 13

H: Yeah

S: I could see that he's yes, taking it in

B: I think it depends as well on the child and on the family environment, where if someone's quite intelligent

H: Mm

B: It's alright or someone's not all that intelligent will struggle with it

S: Well yeah that's what I think really

B: Puts more pressure on him

S: Yeah I was thinking that

H: Mm

B: It's like the thing that annoys me is maths

H: Mm

B: It's like maths progresses all the time

H: Yeah

B: Now when me, me and Sarah were at school it was so different

H: Mm

B: To how it is now

S: Yeah

H: Yeah  
B: So when the kids come home with their homework  
S: (Interrupting) I can't help them  
H: Right  
B: So, so  
S: I mean half the things that have been sent home I've never heard of  
H: Right  
S: Or you know I've never done  
B: No  
H: Mm, you're not the only parents who feel that way  
S: And I'm like (gasping noise, followed by laughter)  
B: I mean I suppose, I suppose you'd be alright if you was very, a younger parent and had kids early on in life, where there wouldn't be much difference between them being young 'n' kids  
H: Mm, yeah  
B: I mean there would be differences but not that much unlike us  
H: If there was a chance of going and learning about the work they were doing, do you think that, would you take advantage of that or would you not bother. If you could go in and they would show you what to do or...  
S: (Interrupting) yeah because for myself, I'd be learning myself  
H: Yeah... because Daniel has really progressed in maths (unclear) much better (unclear). Does Daniel have friends in (name of area here Dad lives)?  
B: Err... he's got a couple but not really  
S: (Interrupting) he's got one friend that lives in, in just up where your brother lives that he said he had a lovely time with  
B: Yeah, Matt, yeah he's (unclear)  
H: So does he spend time with you (unclear)  
B: (Unclear) yeah, yeah  
H: Okay and that's it unless there's anything else that you would like to add  
S: No  
B: No

## INTERVIEW WITH MRS REDPATH, ELIZABETH'S MUM

Date: 20/06/2002

Location: 6B classroom, Roseberry Hill.

*Notes: There were interruptions during the interview, as Mrs. Eastwood and the German teacher from Greenwood secondary school who taught 6B walked in and out of the 6S classroom numerous times. Mrs. Brookes was not in school that afternoon (she has gone on a visit with children from the Indian music group which included Elizabeth) and Mrs Eastwood was talking with the German teacher regarding that afternoon's activities for 6B. As Mrs Redpath had recently joined 6B as a teaching assistant, I introduced her to the German teacher before beginning the interview. Throughout the interview the windows were open (as the classroom was very hot) and children could be heard outside playing in the playground.*

**Key:** Helen (H); Mrs Redpath (L)

- H: So I haven't got any specific questions  
L: Right  
H: But I would like to talk about these three areas (referring to sheet).  
L: Fine, yeah  
H: So the first one is your thoughts about this school  
L: Yeah  
H: Err... and then the second one is how you think learning happens... is it within the child or is it in contact with others or is it a bit of both. And the last one is other influences on children's learning. Okay? So we'll just kind of discuss them in turn okay?  
L: Yes that's fine  
H: So is Elizabeth the first child to go to this school from your family?  
L: No she's the third  
H: She's the third because she's got two brothers  
L: (Unclear)  
H: And have one of your children had Mrs Eastwood before?  
L: Yeah  
H: Yeah?  
L: All three of them have  
H: All three of them (Mrs Redpath laughs). Okay and do you think the communication between the school and yourself is good  
L: Yeah  
H: Do you always know what's going on, that kind of thing?  
L: It's, it's very open to you coming in  
H: Right  
L: Which is good  
H: Do you think that's partly the teacher or, are you able to discuss anything with the teacher, you know if there was a problem?  
L: Yeah I feel I could, yeah  
H: Yeah... err do you think that would be different with a different teacher? Like last year was it as easy to go and talk to the teacher or...  
L: Err... no  
H: Was that Mr Tate?  
L: (Mrs Redpath nodded her head)  
L: What's the difference between the teachers that makes it easier?  
L: Err...  
H: If you know what I mean. Or not easier as the case may be  
L: (Laughs) ...approachability I think  
H: Right  
L: Having time to sit and listen to what you've got to say  
H: Right. And was it also difficult because he's Deputy Head Teacher as well or didn't that really  
L: (Interrupting) that didn't really enter into it, no  
H: Right, but you didn't feel as though he gave you the time  
L: No

H: Right. Err do you think Elizabeth gets on, I can't call her Elizabeth, Beth gets on (Helen and Mrs Redpath laughs) with... it doesn't seem right to me... (Mrs Redpath uses her daughters full name) with Mrs Eastwood. Does she have a better relationship with Mrs Eastwood than she did with...

L: (Interrupting) Easily

H: Yeah

L: Yeah, easily

H: Err... okay. She's grown in confidence a lot this year

L: She has yeah

H: How do you think she's progressed in her work?

L: Yeah really well because considering what she was like last year, worrying all the time about her maths, 'I'm no good at maths' she used to say err... she's pleased with what she's done, 'I've done really good stuff today' things like that so

H: And does she err tell you what she's doing every day at school and stuff? Does she go home and talk about it or...

L: Sort of points during the day, you know we did such a thing or you know, she really chooses, rather than, you don't get like a run through of everything that she's done

H: Yeah

L: It's more things that have stood out for her in the day

H: Right

L: That we hear about

H: If she struggles in classes, do you think that she would ask the teacher or the teaching assistants for help?

L: I think she would now

H: Yeah

L: She wouldn't, she didn't at the beginning of the year

H: No

L: She didn't last year, so

H: So do you think that's something to do with the relationships that she makes with other people?

L: I think she's err more confident in the teacher

H: Right

L: Of not being err... not belittled but err... not being put down in a way, you know err

H: Yeah

L: (Unclear) if you don't understand it

H: Yeah

L: Just turn round, you know

H: Yeah she has a way of making it okay. It doesn't matter if you don't understand. I think sometimes in other classes... teachers don't always encourage you to put you hand up and say you don't understand. Mrs Eastwood really does try to encourage it.

L: Yeah

H: So do you know Mrs Eastwood through like parent's evenings and school activities

L: Yeah

H: And you've worked in 6B for just two afternoons (Helen and Mrs Redpath laughs) but do you think, can you see a difference in the teachers or...

L: (Interrupting) what between the two classes?

H: Yeah

L: Yeah

H: And could you describe that?

L: Err... not on just two hours, no

H: Right

L: But there is a difference there

H: Is that the way in which they relate to the children or...

L: Yeah I think it probably is yeah

H: Right, okay. I'll be asking you again you know before the end of the year (Mrs Redpath laughs). Okay err how do you think that learning happens? Do you think it's within the child, like motivation within them or do you think you learn with others...

L: I don't really know. I don't...

H: Well, Beth has mentioned that she receives help from home with homework and stuff. So do you think that she is learning through doing work with other people?

L: Right

H: So do you think it's with others or do you think it's something that they have to be interested in themselves to want and go and seek out help from others?

L: I think it's better with others

H: Mm

L: Because you gonna get sometimes different slants

H: Yeah

L: And that widens your knowledge.

H: Yeah

L: You don't just see it from one angle, you start to see it from lots of angles and your knowledge widens

H: Okay. Do you think it's anything to do with... genes, whether what you inherit, do you think it has anything to do with it?

L: It, ah, it has a bearing but I don't think just because... people can be clever in different areas

H: Mm

L: I mean it's not all academic (unclear word) so I mean you can be brilliant with your hands or

H: Yeah

L: You know, it's just that if your brilliant on paper people think that you are intelligent, where as

H: Do you think that's because of the culture that we are in?

L: Yeah

H: It puts a big emphasis on tests doesn't it?

L: Yeah

H: And academic work. What do you think of the tests? Do you think they're valuable or...

L: No (Mrs Redpath and Helen laugh)

H: Can you elaborate on that please? (Respondent laughs)

L: Err... I think even at eleven they're still young. I mean I'm horrified that err Jack does them, he's five and he has homework, spellings, maths... and... I get hauled in every few weeks 'cos we don't do it

H: Right

L: Because I don't agree with it. I do the reading with him 'cos I yeah (unclear word) books (unclear word) but all the other stuff

H: Do you think they should be having more fun rather than

L: Definitely

H: Rather than a strict regime

L: Definitely, yeah

H: Err... a lot of the children got nervous when they were doing the tests

L: Yeah

H: Did Beth get nervous?

L: Oh god, yeah

H: Right. Because I mean it does play a big factor when you're actually doing the tests, if you're anxious you can't settle, or you experience difficulty reading or understanding the question

L: Mm and it's only as good as you are on the day, it's, it's only have you revised the right things for what's on the paper

H: That's true

L: I mean assessment throughout the year is a lot more accurate

H: Mm, yeah

L: A lot more accurate

H: (Unclear) err why do you think it is, that they only test English, maths and science? They don't seem to shown an interest in anything else

L: I've no idea because the thing is, they start to do history and geography and all that don't they? So...

H: Mm

L: Maths and English is always seen as the big, the key ones isn't it really

H: Yeah, yeah

L: Err and Science is err new isn't it because of the new computer age so  
H: Yeah  
L: That's like that becomes hip as well  
H: Yeah  
L: You know lets' get Science and that. But... I mean like I said before if you're arty  
H: Mm  
L: There's nothing that you could show  
H: No  
L: There's nothing that you could shine in  
H: No  
L: You know, so  
H: Mm, you don't get the opportunity to show what you're good at. Okay...computers, does Beth like computers  
L: Yeah  
H: Yeah  
L: She's... very comfortable on it  
H: Mm  
L: It's just natural  
H: They're more comfortable than I am  
L: Yeah I mean I've not a clue  
H: I have been learning along with them, you know, when I first started using them I hated them and I felt anxious to do anything but they seem to take the attitude, just have a go. Does she have a computer at home?  
L: Yeah  
H: Maybe that's why she's  
L: (Interrupting) it's a family one  
H: Okay, are there other things that you think influence a child's learning? So for example we've mentioned the relationship between a child and a teacher  
L: Yeah  
H: How about the input from home?  
L: Yeah  
H: You know because some children don't have the opportunity, their parents work long hours or (unclear) some parents at parents evening mentioned that they find the work quite difficult  
L: Yeah  
H: You know, so the way questions are worded in Maths for example  
L: Yeah  
H: Err so do you find the work that's sent home, do you find it difficult? Or because Beth's had brothers in previous years are you okay with it?  
L: Err any problems with homework Derek does it  
H: Right  
L: (Laughing) any arty things, any arty things I do it  
H: Right  
L: So between us we cover everything  
H: Yeah  
L: 'Cos Derek is the academic  
H: Right  
L: So err... but like you say, Mark will help her with it as well  
H: Right  
L: So  
H: Okay, do you think she's quite an independent worker or...  
L: She is actually. She goes upstairs to do her homework.  
H: Do you have to prompt her or does she do it  
L: No, she does it. But I think that's... like I said before Chris comes in and does his homework, Mark comes in and gets it out. I've never said you must do you're homework. I usually say in the evening has anybody got you know (unclear) but on the whole they just do it, so  
H: Right, very impressive, it's not what other parents have said  
L: But to me that's ideal

H: Mm  
 L: That's how it should be isn't it?  
 H: Yeah. It's like they've got an interest in it and they want to do it, isn't it?  
 L: Yeah  
 H: What other factors do you think influence learning? Like for example the way that Beth interacts with other people on her table, do you think that would be important?  
 L: Yeah if she didn't get in with them  
 H: If she didn't get on with them?  
 L: Yeah  
 H: Do you think she gets on with most of the children?  
 L: Err I think she's quite sociable, I think she's quite willing to get on with people  
 H: Mm  
 L: Err I think she finds it difficult if err they're the children that are disruptive (unclear) like that  
 H: Mm... okay we'll have to stop now as they're all coming in  
 L: Okay  
 H: But thanks for that, okay  
 L: We can finish it some other time if you like  
 H: Yeah, that would be brilliant if you could

*The interview was continued on a week later in the 6E classroom.*

H: Okay, thanks for agreeing to continue with the interview  
 L: That's okay  
 H: So, we're going to talk about wider influences upon learning. So we talked last time about relationships between teacher and child. How important do you think that is for the child, in terms of their learning in the classroom?  
 L: What their relationship with the teacher?  
 H: Yeah... how they get on with the teacher  
 LG: Well they have to, I think they have to like the teacher really and err respect them  
 H: Is that something that you think they've had to build over the years or that would happen automatically when they come into the classroom?  
 L: I think they should have a certain amount of deference when they start  
 H: Right  
 L: Purely, purely because it's an adult  
 H: Yeah  
 L: And you should have you know, be like with an adult I think and then the relationship should build during the year  
 H: During the year  
 L: Mm  
 H: So do you think that children are like that automatically in the classroom?  
 L: Not in this day and age no (laughing)  
 H: No, what do you think influences them to be how they are?  
 L: It's the way they are brought up, what values are being taught at home  
 H: Right...err I don't know if Beth's ever mentioned it, the relationship between classroom assistant and child, do you think it's different to the one between a teacher and a child?  
 L: Yeah I do, I think it's err... I think it's more informal  
 H: Right and do you think that's a good thing or a bad thing?  
 L: I think it's a good thing, 'cos I think if something (unclear) her that she doesn't feel she could tell the class teacher, she might be able to tell the classroom assistant because it's quite a err different relationship  
 H: Right, do you get that impression from talking to Beth or is that from your experience in the classroom?  
 LG: That's from talking to Beth, yeah  
 H: Okay err and last time we talked about wider influences err ... home input, in that you do the creative side of things  
 L: Yeah  
 H: Ad your husband does the maths and stuff like that

L: Yeah

H: Did you like school yourself or?

L: No (laughing) Derek's got err something like eight or nine 'O' Levels

H: Right

L: And did however many 'A' Levels. I just struggled on, I struggled all the way, I got bored at school so I went to (unclear) and I, I failed my English twice

H: Right

L: After me third time (unclear) I failed my maths twice and I had to go in the upper sixth

H: Did you do well in your creative subjects?

L: Yeah, yeah but I came out in the end with six 'O' Levels and two 'A' Levels so I got there in the end but I was prepared to work for it though

H: Yeah

L: You know I can't, I thought whatever I do, I have to get the err right qualifications, so I just stuck at it

H: Right. Besides home, what other things do you think influence learning? Do you think they're friends have any (unclear) have any influence on their learning or...?

L: Not a great deal at this age I don't think, no

H: Do you think it increases as they get older or... do you think it's more important when they're younger?

L: I can't see that the peers, peers have much influence on Mark really err...his friends tend to be of the same, of similar standing as him I suppose

H: Right

L: So from that point of view interests and... things erm... like that and its (unclear) Mark is at the top end of the class and his friends tend to be at the top end of the class as well

H: Right

L: But (unclear)

H: Mm

L: So you could put it like that really

H: Right, what about Beth and her friends, do you think they influence her or...?

L: I think it's a horrible class of girls (respondent laughing)

H: This one? Why's that?

L: They have been trouble all the way through school, them all falling out

H: The girls are just falling out or the boys

L: Oh they fall out and err

H: Yea, they do fall out now but not, I don't think they fall out to the same extent as last year, you know. But they do fall out easily over football matches or anything

L: Yeah... oh it's just tales, she's said this and she's not friends with me now and...

H: Right, but does Beth participate in that or does she have a group of friends that aren't, you know, that are more disengaged from that?

L: 'Cos really I've encouraged her to stay out of it

H: Right

L: Really 'cos err that sort of friendship that (unclear) and started isn't worth having

H: Mm

L: Really

H: Mm

L: And to make friends outside the group which I think she's started to, it doesn't upset her like it used to

H: No. But the children that she hangs around with mainly, in my eyes, they're not part of the, they're not so much part of the other group, they dip in and out of the group

L: Mm... yeah

H: that seem to be falling out on a regular basis. So was she in that group originally? The one that falls out a lot

L: One the edge of it

H: On the edge of it

L: Sometimes she was in it and sometimes they'd say you're not in our group

H: Right

L: So she's sort of like in the middle really

H: Do you think now, that it's dealt with differently by the teacher? The squabbling?

L: It has been this year, yeah

H: Yeah  
L: Much better than last year  
H: Right is it a reoccurring problem then?  
L: Yeah, last year it was, yeah  
H: So do you think Beth's happier now?  
L: Yeah  
H: In terms of friends  
L: Yeah  
H: And does she see them outside school?  
L: Err... she sees Claire occasionally and she sees Joanne occasionally, that's about it really  
H: Right, okay err do you think that the media or anything has an influence upon learning?  
L: Yeah  
H: How do you think it influences it?  
L: I don't think it's media on it's own, I think to an extent it's what you're allowed to watch really  
H: Right  
L: Now we don't, at home we don't ban the children from watching anything  
H: Right  
L: Err... but saying that, I find it quite interesting to find what they do, what they look at. They look at things and it drives me nuts but I remember my father saying that to me, I better keep my mouth shut (Mrs Redpath and Helen laugh) and we all watch 'The Simpson's' and it's nice that everybody's watching something  
H: Yeah  
L: That we all enjoy and it's quite bonding in a way that  
H: Yeah  
L: and the kids like err... discovery  
H: Oh do they?  
L: And the scrap, have you ever seen the scrap heap challenge?  
H: Yeah  
L: We all watch that and a lot of the err history programmes we all watch  
H: Right  
L: Because I get very enthusiastic over these things and all the dinosaurs programmes we watch and anything about sharks I watch, it drives Derek nuts but I do  
H: Mm  
L: And Victorian stuff we like. So... they don't watch that much soap  
H: Right  
L: I mean we watch 'EastEnders' and 'Coronation Street' because (unclear) but after that they quite like a lot of the and I think that's because we've always had it on  
H: Right  
L: And when it's been on, it's you know its (unclear) 'oo look at that, look at that' you know animal programmes (unclear)  
H: Mm  
L: I mean they enjoy watching them so I think, used in the right way, you can pick a lot up  
H: Right  
L: I mean... on the other hand you can pick up a lot, a lot of err... (unclear) negatives as well but I think it's (unclear) at home  
H: Home has a big influence?  
L: Yeah  
H: Can you see differences in the children's attitudes when you're in school?  
L: Err well I couldn't relate it to what they watch because I don't know what they watch  
H: No  
L: So  
H: Right. Is there anything else that you would like to discuss in terms of learning? ... What is Beth's like at home? Because I only see her at school, like a little snapshot  
L: What's she like at home... helpful... fights (laughs)  
H: With her brothers?  
L: Yeah  
H: Do they get along?  
L: They do yeah, yeah they do. They go and do stuff together and err they're going to do the enter, Mark and Beth are going to do the entertainment for Jack's birthday over the summer

H: Oh right  
L: And I've promised then if they organise it, I'll pay them to do it. So they're doing their magic show and err a puppet theatre  
H: Oh fantastic  
L: Well they've done it before, they've, they will pull together like that  
H: Yeah, look after each other  
L: Which is quite nice, yeah  
H: And how do you think Beth's feeling about going to Greenwood  
L: She's looking forward to it now. At the beginning of the year I would have said she's too young  
H: Mm  
L: But she's more mature  
H: Matured a lot do you think?  
L: Yeah, I do  
H: Is she, is she conscious about receiving the... err test results or has she forgotten about it?  
L: She's not really mentioned it. I did bring it up, we had the interview on Tuesday and I did bring it up. I said err what will happen because she won't have any SATs results and they said well it will just go off the teachers report  
H: Right  
L: I though it's better that really because I mean... you know  
H: It's based on continued assessment?  
L: Yeah, it's more accurate  
H: Mm. What did they say at the secondary school?  
L: Well they're not in sets until Year 8  
H: Right  
L: So they, they re-evaluate in Year 7 anyway so  
H: Are they not put in sets for anything?  
L: No  
H: And do they get to choose someone that's going to be in their class or not?  
L: Err most years they have done. When they go for their err week there  
H: Mm  
L: You know they do so many mornings and afternoons  
H: That's not been organised yet (Helen and Mrs Redpath laugh)  
L: (unclear) they're asked to, I think its either one or two people they would like to stay with  
H: Right  
L: And everybody does it, so how they organise it I don't know and it ends up, sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't  
H: Right  
L: But  
H: Do you think Beth is particularly close to anyone in this class?  
L: I don't know, she's very friendly with Leanne, you know (unclear) isn't she?  
H: Yeah she is with Leanne  
L: After that  
H: Does she see Leanne outside school?  
L: She doesn't no, no  
H: Leanne says she doesn't go out very much outside school  
L: Right, no (unclear) doesn't (unclear)  
H: Mm  
L: But err I mean... Beth will have the err benefit of having two brothers there  
H: Mm  
L: So she'll know quite a lot of people  
H: Mm  
L: Plus playing lacrosse, nearly everybody who plays goes to Greenwood  
H: Right  
L: So you know, she will know a lot of people by sight  
H: Mm  
L: Which I think will be reassuring really  
H: Yeas. She'll meet you know more friends (unclear) I think this class will (unclear)  
L: I've told her that

**\*\* Children enter the classroom where the interview is being conducted\*\***

H: We'll have to stop now. Thanks for agreeing to be interviewed

L: You're welcome.

## INTERVIEW WITH MRS TAYLOR, LEANNE'S MUM

Date: 20/06/2002

Location: Staffroom, Roseberry Hill.

**Notes:** *The interview took place in the staffroom as it was the only space I could find that was private and unoccupied. Unfortunately, shortly after the interview commenced, lunchtime staff came in and sat together around the main table. They were unfortunately, rather noisy and their constant chatter and activity meant that some of our discussion is incoherent; this is marked in the transcription notes as (unclear).*

**Key:** Helen (H); Mrs Rose Taylor (R)

- H: Okay, I haven't got any specific questions that I want to ask you, but there are three subject areas that I'd like to talk about
- R: Right
- H: The first is your thoughts about this school and Leanne's progression through the years and her teachers and things like that. The second is how you think learning happens, is it within the child or within her relationships with others or do you think success and intelligence are to do with the genes we inherit? Things like that. And then wider influences shaping children's learning
- R: Right, okay
- H: Okay. So what we discuss today will be included in my research but your comments will be anonymous and won't be repeated to Mrs Eastwood or Ms Thompson
- R: Okay
- H: Okay, so has Leanne been here since nursery
- R: Yeah
- H: Would you say that she's always got on with her teachers?
- R: Yeah, I've never had any problems with any of the family (unclear)
- H: Right
- R: (Unclear)
- H: Do you think the communication between the school and home, you know do you think you always know what is going on? That the teachers inform you?
- R: Yeah
- H: And there's letters and the weekly newsletter
- R: Yeah, yeah
- H: Err...do you think that Leanne has got a supportive network of friends in the class?
- R: Yeah...she always has done coming up; I think it's the same group she's moved up with
- H: Right
- R: So, it's always been the same people
- H: And do you think that she has a good relationship with Mrs Eastwood?
- R: Yeah
- H: Do you think for example, that if she was experiencing problems, do you think she would be able to tell her?
- R: I think she'd tell her most things, yeah
- H: Yeah
- R: I think they've got a good relationship
- H: Would she have done that last year do you think?
- R: No (laughs)
- H: Do you think it depends on the teacher?
- R: It depends on the teacher. I know last year she wouldn't have done. I know certain things she didn't express, but err...I think it's because possibly last year it was a bloke
- H: Mm
- R: Which is different I think
- H: Mm
- R: (Unclear). But I think the relationship wasn't as close as she's got now
- R: Right
- H: Do you think it's a different style of teaching as well?
- R: Yeah
- H: Which do you think Leanne responds better too?

R: I think to this one  
H: This one  
R: Yeah, to the female one I think  
H: Unclear  
H: Because she did really struggle last year  
R: Right, in terms of work or...  
R: Err, I think...(loud sigh)...the work, it was as though it was err...it was put over or there wasn't enough of it to keep them going  
H: Right  
R: Because I think there is a lot of things that are lacking of (unclear)  
H: Mm  
R: (Unclear) you know I thought they were lacking a lot  
H: Mm  
R: And it showed when they first went into this class  
H: Mm  
R: Because they had quite a lot to catch up on  
H: Yeah  
R: So yeah, 'cos Leanne was a bit annoyed about it as well  
H: Yeah  
R: You know and I wasn't very happy about it  
H: No  
R: But like I say, she copes alright  
H: Yeah  
R: She managed to catch up  
H: Mm. do you think she's progressed well in the school?  
R: She's done very well, yeah. 'Cos err...she started off in the class quite late because she was off with suspected whooping cough  
H: Oh right  
R: Err so Year 1, she missed quite a bit of that and she's always struggled with science I think, that's her worst subject  
H: Right  
R: But she seems to have caught up quite well  
H: Yeah. She's very self motivated isn't she?  
R: Yeah, yeah. She comes home and she knows she got homework and I say (unclear) and she has to get herself disciplined. The homework is done on Saturday, err...  
H: Is that something you've brought about in her, or...  
R: I've always said to her if you've got homework and she knows we are going out, to get it done and sorted because I don't want her telling me on Sunday night that she's not done it  
H: Mm  
R: That's what her brothers used to do you see (laughs)  
H: Do her brothers help her with her homework or...  
R: No, they're never in  
H: Right. She has mentioned that you help her with it  
R: Yeah, sometimes, when I can. She won't let me help her too much in case I get it wrong because she said they do it different now compared to how I used to  
H: Yeah  
R: They have a completely different way of teaching now  
H: Mm  
R: So you know  
H: So how do you think learning happens?  
R: I think it's a combination: at home, at school and the child's got to be disciplined themselves, otherwise they won't  
H: Right, it that discipline something they have or something that  
R: I think some kids have got  
*\*\* Interruption \*\**  
R: I think some kids have got it but I think that unless you sort if work on it  
H: Mm  
R: You won't progress, come on a bit  
H: Right

R: I don't think even if they've got it, I don't think it will shine through if you know what I mean  
H: Yeah  
R: I do think some kids have got a bit more than others (laughs) that's the way I'd word it (laughs)  
H: Do you think the genes they inherit have anything to do with how successful they are or...  
R: Err... in some cases I could imagine that, but not all cases  
H: Right  
R: Certainly, if they've got the ability, they will learn  
H: Yeah  
R: You know with a lot of help from school and home  
H: Mm  
R: I think they will. If the challenge is big enough and they discipline themselves enough I think they will (unclear)  
H: Mm, okay. Is it difficult, err...because you work full time  
R: Mm  
H: Is it difficult sometimes to spend time with Leanne?  
R: Yeah because I am always tired  
H: Mm  
R: (Unclear)  
H: Some parents have said they find the work too difficult to actually  
R: Understand, yeah  
H: Give help, you know, the wording of questions, especially in Maths because they're not familiar with it  
R: Yeah, yeah  
H: Because when I first came in, the first few days we had to do orthogonal symmetry and I was unsure what it was. It's not something you use or hear of everyday. And I had to be shown what to do before I could assist the children with the work.  
R: No, well sometimes, you can work something out and get an answer but (unclear – laughs)  
H: Do you have a close relationship with Leanne?  
R: Yeah, yeah, at the moment, yeah  
H: Does she get on with her brothers?  
R: On yeah (unclear – laughs). Yeah, the boys are out quite a lot because they are both courting  
H: Mm  
R: Err...so they come and go, but she does see a lot of them. They take her out and so on; you know... they are quite a bit older than her  
H: Yeah  
R: So she gets spoilt a bit by them  
H: And she likes it (laughs)  
R: Yeah, she does yeah. Sometimes she gets a bit fed up if she doesn't see anybody  
H: Mm  
R: So I'll come in and want to put my feet up and she wants to go out for a walk or play  
H: Does she play out with her friends that live near her?  
R: Err, not very often because we live on (name of road) and there's not many kids her age, 'cos they are all toddlers there  
H: Right, mm  
R: But you do get kids who come off other avenues, when they get weeks off they come out from these other avenues and (unclear) bigger, older friends and live more up this end, so she comes more up this end  
H: Do you think she's looking forward to going to Greenwood?  
R: Yeah, yeah. I think she's a bit bored at school at the moment  
H: Mm  
R: You know and it shows  
H: Yeah  
R: She goes to the childminder and she's a bit bored there as well  
H: Is she? She's ready to move on?  
R: She's ready to move on  
H: The structure of the lessons are very different now compared to just before the tests  
R: Yeah, I think they are

H: You know, they were very intense because they had to learn this, that and the other and now they are more relaxed and they're focusing on the Year 6 production.

R: Yeah, mm

H: I think a lot of time will be spent practicing and rehearsing for that. I am teaching children how to juggle and envisage it is going to be quite difficult in the short time frame; I am not looking forward to it.

R: Laughs

H: And Greenwood have sent work for them to do

R: Oh, have they?

H: Yeah, we have two books to read and two accompanying workbooks to complete. We've just finished reading one today which we've been reading aloud as a class. But it's quite a long time, I mean today I read for three quarters of an hour and that a long period of time for them to sit still and listen

R: Yeah, it is a long time

H: But because the work reading needs to be done and there's other tasks to do, it's difficult to achieve a balance

R: Mm, yeah

H: But, I think she's not that interested now

R: No, she's not

H: Well, not as much as she used to be

R: No, no, because Anna said to me, that's the childminder

H: Mm

R: (Unclear)

H: Mm

R: You know, 'cos Anna keeps saying oh, we're counting the days down now

H: Mm, does she get on well with the childminder?

R: Oh yeah, yeah

H: Are there other children from this school that go to her?

R: Yeah, there's about six of them I think but they are all younger now.

H: Right

R: Because there was a couple there that was like her age and that would have gone to Greenwood now, but she's the only one

H: Right

R: After she leaves, the oldest, the next one is eight

H: Right

R: So there's quite a bit of difference. She's got no companionship at all.

H: Mm, does Leanne know people at Greenwood then?

R: Err...just kids who've left yeah, about three or four

H: Mm

R: But there's about four of them from the childminder and a few of them from, she used to play with them before they went up

H: Right

R: So, she does know a few people

H: Right, do you think Leanne likes school?

R: Yeah, she loves school

H: I was really impressed when she set herself work on area she felt she needed to improve on and brought it in to ask us to mark it and give her feedback

R: Mm

H: She's the only child in the two years that I have worked here, who's done that

R: Ah, is that for science

H: Yeah and there was some maths work at some point too

R: Yeah, I know some of the maths she was struggling with and the science has always given her a problem and I think because she's trying to work towards a 5

H: Mm, she's aiming high

R: Yeah, she says I've got to do this Mum, I've got to. She'll go on the computer and look things up as well (unclear). I've found this question that I am working on and their on the computer and things like that

H: Mm

R: And I think, oh god, if you'd left it up to me I wouldn't have found it (Mrs Heywood and Helen both laugh)

H: So you encourage her?

R: Yeah

H: And she is quite an independent worker?

R: Yeah, yeah, she just gets on with it

H: Do you think she's confident in herself?

R: She's fairly confident I'd say

H: Yeah

R: I think at first (unclear) when you put anybody with people

H: Yeah

R: It takes them a while to come out, but I think once she gets settled down, I think she's fine

H: Mm... do you think the classroom has an impact on how they learn? Do you think it's just the teacher or other things in the classroom?

R: I think it's other things in the classroom

H: What kinds of things?

R: because err... I know last year when she was with certain groups of kids

H: Yeah

R: She was a bit distracted and once she was moved she settled down a bit better

H: Mm

R: So it depends who she's with

H: Okay, do you think she has built up a relationship with the teaching assistants in the class?

R: Yeah, she talks all the time about you and there's somebody else as well isn't there?

H: Alison?

R: Alison, yeah, yeah. She talks about you and Alison and what you've done today and when you've given her crisps (Mrs Heywood and Helen both laugh)

H: Okay... other influences on children's learning. So we've talked about relationships with teachers and the different impact of surrounding children, whether or not they distract or if they're a positive influence, oh, and we've also talked about the home environment. Is there anything else that you think impacts on them?

R: That impacts on them?

H: Do you think...err the media influences their learning in anyway?

R: Yeah, I suppose there's certain things I should imagine on the TV, that sort of thing

H: Mm... okay, what do you think about the role of the tests? Do you think they are good or...

R: I think their good

H: Why's that?

R: Because I think for some kids they wouldn't bother otherwise

H: Right

R: And I think that if they are shown that they can get good grades and so it encourages them to move on to the next target

H: Right

R: And so I think it's a good thing

H: Mm, did Leanne get nervous during the tests or was she okay?

R: She was alright, she wasn't well that week but she was alright to be honest

H: Okay

R: Yeah, fine, no problems...err I can't remember what she said about the tests... I think there was a couple of questions that she felt were a bit hard, that she wasn't really prepared for

H: Mm

R: But apart from that I think she was fine

H: Mm... do you think that the teachers did a good job?

R: On the whole yeah

H: Mm... do you think that there were areas that could be improved upon or (unclear)

R: The only gripe I've got I think is the Year 5 bit that I thought could have improved more

H: Mm

R: Because of the way I've seen her struggle to catch up with whatever

H: Which will have meant it was the whole class that struggled

R: It was the whole class, it wasn't just her, no it was everybody in that class

H: Do you know if parents said anything in Year 5?

R: No because whenever we went, I think it was suggested that the group were quite good

H: Right

R: They were excellent, there was no problems and so on but we didn't realise there was so much work missing

H: Right

R: Until she actually moved up

H: Right and there was a gap?

R: There was loads (emphasis) of it and then stuff went in the bin when we should have kept hold of it, so she was quite annoyed about that and it was awful

H: It went in the bin in Year 5?

R: They were told they wouldn't need certain work, you know at the end of the year when they're clearing up to

H: Right, yeah

R: Go on to the next class, you don't need it, you're not going to need it so you can chuck it away, chuck it away

H: Mm, when they did need it

R: Which was a bit of a err...cause they had to cover it again

H: Yeah and it will make it harder in Year 6 because they have so much new material to cover anyway

R: Yeah, certain amount of work, I think that was the hardest part you know? So I think a lot could have been done

H: Mm

R: Right through the year to make sure it was all covered, to make it better for them

H: Mm, yeah

R: But (unclear) throughout the year when I came to parent's evening (unclear) I didn't have a clue. You know there was a little teething problem which I mentioned a couple of times and it was the grouping thing, that the kids were in different groups and so on

H: Was that groups that the teacher had placed them in?

R: Mm

H: And it wasn't working out?

R: No (unclear) and I told the teacher that it wasn't working out at all

H: So were the groups changed?

R: It was changed and it wasn't changed for the better, lets put it that way (laughs) so I think that year, that year wasn't a good year at all

H: Mm, I think the children's attitudes towards each other have changed this year

R: Yeah...yeah. I just think the 5<sup>th</sup> year wasn't very good at all for her

H: No, do you think she is okay now?

R: She's fine now, yeah, yeah. I just feel there's a lot of complaints

H: Right

R: I mean she got on with it, she did the work she was supposed to but like I say, there was still a lot of problems

H: Mm

R: And she didn't really want me to come down and say anything (unclear)

H: Mm...what kind of negative effect do you think it has if you don't get on with the children that you are seated with on your table in class? Can you give any examples of the problems Leanne experienced? You don't have to mention children's names

R: I think (unclear) 'cos their timed to (unclear) their work aren't they?

H: Mm

R: If somebody's disruptive or stuff like that, I think it sought of meant people taking longer to finish work

H: Right

R: To finish off, so it was given to them as homework basically

H: Right

R: So that did happen, a lot (emphasis)

H: Mm...and I imagine it disturbs their train of thought, affects their concentration

R: That's it, you can't concentrate if there's someone there nudging you or chucking things (unclear)

H: Mm...does Leanne talk about her close friends now? Those she hangs round with in the class?

R: Oh yeah (Mrs Heywood lists friends names and includes Beth). But sometimes, you know what girls can be like (laughs)

H: She's become very friendly with Jane, has she mentioned Jane?

R: Err

H: She joined the class during the year

R: Is she new in the area?

H: Yeah

R: Yeah, I think, yeah she's mentioned her; she said there was a new girl that she talked with sometimes

H: Mm

R: I know the group she moves round (unclear) I think there's a lot of fall outs among them, 'cos (unclear) like girls and I know certain ones, mothers tend to get involved as well (laughs)

H: Oh do they?

R: But one mother (laughs) she causes friction amongst the whole lot of them sometimes, but I think other parents will know that its mother

H: Mm

R: So avoid you know, because I think this kid, she's been a bit of a madam I think from day one

H: Right

R: But I don't think it's against her, but I think that because the fact that she goes home and tell her mother and the mother phones up other parents to complain about it

H: Mm

R: You know, I think that sort of causes a bit of friction

H: Right, it seems friendships change on a daily basis amongst the girls in the class; they are friends one day and not the next

R: Well, this is it.

H: Do you think it's their age?

R: It was alright at first but I think as they get older I think it's happened

H: Did it happen last year as well?

R: Mm and the year before

H: Year 4 too?

R: Which was worse? I think it was the 4<sup>th</sup> year that was worse because she had a birthday party; she didn't have one last year

H: Yeah

R: Yeah, Year 4, I think it was quite bad then. All her friends were there, there was about twenty odd kids their and they were all talking about it, all the parents you see. I mean the person was there. I mean there was the (unclear) daughter and err...all the mothers were talking in groups about this one person and how terrible this mother is

H: Mm

R: You know and she shouldn't get involved 'cos we don't get involved

H: Mm, it blows it out of proportion a bit doesn't it?

R: Yeah, I mean I listen to what Leanne (unclear) and I say you lot are always in bloomin' hot water

H: Mm

R: But they'll sort it out among themselves

H: Mm

R: And this mother will get on the phone and ring others and like I say, complain about. I never had a phone call yet but I don't want one (Mrs Heywood and Helen laugh). But I think Leanne tries to be a peacemaker between everybody

H: Yeah, yeah, or she'll walk away from it

R: Yeah, I think she's sensible enough to walk away

H: Mm, she handles it differently

R: Oh yeah, because sometimes she'll say a certain person's approached me and I've put my head back and I've said certain thing to them

H: Mm

R: And err...I'll say you know, whether I disagree or agree with her

H: Mm, so we've mentioned peers, teachers, parents and media, is there anything else that you'd like to add

R: Err (long pause) not really, not at the moment, no  
H: Okay  
R: Err...the only other thing that I've thought about, she's always (unclear) the computer (unclear) she enjoys that really  
H: Does she? Yeah, it's a really good opportunity for the children because they get a computer each  
R: Yeah  
H: And in the lesson here, they share a computer between two or three of them for only half an hour a week, so they don't really get that much opportunity in school  
R: That's it. And I wouldn't have a computer before, we've had old ones but (unclear)  
H: Because it is so expensive, more than it used to be, is it difficult to provide for Leanne?  
R: Mm  
H: Because doesn't Leanne go to Guides?  
R: Guides, she used to do dance. She had to drop that because I said if she wanted to join the Guides, she had to drop the dancing  
H: Right  
R: Because I can't afford. Well I basically try and well... she's got some sort of activity to do (unclear). So she dropped the dancing at Christmas and joined Guides in January  
H: Mm  
R: But I do find it very expensive 'cos for the guides I pay, it's not too bad, its like £10 a term, but there's all the activities they do too (unclear)  
H: What kind of dancing was it?  
R: She did modern dance, ballet, tap and drama.  
H: Did she like dancing?  
R: She likes both you know but (laughs) can't afford to go back to dancing (laughs) (unclear) it gets her out of the house. I think there's children from her class that go to Guides, about four of them I think (lists names), whereas her dancing class, that was a different set of people that she met down there  
H: Mm  
R: But I'm afraid I can't afford that.  
H: Mm  
R: They had quite a lot of exams you know, that you had to pay out for and then you had to buy shoes, I mean there were tap shoes and ballet shoes and so on  
H: Mm, I used to do that  
R: (Unclear)  
H: Mm, okay. So there's nothing else that you'd like to add?  
R: No, not at the moment  
H: Okay. Well thank you very much for your time and agreeing to be interviewed  
R: You're welcome

## INTERVIEW WITH MRS KHAN, TARIQ'S MUM

Date: 13/06/2002

Location: Tariq's family home

*Notes: The interview took place at Tariq's family home.*

**Key:** Helen (H); Mrs Shahla Khan (S)

- H: So has Tariq been at Roseberry Hill since nursery or...  
S: He went to private nursery from first because of the young  
H: Right  
S: Err I had err got a job and I didn't want to leave the children  
H: Right  
S: So he went there and then he started nursery  
H: Okay and how do you think he has progressed at Roseberry Hill?  
S: Err I'm not really sure err since his Reception Year he's always been... I think that's the way he is...he's always been slow at writing, right at the beginning  
H: Mm  
S: Very slow in each class, he's been really slow but then eventually err I talked to the teacher and she worked with him  
H: Mm  
S: And at him as well and eventually I note that in the final sort of term  
H: Yeah  
S: He's picked up, he's not slow but he's...  
H: Mm...from my observations of the children in class I have noticed that Tariq tends to fidget quite a lot  
S: Mm  
H: He tends to mess with anything that is in front of him on the table. But although he does tend to fidget, I think he is still listening to the teacher's lesson as he is able to complete the work tasks without much assistance. Err most of the children who tend to fidget during explanations or whatever tend not to listen to instructions and then find it difficult to undertake the work unless given additional assistance from the teacher or teaching assistants. But as I said, Tariq seems to listen  
S: Both? Oh right. I'm surprised because at home err I have noticed that he's not organised, he doesn't try err if there is a timetable that I have set for him, he doesn't stick to it  
H: Mm  
S: He will only focus on something if he's interested in it  
H: Right. He doesn't always participate in lessons, in terms of putting up his hand to offer answers or ask questions, I think that tends to depend on what the area or topic is. I have noticed that Tariq is very enthusiastic about computers  
S: Yes he is  
H: He really seems to enjoy the lessons and he's good on them  
S: Yes he is, he is very good at it, yes, yes  
H: And he helps other children in the class  
S: Oh does he?  
H: Yes, those children who finds it a little more difficult or perhaps don't have the confidence because they have limited experience of working on a computer or whatever  
S: Mm  
H: He helps them out which is good  
S: Mm very good err but reading I've been saying to him that no matter what, say an evening newspaper  
H: Mm  
S: Any newspaper, any magazine, kiddies' magazine  
H: Mm  
S: Anything  
H: Mm  
S: Should at least spend half an hour reading that err I've sat with him actually and said I'm reading what I want to read, my book or whatever and you read and then we'll discuss  
H: Mm

S: So he'll do it for five minutes, you know and then he'll say 'Yes, I've read it all, can I go out now' you know

H: Mm

S: And I want him to, I think he's got a lot better

H: Mm

S: But obviously teachers can only do so much

H: Yeah

S: With a child, they can't really push a child, whereas I know I can do so many things with him

H: Mm

S: But then again if he thinks he can get away with it at school

H: Mm...it's more difficult at home?

S: Yes, yes but the teachers (unclear)

H: No and it's hard as well because there is so many children in the class

S: Mm, very difficult

H: Mm

S: But I still appreciate the teachers, each year it's always been the same report for parents' evening

H: Right

S: That Tariq err... it takes him time to get to know the teacher

H: Mm

S: And then get to know, err obviously the subjects are the same

H: Yeah

S: In depth each year and he doesn't seem...it doesn't click with him

H: Mm

S: And then in the second, second parents' evening then I get some feedback saying err...mm he's doing fine you know, but I know he can do better and he doesn't

H: Right, do you think that's because he's not interested in the subjects?

S: It's not that, I think it's just that he can only do one thing at a time

H: Right

S: Whereas my daughter, she can do (unclear)

H: That's just a man woman thing (both laugh)

S: Yes, but then I've seen other men who are doing the same

H: Right

S: They're planning, they're planning for their family, they're organising something, their doing things, their working until five and then they're coming home and arranging things for the children

H: Mm

S: I am talking about Asian parents here

H: Yeah

S: Mainly, or I know that the parents, mothers most of the time, they are the one's that are like at home

H: Mm

S: Cooking, cleaning

H: Yeah

S: And they don't either have the knowledge or they do not, they can't go to parent's evening because there are younger children at home

H: Yeah

S: So it is the father who is running around whereas err in our household, in my family, my husband and me both try with Tariq

H: Yeah

S: Err and we try and sort of go in when we can err try to go, both of us, for parent's evening

H: Mm

S: Or anything for school, we try to (unclear) alternate it a bit

H: Mm

S: With my daughter it is totally different

H: Right

S: Err we didn't have to push her, we didn't have to say things to her, she used to say I'm doing this and I'm doing it now

H: Right

S: (Unclear) and she's still the same. Whereas I find it very difficult now with Tariq err still it's not clicked with him that now he's going to go to high school

H: Mm

S: And it's got to be, time management is the main thing

H: Yeah, it is important

S: Yeah (unclear)

H: But the format of the lessons is very different now than they were before the tests. Before the tests, it was more structured and prescriptive, you know... strict and now it's more, there are more school trips and the atmosphere is more relaxed

S: Mm, mm

H: So in that way they don't really get much homework

S: I've asked him, he says '*But I don't get any homework now*' and I say right, okay, but there is still so many things that you can sit and do

H: Yeah, he still has set reading homework each week

S: Do you check with him?

H: Yes, every week

S: And he's done it?

H: Yes, on the whole. They are given time in class each day, a period of silent reading after lunch, to ensure they do it

S: Ah, right

H: So if they take the opportunity, they can do it in class and not have it for homework

S: Yes, but its better if they do it in the evening because (unclear)

H: They do have time in class

S: Ah right and so he does it then

H: Mm but some children don't use that time to complete the set reading as they prefer to read their own book and so they take the set reading home. It swaps about really

S: Mm

H: But if they haven't written their reviews for two consecutive weeks then they have to stay in at lunch time

S: Mm and do it

H: And complete it in their own time

S: Oh right I'm surprised because I ask him each day when he comes home, I say Tariq do you have homework? He says '*No, no, I don't have homework, others have, I did it in class*' and I think, he's slow, how did he do it in class? (laughs)

H: What do you think about the school generally... for example, so you think they're easy to approach? To talk to?

S: Very good, very good, yeah, yeah, very approachable. You know, very supportive and I'm talking about what, talking about what I don't know about

H: Mm

S: So what the parents think

H: Yeah

S: But err I've never had any problems with the Head Teacher or the class teacher or any problems, a couple of problems I had with Tariq when I didn't know he had been outside Ms Thompson's class err office

H: Right

S: That was in Year 5 I think, yes, Year 5

H: Mm

S: And I found out and err I went to speak to, Ms Thompson is always available

H: Mm

S: And I went into her and I was really embarrassed

H: Mm

S: And I said look, I've come to apologise and I made Tariq apologise as well. No matter what he had done there was a reason he was outside Ms Thompson's office

H: Mm

S: And she's got better things to do rather than keep an eye on him. And then the second time err that was a recent actually, last month when he said to me he didn't want to go

H: Mm, was that when he didn't like, when he found the lessons boring?

S: Yes, yes and boring as well and he wanted to stay at home

H: Why was that?

S: Err well Ms Thompson rang back and said she would find out, talk to Mrs Eastwood and she'd be back in touch and I think what we, I... when I mentioned that I'd been off sick from work

H: Mm

S: And I was supposed to go into hospital err he didn't talk to me, he didn't say anything to me but I said to him I'm going into hospital and I'm staying over night

H: Mm

S: *'Oh come back Mummy, can't you come in the evening?'* I said I didn't know if the doctor would let me out

H: Mm

S: But I'll see if I could, oh and that was a week before I was supposed to go and that week he started saying, he, *'I'm not going to school'*

H: Right

S: But I thought, I did say to him are you thinking that Mummy's not well

H: Mm

S: And you want to look after Mummy? *'No, no, no.'* I said well, why don't you want to go to school? So that was the day when he actually, literally cried and said he didn't want to go to school and I rang Ms Thompson and you know, spoke to her

H: Mm

S: But in that way we worked it out together, Mrs Eastwood also I think had a word with him

H: Mm

S: In that, in that way err any problem err...never had any problems with Zahra, my daughter

H: No

S: There were a couple of things that needed sorting out with the teachers and... I think it's a brilliant school

H: Mm, so is he settled in the class now?

S: He is yeah, I think he's always been settled there

H: Mm

S: But I think err my even the most, this, the revision they were doing

H: The videos?

S: Mm the video, to which she never mentioned to me Mrs Eastwood mentioned to me, she never said anything and I wasn't aware of it

H: Mm

S: Err and then myself going into the hospital and he got worried and *'I want you Mummy, I want to be with you Mummy'*

H: Mm

S: Sort of attitude

H: Mm

S: So we worked it through and he's okay, he's happy (laughs)

H: The two Year 6 classes, usually they get on quite well, but this year I noticed that they don't really get on that well at all. But Tariq is one of the only children in 6E who has friends

S: With the other

H: In 6B

S: Laughs

H: There are a couple of boys who he walks to school with in the other class

S: Yes, he does

H: Ameet and Jalal

S: Yeah

H: It's interesting because the classes don't actually get on that well but this year because of the play at the end of the year

S: Mm

H: Both classes will need to work together to make it a success

S: Mm

H: It starts this Friday so that should be interesting

S: Mm (laughs) yes

H: So do you think the school informs you enough about what's going on

S: Yes, yes

H: With the newsletter and things?

S: Oh yeah, oh yeah. We keep the, we have the Wednesday newsletter and err I think if there was anything err (unclear) at school, they take action, really they do. Err once I had a problem, I didn't have a problem

H: Mm

S: But the other Asian ladies who used to walk their children to school, this is going back...five years or something

H: Mm

S: These children at Greenwood, because they were walking to school and the mothers were walking to Greenwood, sorry Roseberry Hill

H: Yeah

S: They used to sort of meet each other at a point and they used to call names, Paki's all sorts err a couple of times it did happen when I was with a couple of ladies walking to school

H: Mm

S: Err and they said the same thing and it was really not, they were abusive

H: Mm

S: Err we spoke to Ms Thompson and the same day Ms Thompson said okay, I will walk back with you to your house and I'll see for you know, herself and we walked and we came through under the bridge

H: Mm

S: And this group of girls and boys, Ms Thompson, I said yes, these are the ones and she said, I'm very sorry to say Mrs Khan, these are my ex-pupils

H: Mm

S: And I know when she looked at all the faces. She walked all the way up to there with me and said she walked the other way back to school and then the next morning she rang me and she said err she has written to the parents

H: Yeah

S: And she also spoke to Mr Brown (Head Teacher of Greenwood). Err he wasn't there at the time and she said that err when she called me in err the day of my (unclear) she said there are two girls here who want to apologise to you Mrs Khan

H: Mm

S: She really, she does take notice

H: Unclear

S: Yeah, yeah she did (unclear). She said I'm very sorry (unclear). It stopped

H: Mm

S: After that, not a single incident

H: Right

S: You know, I can't praise them enough

H: Mm

S: I can't and err the way they prepared them, the children to go to Greenwood, brilliant

H: Yeah, the children will have some lessons with teachers at Greenwood before the end of term, to get a flavour of what to expect before they go

S: Yeah, yeah, I think it's just brilliant, I only found that out when Zahra went to go to Greenwood

H: Oh right

S: And I thought (unclear)

H: And this year, a new scheme has been introduced where Greenwood have sent some work for the children to do in the Year 6 classroom. So at the moment in class we are reading this book that Tariq has been reading at home anyway

S: The one, the...the

H: It's by Michael Morpurgo, I've forgotten the title, err... Kensuke's Kingdom it's called and it has a boat and a wave on the book cover

S: Okay

H: Err so that Mrs Eastwood has quite a lot of (unclear) so she can read it out to the rest of the class (Mrs Khan laughs) and then they're going to complete some corresponding work that was sent, err in booklet format which they will then take to Greenwood with them

S: Mm

H: So it's more you know, not such a huge gap because they will have experience of doing some work which is of high school standard

S: That's brilliant. He didn't say a word. He just said some people came from Greenwood and had a chat with them and I said well, what was it about? *'I don't know'*(laughs)

H: Some of Mrs Eastwood's ex-pupils from last year came in, she asked them to come in so the children could ask anything they wanted, you know if they were worried or anxious about anything

S: Mm

H: Or curious, then they could ask

S: Mm, mm and did it go well?

H: Yeah

S: Did children ask questions?

H: Yeah, yeah. They asked openly about bullying and things like that and the children were saying how to deal with it. I mean I thought it was really productive because there is only a year between the year groups

S: Mm, mm

H: And they have just experienced what this present Year 6 will start to experience after the school holidays

S: It's brilliant

H: Mm... okay, do you think about the learning process? I know it not necessarily something you would think about everyday but err... how do you think learning happens? Do you think its something that's within the child?

S: As well

H: As well as other...

S: Other people, yes. Err a child is influenced first of all by the parents err not as much by, as the siblings

H: Mm

S: Because there's more err Zahra is totally different and he does not take notice all the time so I don't think that err children mainly they don't think, they're not (unclear). But they are influenced by their peers, they are, and I think it's their companions outside school

H: Yeah

S: Err they do learn, not learn, but pick things, whether they're good or bad

H: Yeah

S: They pick things from them and I think also the way parents deal with them

H: Yeah

S: That has an effect err... I do not know the difference, because I've not been educated in this country

H: Mm

S: When a child moves from primary to high school and then high school to college

H: Mm

S: Err that's where... you know, they sort of find new companions

H: Mm

S: The teacher, it depends what sort of teacher they get

H: Mm

S: In the very first year in the high school or the college, that is an influence as well

H: Mm, yeah

S: (Unclear) mm and also I think they're not only teachers; they're parents, parents with a family (unclear)

H: Mm, do you and your husband both work?

S: Yeah

H: So is it difficult to spend time with Tariq?

S: (Large sigh) yeah, yeah. I absolutely blame my circumstances for that because when I say Tariq, oh Tariq is (unclear), he's not organised, he's not... it's because I left him when he was just three

H: Mm

S: Left him at the nursery, a whole day (said with emphasis)

H: Mm

S: You know

H: Mm

S: Yeah? Yeah. Private nursery, they are probably better than the other nurseries but I don't think so

H: Mm  
S: Err and I feel, I used to leave home before he was taken to nursery  
H: Right  
S: Yeah?  
H: Mm  
S: I used to feel bad, really guilty about it and I used to say I should be there. Whereas Zahra, I used to be with her, I used to care, get her ready, put her clothes on  
H: Yeah  
S: And right, lets walk, now look at the time, okay shall we go 'Yes Mummy we go' whereas that didn't happen with Tariq  
H: No  
S: And Omar my husband, he's, obviously I don't expect him to do things the way I do things  
H: Mm  
S: Yeah and at least he took him and  
H: Yeah  
S: Got him ready, fed him, took him to nursery, he'd stay and brought him back.  
H: Yeah  
S: I think Tariq missed out from that, no, I don't think, but I know he has missed out  
H: Yeah  
S: Whereas when I was walking Zahra to school, I used to say right okay and nursery rhymes and I used to talk and when she was in reception class we used to talk with friends and so  
H: Mm  
S: With Tariq it didn't happen at all  
H: Right  
S: I hardly took him to school, you know, had to leave early for work  
H: Mm  
S: But I used to sort of rush to school at half past, like half past three  
H: Right  
S: Working part-time, to actually go and meet him  
H: Mm  
S: But then he was tired, I was tired, on the way back I used to say, oh he used to say 'Mummy, give us a cuddle' and I knew he has missed me all day  
H: Yeah  
S: And the foundation isn't there  
H: Right  
S: Yeah? And I don't know how to put it right; it's too late, 'cos now I am working full-time  
H: Yeah  
S: Yeah? And I wanted to assist him when he was preparing for exams  
H: Right  
S: And I didn't have time and I was in ill, I was in and out (unclear) (both laugh)  
H: But compared to the beginning of the year, do you not think he has come on a lot; that he has progressed a lot in his work?  
S: I don't know until I have seen his report and each report will say, it doesn't say, 'Oo excellent'  
H: Mm  
S: At the end of the year, it doesn't say that, it says 'Good effort Tariq' and I know what that means  
H: Right  
S: It's between the lines, that he could have done better  
H: Right  
S: Yeah?  
H: Mm... you know the tests?  
S: Yeah?  
H: How important are they to you?  
S: ... I cannot compare my education to what it is today  
H: Mm  
S: We used to have exams err each, end of each term, yeah?  
H: Mm

S: And to me they were reports and then we knew which area we were weak in and to work on that, yeah?

H: Yeah

S: With him or with the current, err the way the education system, I'm not sure because sometimes it's too much, err what's the word now I am looking for... hyper about

H: Yeah

S: Yeah? And, but the children, they haven't done that before

H: No

S: The Year, Year 3, they do it don't they?

H: Mm, yeah

S: Year 3 and I don't know how it works, what they did, but I'm just thinking, yes the teachers work very hard to get them up to that level

H: Mm

S: So they would achieve Level 4 5

H: Mm

S: Okay? And that's if that's... I'm not sure whether that's the best way for it

H: No. What do you think could be a good alternative? A different method?

S: ...

H: Because when they do the tests

S: Mm

H: They do spend a lot of time preparing, you know they do three practice ones and then they do the real one

S: Mm, mm

H: And some of the children get very upset and worked up

S: Yeah

H: You know, stressed about performing well

S: Yeah

H: And I personally don't think that should be happening, you know? And then they are judged, you have to get up to this level

S: Yeah

H: But a lot of the work when I was reading the questions, the children could do the work but because of the way the questions were worded, they didn't understand it

S: Mm

H: But if it was worded or phrased in a different way

S: Mm

H: Which we are not permitted to do in the test situation

S: Mm

H: I know that many of them would have been able to have a go at working out the answers

S: Mm, mm it's not fair, it's not a fair system because they are not, yes he is 3, they have this time and then for two years they have nothing

H: Mm

S: Yeah and then in Year 6, again they have this problem and then Year 9 they have the same

H: Mm

S: And then shouldn't, it, it should be gradual and they be used to these things

H: Yeah

S: Yeah? And not for these, but yes SATs and it's a big thing, it's a giant

H: Mm

S: You know coming to them and 'Oh we don't know what to do' err yes okay the teacher will, the teacher, I feel sorry for the teachers right? Because they have to work so hard (said with emphasis)

H: Yeah

S: With the children so that they get, the kid gets the required result

H: Mm

S: Then the teachers, it's good for them as well

H: Yeah

S: But it's not fair

H: Mm

S: It's not fair so for me err they're asked to do the SATs err sit the exams (laughs)

H: Yeah

S: And I am not happy about it  
H: Mm, you know you said you felt as through you didn't help Tariq?  
S: Mm  
H: Tariq did mention to me that he received help from both his parents  
S: He thinks he did yeah. But my husband, obviously he's good at err maths and science and I said to him to do the rest of the things with him  
H: Yeah  
S: I, I want to spend more time with him err and have more time, and even when... like just going for a walk  
H: Mm  
S: Talk to him about things, talk to him about work  
H: Mm  
S: Talk to him about spelling, yeah?  
H: Mm  
S: Err and I couldn't do that  
H: Right  
S: That's why I feel I haven't given my one hundred percent  
H: Right  
S: Yeah? He could have done a lot better. I don't expect the teachers to do that. Teachers have so many other children  
H: Mm  
S: Behaviour problems yeah?  
H: Mm  
S: And err and so many other things to prepare to do, whereas as a parent I feel I have not been able to do. He thinks he has been, had (unclear) he has got some help  
H: Mm  
S: And attention  
H: (Unclear).  
S: No, his sister didn't get any help and attention (unclear). She used to sit and do her homework and we used to be there and say 'Right okay, what are you doing there?' 'Oh Mummy, I'm doing this; oh Mummy can you help me with this' 'Yes'  
H: Right  
S: The thing is, Tariq doesn't come and ask me  
H: Right  
S: When he says, 'Oh somebody, oh there were people who came from Greenwood' and I thought err teacher you know or assessor or somebody  
H: Mm  
S: He said 'Oh there were some people' and I said 'Well, the people, what did they do? What did they ask you to do?' 'Well they had a chat with us' 'What sort of chat? What did they say?' 'Something Mummy' and that's it, off he went, you know on his bike and playing football and that's it and he doesn't bring the information home to me  
H: No  
S: Whatever I see is on the piece of paper I see  
H: Mm, right. I think a lot of the children don't necessarily provide parents or carers with the specific details about their day, you know what they have been up to, the tasks they have done, the conversations they have had  
S: No... err I make sure that we have supper together  
H: Right  
S: We wait for each other. I come home at half five and my husband is cooking something for dinner sometimes, then by the time we are ready, everything and then wait. Err at the table we will sit and talk and we'll say 'What did you do?' You know, I know his friends  
H: Mm  
S: And teachers and everything. 'Oh well, was everything alright?' 'Yeah, yeah.' So the same thing with Zahra and she'll tell me err and she'll tell me, not a lot but a summary of what's happened  
H: Yeah  
S: Now she's stopped, she's now, she's you know going to be sixteen later this year 'Oh it was alright'  
H: Mm

S: And they used to say 'Oh, what did you do Mummy, what did you do' I was in hospital  
H: Right  
S: And yeah 'Mummy, what did you do?' They used to say 'Oh, this is terrible, it's so funny' or 'Say what you did' and yeah, they don't even ask me now  
H: Mm  
S: So they don't and I, its only me and my husband now, mainly I feel, because Tariq is too busy, 'Can I go to football Mummy? It's a lovely day, I want to go' and I say 'Okay' 'cos I know it might start raining tomorrow, so I might as well let him go 'Okay'  
H: Mm. Does he play with children from school or outside school?  
S: He plays err with two boys from school, Ameet and Jalal yeah, and then the other boys  
H: Do they go to Greenwood?  
S: No two go to (name of school) and one goes to Greenwood and the other two, oh, I think the other two are Greenwood, yeah  
H: Have they always known each other? Do they all live near each other?  
S: Mm Yeah, just in the vicinity (unclear)  
H: Is it difficult because you live on a main road? Do they go and play somewhere else?  
S: They go on to Greenwood playground  
H: Oh, right  
S: They go there, so it's fine yeah. But I think he's more into, I like it that he's into games  
H: Mm  
S: So and he loves, the last two days he's been trying to fix his bike  
H: (Unclear) He says he makes things as well with the family?  
S: In the kitchen? Yeah, with me and with Dad. Yeah, he does things with Dad  
H: Mm  
S: Err and he gets told off and then he doesn't like it and Dad doesn't like it (both laugh) H: and it causes a problem. But no, he likes it, he likes doing things  
H: Does he like cooking?  
S: Mm he's helped me in the kitchen quite a few times actually  
H: Yeah  
S: In fact yesterday he came and said 'Look Mum, I'm not feeling too good' and I was making chapattis err (unclear) lay the table, but that is when he is in the mood to do things  
H: Right  
S: Otherwise he'll flop here and he'll watch TV and I switch it off and then he'll sulk 'You switched it off, I wanted to watch that programme' and I say 'Well, I wanted to watch it too, I'm tired so why don't you come and help me'  
H: Mm  
S: What I've noticed is that err if I say things to him and I sort of mollycoddle him  
H: Mm  
S: And say 'Oh Tariq, my lovely silly boy' and he loves it, he comes to me  
H: Really?  
S: Yeah, he loves it. And err this is what I really say to him. We speak two or three languages English, Urdu and Punjabi  
H: Right  
S: So 'Oh my lovely sunny boy, oh I love you Tariq, look at your lovely face' (unclear) he'll never sort of say what do you want Mummy?  
H: Really?  
S: Yeah, never, he'd come to me. And I'll say 'Okay, Tariq will you please, please come with me?' and he'll say 'Okay' whereas Zahra, I didn't have to say that to her at all  
H: Mm  
S: Err but at times when I wanted something doing  
H: Mm  
S: And I said 'Oh Zahra, please' and she'd say 'I know what you want' (both laugh)  
H: Are they very different?  
S: Very different, they are so different; they are miles apart (unclear)  
H: Do you think that's because of the differences between girls and boys or just because...  
S: ... if you believe in genes and if you believe in the heir, if because the father was like that, his son is like that  
H: Mm

S: Yeah, if you don't, then... I think it is because Zahra got to spend, she was four when Tariq was one

H: Mm

S: And I wasn't working and I spent a lot of time, well twenty four hours a day with her

H: Mm

S: And we did things together, yeah?

H: Mm

S: Whereas with Tariq, he was born, I was, I used to leave him in his cot and rush Zahra up to school

H: Right. But who looked after Tariq?

S: Err I used to risk it

H: Right

S: He was in his cot and he (unclear) wake up and I used to either just take her across and another lady was walking her child to school and I'd say 'Oo can you take Zahra with you?' 'Oh Yeah' because people knew me

H: Yeah

S: And I used to do it for other mothers

H: Yeah

S: I used to say 'Oh Tariq is still in his cot so I have to rush back'

H: Mm

S: You know. I used to quickly do things with him

H: Right

S: Yeah? Err leave him on the settee and get on with my work because Zahra was coming home yeah?

H: Yeah

S: So I feel that I have, because obviously being a mother, it's an experience you've never had before

H: Mm

S: With the first child, second child, with the second child and if you're expecting a third (unclear) then you know the balance you need between each child

H: Yeah

S: But with the first and especially if she was independent in her own way

H: Mm

S: Because she could chose, very confident, that she saw Mummy doing things

H: Mm

S: She was listening all the time. We had, with Tariq, she wanted to come to me and I said (unclear) you know. She was just taking those four years

H: Yeah

S: Err became and she was a very mature four year old whereas Tariq is still not mature in his ways, he's been left and left and left

H: Mm

S: Not err... it's just that it happened that way

H: Mm

S: It's not that I wanted to leave him

H: Mm

S: Err not deliberate

H: Mm...under the circumstances

S: Yeah, yeah

H: Do you think Tariq is confident within himself?

S: Yeah in some ways he is and sometimes it comes over confident

H: Right

S: Err a few things I've noticed err he risks things

H: Mm

S: He does it, because it's not planned and he doesn't realise that the next morning what's going to happen

H: Mm

S: Err or he thinks he will do it, I can do it, and I'll do it in the morning, wait till the morning

H: Right

S: So I think that's the problem. With Zahra, she's not like that, she's...plans, she used to make lists, five years old and she used to make a list of things, yeah, make a list of things. I remember going to Pakistan when she was three

H: Mm

S: Err we went to Pakistan and she decided what clothes she wanted to take

H: Yeah

S: And I said okay, and that was a great task.

H: Mm

S: I depended a lot on Zahra and I used to go, you know, to bring your, she knew exactly where her frock was, her jumper, things, what we needed, socks, underwear, everything and she brought them and she folded them nicely and they were ready for me to put in a suitcase

H: Mm, I feel I am very different to my brothers. I like to make lists and be organised whereas I think my brother is much more spontaneous

S: Are we talking now about differences between males and females

H: Well, I don't know. You know, it might be that in terms of learning, we were treated differently but were not necessarily aware of it. I mean I do think on reflection that my parents treated the boys differently to the way they treated me.

S: Mm, I think that... sorry the word treated differently, its not, it not that parents want to do that

H: No, no, I appreciate that

S: (Unclear) but you're a girl, you understand. You don't know err anything and she's going to get married and have more children and this, that and the other. But I have never thought... like that

H: Mm

S: Err because when I, when I was a child, we were treated that way

H: Mm

S: You go, 'you can't do that'. That's why I didn't want to do it to my children, but you know it happens

H: Mm

S: So Omar my husband

H: Yeah

S: He was different with Zahra

H: How?

S: Err he was, if he was gardening

H: Yeah

S: He would take her with him and say 'Right, okay, I'm going to mow the lawn you can help me.' You know, push, a little push

H: Mm

S: And she got the confidence

H: Mm

S: She wasn't scared of the noise and she knew where to put the plug in

H: Mm

S: And what to do and what Daddy's doing

H: Mm

S: Err watering the plants, cutting the grass, whatever

H: Mm

S: She was out there with him. If he was washing the car, he would say 'Okay, you bring the bucket' (unclear) 'Okay, here's the sponge and the liquid and here's what you do' 'You clean the tyres with the brush while I do the roof'

H: Yeah

S: Yeah? Which Tariq err he, because there was two children in the house err and I started work and then when it was time for Tariq to go out and help him, there wasn't sort of enough time err to go somewhere

H: Right

S: So Omar used to say 'Oh, I'm taking you to the carwash'

H: Right

S: Yeah? So I think it was mainly because I started work

H: Mm

S: Yeah? So things have sort of fallen apart you could say because of that. Whereas I was cooking, I was cleaning everything, things were ready, the house was tidy, everything was okay and Omar used to come home, feed them and go out. Whereas now I come home and I can't go out and Omar had to do things: the carwash and quick food and pick up from there so Tariq has had it totally different

H: Right

S: Err... way which has been at home yeah?

H: Mm

S: I can see that at that time, the necessity was that I go to work

H: Mm

S: I found at the time, I didn't, even Omar did not even visualise

H: No

S: I knew that I was feeling guilty

H: Mm

S: And I knew that he was missing me

H: Mm

S: But I thought err it would be alright

H: Mm

S: But no it was too late, it was too late

H: Maybe it's not... when I was at school, I was very quiet and I was always average, all the time, I was never you know (unclear) (Mrs Khan laughs) and then when I went to university I started to get higher marks, in the end I got the highest first on the course

S: Really?

H: Yeah and now I'm doing a PhD, so I think people peak at different times, it may be GCSE, A' Level or whatever

S: Mm, mm

H: Some years you may be average but I don't think it means you will always necessarily be average, it comes to people I think, at different times, something just clicks

S: I hope, I hope. I try to, I want to spend more time with Tariq

H: Mm

S: Than Zahra because Zahra is fifteen years old

H: Mm

S: I will keep an eye on her, I mean because she is only fifteen

H: Mm

S: She knows the limits (unclear) Because I let her know what I let her do and what she can't do and what she can so, so I'm not going to spend any length of time with her really. I still want to spend time with Tariq, which I have been trying since I've been at home. I've got problems with (unclear) that's why I am at home

H: Right

S: Err and I make sure that I see him, I make him breakfast, I sit with him, I have breakfast with him. So these few weeks, its (unclear) it's different (Mrs Khan laughs). But I don't know it might just click with him one day

H: Mm

S: And he knows that I love him, he knows that, I just feel (unclear) you know. Oh here he is, excuse me please

H: Okay

\*\* Mrs Khan leaves the room \*\*

H: So, you know the school work that comes home

S: Mm

H: Do you find it okay to understand? You know if you help Tariq with his homework

S: I am lucky that way; I can understand err other things than maths or science

H: Right

S: Err my husband helps Tariq with that

H: Mm

S: Because he's very good with maths. I now find it difficult but Zahra is there to help him

H: Right

S: Because she's been through it. But I often wonder about the parents who either cannot read and write English or they are not very good

H: Mm... at parents evening, when I sat in with the teacher during the times she met with the children parents or carers involved in the research

S: Mm

H: A few said they experienced difficulties. They either said they found some of the work hard because you know, they struggled at school themselves

S: Yeah

H: Others said they found some of the terminology, the wording of questions difficult o understand

S: Mm

H: One idea which I thought about which might be good, is if parents were given the opportunity to go into school where any difficulties or problems could be explained

S: Mm

H: Because if the children are struggling and the parents are also unable to help, it is a problem isn't it?

S: Mm. But yes I do find that personally err I find it difficult err anyway and there are, there has been questions where I had to read them (unclear) or Zahra can , Zahra is a Year 10 student now err and she found it difficult a well

H: Mm, do you think Tariq feels comfortable asking question in class?

S: Not always

H: Why?

S: I don't, he does because...err...he doesn't ask questions himself, only if he's interested in certain subjects

H: Mm

S: He'll ask questions

H: Right

S: Otherwise he won't. Err I have to say things to him, sort of have to prod him and say 'Right, okay, now this is the question, what is your answer or what would you ask?'

H: Mm

S: I have to say that to him but I don't think he asks questions very much

H: Right

S: Am I right?

H: Mm, he doesn't tend to ask questions very much in class. Once I asked him a question and he replied 'Okay'. I pointed out that I had just asked him a question, but I suspect he simply thought I had said 'Put your pen down and listen' or something. He was elsewhere he wasn't paying attention to the lesson, he has drifted

S: Mm

H: But yes, sometimes if he has been interested in one of the subjects

S: Mm

H: Err literacy, once we were doing a comprehension on making pancakes and I noticed that a few of the children in the class, including Tariq, were struggling with particular words in the passage like 'batter' because they weren't familiar with the terms

S: Mm, not used

H: Mm, so he put his hand up quite a lot in that lesson

S: Did he?

H: Yes, which was interesting

S: Because, well it was to do with cooking (laughing)

H: Yeah, maybe. He was familiar with the tools that were mentioned, like spatula and things which some of the other children were unfamiliar with

S: This is what I mean, if he's interested in a subject

H: Mm

S: Or if he's already got some knowledge about it, then he will know what questions to ask

H: Yeah

S: Otherwise he'll be just like err...school, you now (unclear) he's not even listening, he's miles away

H: Do you think he's looking forward to going to Greenwood?

S: He is because err the lad across the road who he plays football with, is there now in Year 7.

H: Is that (name)?

S: Yeah (laughing)

H: Yeah, he was in Year 6 at Roseberry Hill last year

S: Oh, yeah okay (laughing). That's good; I mean he's looking forward to walking with him to school

H: Mm

S: Err he thinks (unclear)

H: Yeah, but you feel like that when you go there don't you? You feel that you've grown up a lot compared to the little ones (Mrs Ali laughs). I think Tariq looks like one of the oldest children in Year 6, because quite a lot of the children are still quite small. There's a few boys who are still very small but they will shoot up when they go to Greenwood

S: Yeah err he's growing quite fast, muscular. I mean he wants to do body building but I said it's too early

H: Mm

\*\* Mrs Ali leaves the room to go into the kitchen \*\*

H: Okay, is there anything else that you would like to add?

S: (Unclear) do you think its going to change the (unclear) system?

H: At the moment, I don't think so. I think the government are very much into testing and league tables etc. And I think that will probably stay at the core of the system, the testing system they have in place now

S: But that's not the, I don't think that, that err....

H: That's the way forward?

S: Yeah

H: No, I don't agree with tests because one of things to consider with tests is levels of anxiety. If a child is anxious, it will inevitably affect their performance,

S: It will not be as good

H: No and the child knows he or she could do better. I mean there are one or two children in the class that will not achieve the expected level

S: Ahh, but what does that mean? Are they looked at in a different light when they go to high school?

H: The children?

S: Mm

H: Well, they say to them that they won't be but as you know, the scores children achieve on the SATs go with them to high school. And judgements are made based on these scores; they carry more prominence than teacher assessment. The teachers at high school work from the test results and I would think that work will be set according to the standards achieved on the tests.

S: Mm

H: But you have to get a Level 3 to actually achieve a Level, if you get a Level 1 or 2 it doesn't count, you don't qualify as having a score

S: But then why wait all time waiting for SATs results or SATs to be taken by the child? They could be assessed, not assessed but the teacher should know in the SATs, have an idea of what the child is like and then say to the parents and then ask them to do something about it

H: But what if the parents aren't able to help?

S: Okay, well something should be done with the child in the classroom

H: Mm

S: Extra help or something, extra time

H: Mm. I do spend time with some children who you know need extra assistance

S: Mm

H: But the SATs are the most important thing in Year 6, they shouldn't be, but in reality they dictate classroom practices. My extra sessions which these children were benefiting from got stopped as the SATs got closer. It was so they could join the rest of the class and take part in general revision sessions and watching videos and such like

S: Mm

H: But you know, I think we all learn in different ways and many of the children I work with tend to have short attention spans

S: Mm

H: They benefit from different activities every ten minutes or so

S: Mm

H: They find it difficult to sit and focus for half an hour, watching videos, because they just get bored after five minutes

S: Mm

H: And I personally think that they would learn more in our smaller group sessions than they would watching the videos

S: Mm

H: So I don't agree with the tests personally but I do think, that at the moment the government are heavily reliant upon them and the school has to so them whether they want to or not

S: Oh yes, they have to, have to

H: But private schools don't

S: On the other hand, they were talking about GCSE exams to be abolished, I don't understand that

H: Mm, well, no.

S: Too much stress. Yes, I know Zahra is under a lot of stress at the moment

H: Mm

S: I mean she's only Year 10 but she's (unclear) err every exam she takes

H: Mm

S: They're going to count towards her GCSE's next year

H: Mm

S: But that means its two years and the exams she's taking and the things she's doing or whatever, she is stressed about it

H: Do you think it would be better if they looked at the child's work throughout the year? You know, sort of coursework?

S: Yeah, yeah

H: That would be more gradual, then they're not just focusing on children performance on one or two hour exams

S: Exams...I think some children, they break

H: Mm, exams and coursework involve different skills I think. Coursework gives you more time to think, prepare and organise. Exams, you have a limited period of time to complete set questions

S: Yes, they should look at the coursework and the content and the level of and the ability, how much effort has been put in and maybe the child has done something err just ordinary

H: Yeah

S: Yeah, and that child's though about it

H: Mm

S: And spent time to err do that project

H: Mm

S: And its outstanding work

H: mm

S: And how can you get that and just mark during those two hours?

H: Mm, it doesn't make sense does it?

S: No, no, that is wrong, I think that is wrong

H: Mm

S: And all the stress around the GCSEs is terrible

H: Mm

S: You know, stars and A's and B's. I think some children, they get so, they feel let down during exams

H: Right

S: Err because of mental err they sort of mentally err they get really depressed

H: Mm

S: And err quite a few children Zahra was saying (unclear). But it's not the parents, what can we do? (Unclear) that's the ways it is

H: Mm. Did Tariq feel like that over the tests? Was he worried?

S: Yeah, yeah, oh yeah he was, I was worried, Omar was worried

H: And yet in class, he didn't come across as worried

S: He doesn't show his feelings

H: Mm covering them up

S: Yes, he's very good at covering them up, just like his Dad

H: He's very much, you know, he makes comments that makes others in the class laugh

S: Mm, mm

H: Rather than coming across as a worried

S: Mm but he is, he is err I know when he's worried. He says *'Can I come and sleep with you'*

H: Mm

S: And I say 'Okay' and then I tease him, let him know afterwards. A couple of days later, I say to him 'Ah, your friends, do they know you sleep with Mummy? *'Ah Mummy'*

H: Laughs

S: And I know there's quite a few boys who do want their Mummy or Daddy (unclear) and I say 'Ah Tariq, why do you want to sleep with Mummy? You're a big boy now, you've got your own room' and he says (unclear). 'I understand, oh its cold, oh you've let me down I thought you wanted Mummy, I thought you wanted Mummy to kiss you and you wanted Mummy to be with you' *'Oh, alright then'*

H: Laughs

S: You know, he will always be a baby

H: Mm

S: You know he's happy when I say things to him and I have to act as if I am not mothering him, I am somebody who cares and who's worried about him

H: Mm

S: 'Oh you're doing so much' and you know

H: Mm

S: Where as I need something like that too, you know, I'm not the leader

H: Mm

S: I think these times... some children have (unclear)

H: Definitely, definitely

S: And that's another thing as well, culture

H: Yeah. Do you feel as though, err the school is of mixed cultures, do you feel it reflects one culture more than any others?

S: Yes, it does, yeah

H: Mm do you think other cultures are taken into consideration or...

S: Err all they do is, err when you say taken into consideration what does that mean, what do you mean by that?

H: Do they think about or look at other cultures? Do they give time to them?

S: I think what they do, what they are doing at school they find, especially Tariq (unclear) to know about other, others which I find is very, yes okay they learn about all different religions and cultures in school

H: Mm

S: It's a good thing, they should be broad minded

H: Mm

S: And they should accept others religions and cultures

H: Mm

S: And they should (unclear)

H: Mm

S: Err but mainly, mainly they are influenced by the English culture or British or European culture

H: Mm, yeah

S: They are influenced by that err not only children who are born and bred in this country (unclear)

H: Mm

S: When (unclear) Tariq first went on holiday, oh yes, that was another influence

H: Right

S: Err I found him (unclear) not cheeky but coming out with comments

H: Mm

S: Err which I found (unclear) but it has been an educational trip for him

H: When was that?

S: Last year we went in July during the holidays

H: Yeah

S: And he learnt a lot, he appreciated that (unclear)

\*\* Mrs Khan shouts for Tariq and asks him to set the table at some point; he does it straight away, seeking clarification on the condiments required on the table. Once he has finished, Mrs Ali says that they will wait for Dad and Zahra \*\*

H: So how many languages does Tariq speak?

S: Two  
H: And have you always spoken to him in two languages?  
S: Yeah, we use all three languages. My Mum speaks (unclear) the Punjab dialect, so they speak that and they speak Urdu and then English. (Unclear) the Koran  
H: Mm  
S: So English is the (unclear) at home, at work and at school and when it comes to say, people from Pakistan, he automatically falls into that language  
H: Oh right  
S: Err because you work relating to that environment and you fall into that language err which is great  
H: Mm, mm. Okay, I think I'm going to stop the tape there unless there's anything else that you'd like to add to what we have discussed  
S: No, no  
H: Okay, well thanks very much for having me round and giving up your time to talk to me  
S: That's okay  
H: And I'm sorry it's taken a lot longer than I first anticipated

**INTERVIEW WITH MRS LAZARUS, ROBERTO'S MOTHER****Date:** 18/06/2002**Location:** Staffroom, Roseberry Hill

**Notes:** Mrs Lazarus was running late as she was due to collect Roberto at the end of the school day. We had ten minutes before the bell rang and so the interview was quite rushed.

**Key:** Helen (H); Mrs Alessandra Lazarus

- H: So, I know we are short on time, but I'd like to discuss with you these three areas (refers to a piece of paper on which they are printed) and collect some background information
- A: Mm
- H: Err... so has Roberto been here since nursery?
- A: No, he came here in Year 1 I think
- H: Okay, have you always lived....sorry, what school was he at before?
- A: He was in (name of school)
- H: Right
- A: And we always lived in the same house, we never change house
- H: Right, okay and err...do you think the communication between the school and yourself is good? You know in terms of the letters that you get home. Would you say that you always know what's going on?
- A: Yeah, more or less yeah, I had another child here before
- H: Roberto's sister?
- A: Yeah so...oh yeah, every time there was a problem I was called by the teacher
- H: Right and do you feel able that you can talk to the teachers and the Head?
- A: Yeah, yeah
- H: Good, okay.... I know we don't necessarily think about the learning process but how do you think...do you think it's something that occurs with other people or do you think it's within the child?
- A: Err... the curiosity...within the child
- H: Mm
- A: It's a little bit of both, but it's also stimulation I think from the other people...err everything is (unclear word) the profits of men
- H: Mm
- A: I wouldn't say now we are learning, now we are not learning, every experience teaches something
- H: Mm...say for example Roberto gets homework, he has said that he does do homework at home with yourself and his dad and his maths tutor for time he had her.
- A: Mm
- H: But some children don't have the opportunity to go home and do the work with parents, you know, because either the parents struggle with the work themselves or they haven't got the time etc. So would you say that makes a big difference to the child if the parents are able to help them?
- A: I think so, I think you need, especially in this year when they don't know how to sit there and do some work,
- H: Mm
- A: They need a little bit of guidance
- H: Yeah
- A: Obviously if the parents know the subject a bit,
- H: Mm
- A: they will help
- H: Yeah
- A: But the children not respond always very well to the parents
- H: Why?

A: I wanted to teach Roberto maths  
H: Yeah  
A: And err...he wasn't working with me very well  
H: Mm  
A: Because... you know, clash, you know (laughing)  
H: Mm  
A: We never argue but when, during the interaction maths  
H: Yeah  
A: I went mad, he was mad so we decided no, no more (Mrs Lazarus and Helen laugh) so we had another teacher  
H: Yeah. Okay, how do you think Roberto's progressed at school since he's come?  
A: He's coming quite well I think, yeah. In maths he had a big weakness but...  
H: He improved as he got more confident didn't he?  
A: He improved a lot, yeah, yeah. It was the fear  
H: Mm  
A: More than anything  
H: Has he always had that with maths throughout the years?  
A: Always maths, the number, the number I think it's that  
H: Because with English he doesn't seem to have that  
A: No  
H: He just writes the story  
A: Very good reader  
H: Yeah and he's excellent at reading stories aloud too. He stands out really; he reads with such expression and enthusiasm... it really is very good  
A: Mm I know, I agree but maths no (laughs) I think he was more (unclear word) more than anything  
H: A lot of it I think, was the use of words, he wasn't familiar with some of the words was he? But he did spend time learning them...  
A: It's the counting, the numbers, the association and err...I don't know what happened  
H: Mm  
A: From the beginning  
H: And he's good at computers as well isn't he?  
A: Yeah, yeah  
H: Very good  
A: Yeah and music, music, he's doing something  
H: Yeah, playing his guitar? Okay, what else do you think influences learning. We've mentioned, well we've mentioned parents and... the relationship with the teacher do you think that influences how well he is in the classroom?  
A: On yeah and the classroom itself, I think. This classroom has got a lot of girls  
H: Yeah, two thirds of the class are girls aren't they?  
A: And I think it's a positive thing (Mrs Lazarus and Helen laugh) because girls are usually quieter than boys, usually  
H: Yeah  
A: Not always  
H: So you think that it's a positive thing?  
A: I think so... also if you are in a good school and a good class  
H: Mm  
A: And there is a bit of err...competition...you don't want to be left out  
H: Do you think there is competition?  
A: In this classroom I don't know, I ask Roberto sometimes, how are the others. Maybe it's not stressed the competition.  
H: Right  
A: I don't know, I'll ask you, which is better?  
H: Err... personally, I would say that compared with the other Year 6 class this class is more competitive  
A: Yeah  
H: But I think they are very different classes, the pupils and the teaching styles  
A: Mm  
H: Did Roberto's sister have Mrs Eastwood as a teacher?

A: Err...yeah  
H: Mm, different teachers. So do you see a difference in the way that they've worked or...?  
A: Err...Roberto started doing more homework  
H: Right  
A: At home err...even a year, two years ago; Luciana (Roberto's sister) wasn't doing much at all, nothing  
H: Right  
A: Maybe this is a little difference  
H: Yeah  
A: Err...the work at school...they are different children Luciana and Roberto  
H: Right  
A: So...maybe Roberto is more academic  
H: Right  
A: Luciana is more intuitive and she does more err...I don't know how to say... she's more active  
H: Right  
A: Than Roberto physically  
H: Yeah. Does she play sports and things?  
A: She dances  
H: Right  
A: She's loud, she's always moving and Roberto is more err...calm  
H: (Laughs)  
A: Yeah, I mean no  
H: Do you think Roberto's a quiet or a loud person?  
A: I think between the two is the man, is the calming one and the other one is...  
H: I think perhaps it also depends who you're with as well. I mean Roberto can be quiet with Mrs. Brookes but he's very loud with me  
A: Mm, he's very confident  
H: Yeah  
A: He's not, he's never shy  
H: I think that's a good thing, to have confidence  
A: But that's also because we, Roberto has this two culture together  
H: Yeah  
A: We go to Italy for many weeks in the year and we meet other people with different way of  
H: Mm  
A: So he understands the differences  
H: Mm. Does he speak Italian at home?  
A: Mm...yeah  
H: Do you speak Italian?  
A: Yeah, yeah  
H: Does he speak English with his Dad?  
A: We speak English and Italian, no my husband does not speak Italian but...  
H: Does he understand it?  
A: Err...very little (laughs) but the kids speak Italian  
H: Right  
A: And so the three of us speak Italian  
H: So when did you start talking in Italian to him?  
A: From birth  
H: Did he find it difficult to distinguish between the two different languages or is he okay with it?  
A: Roberto being the second was more err...speaking more English  
H: Right  
A: than Italian. Luciana started Italian and she was, she has a perfect accent in Italian, Roberto sometimes makes mistakes  
H: Mm...I went with him when he read 'The Hungry Caterpillar' in Italian to the younger children in the school  
A: Oh yeah  
H: He was very good, I was very impressed (Mrs Lazarus and Helen both laugh). But he didn't feel very confident in that situation, he wasn't that confident.

A: No

H: He was very nervous and he kept looking at me for reassurance

A: Laughs

H: He was very good, very good. Didn't you work with the same class?

A: Yeah, yeah

H: So they tried to speak a little bit of Italian to impress him too

A: Yeah

H: So, do you his friends influence his learning, those children he hangs around with?

A: I think so, if you are with, you know its like err...environment influence you

H: Mm, yeah

A: Friends, family, country, culture, everything (laughs)

H: How about the television and stuff like that, do you think that has an impact?

A: Television, yes

H: Does he watch a lot of television?

A: Mm, many hours (laughs)

H: And does he play on the computer a lot?

A: He plays on the computer, television unfortunately

H: Well most children do. Does he play on his skateboard as well?

A: On the?

H: Skateboard

A: What is? Ah, the skateboard yeah, yeah he plays err...basketball. There are kids in the neighbour and they see each other everyday, very sociable, they always come and knock at the door and want to play

H: Right. You know when you come to school to collect Roberto and see teachers, is it always you that comes to school or does your husband come too?

A: Err...mostly me, sometimes John

H: Do you work?

A: I work part-time, I am...freelance

H: Freelance?

A: Mm

H: What is it that you do?

A: I'm a landscape gardener

H: Yes, I was very impressed when Roberto told me (Mrs Lazarus laughs). And what does your husband do?

A: He, the husband had a company such a long time ago (laughs). At the moment he's not doing...he's working at some other business that we have

H: Right

A: So he's got free time as well

H: So does Roberto spend time with his Dad?

A: With John?

H: Yeah

A: Yeah, yeah, at the moment. John is mostly at home, especially when the kids are home, he is at home

H: Right, okay

A: But, you know mine is a bit (unclear – Mrs Lazarus laughs)

H: Is Roberto close to you?

A: Very much

H: Is he closer to his Dad?

A: In a different way I think he's close to both

H: He's going to (name of secondary school) isn't he? With Jun

A: Yeah

H: What do you think of this school?

A: It's been a good experience for me

H: Right

A: I like it. Ms Thompson is a good Head Mistress

H: Mm

A: The teachers are nice. Now Roberto had very good teachers I think

H: Mm, has he always got on with his teachers?

A: Yeah

H: Mm  
A: They never have problems with Roberto, never  
H: What do you think about the tests that they have to do? The importance that is placed on them  
A: I agree with the tests because in my experience we had tests every month  
H: Mm  
A: In Italy, you start having tests when you're six.  
H: Right  
A: You always have tests continually so there is no, you're not scared, you're prepared for them  
H: Right.  
A: Here, the thing is you don't prepare the kids to test  
H: Mm  
A: And that's the big thing  
H: Right  
A: A big deal when they do it  
H: I haven't worked in other years, but this year in Year 6, they did three practice tests  
A: That was good but before (unclear). I think they should practice tests more and also for the teacher it is a way to assess  
H: Mm, I suppose if the child knows what to expect then they're more comfortable in the test situation. A lot of the children got very worked up. Did Roberto get worked up over the tests or was he okay?  
A: I think he was okay. Maths was a big thing...for him and we had to call for this help....a tutor to do a lesson with him.  
H: Mm  
A: The rest he revised. I asked him things but he wasn't particularly getting upset  
H: Right. And will he have a tutor again for maths when he goes to (name of secondary school)?  
A: Yeah I think maybe at the beginning of the year, the new term  
H: Mm...is he worried about going to secondary school or is he looking forward to it?  
A: He's looking forward to  
H: Yeah, I think a lot of them are ready to leave  
A: Yeah, yeah and Roberto's sister is already there so he's is a bit (unclear)  
H: Right. What year is his sister in?  
A: Luciana...Year 9  
H: Nine, it's nice to have an older sister or brother there already  
A: Yeah. Also I said to him don't get (unclear) your sister everything (laughs) she has a reputation of being you know...a bit...not bad  
H: Mm  
A: But loud and...she could do better. So I said you will have this on you, this (unclear)  
H: Mm... I was surprised when he brought the ventriloquist doll in for the end of Year 6 production. When he found out I would be teaching some children juggling and balloon modelling, he asked me if I was a clown who had escaped from the circus!  
A: He tells me, he asks a very interesting question  
H: Mm  
A: Roberto all the time. He's was always been very detailed (unclear)  
H: Mm  
A: He's thinking it shows that he's very attentive to things  
H: Mm  
A: When he was three or four he told me, I don't want to be rich because the rich people are arrogant, he was three, I don't know four...you know  
H: Mm  
A: I mean he has already changed mind (Mrs Lazarus and Helen laugh). He was very good during the Juan.... (Juan has been off very ill)  
H: Mm, he missed him a lot didn't he?  
A: He was calling every day  
H: Mm  
A: He called him from Italy when we went to Italy, everyday  
H: Yes, they are very close friends

A: Very close, very  
H: Okay, well I'll let you go and collect Roberto then  
A: We're done?  
H: Yeah, thank you very much for coming to talk to me  
A: You're welcome

## INTERVIEW WITH MR ALI, JALEELA'S FATHER

Date: 19/06/2002

Location: 6B classroom

**Notes:** *This interview took place while the children were rehearsing for their end of year play. Mr Ali was due to collect his children at the end of the school day and as such, the interview was confined to twenty minutes. I noted that he never made eye contact with me throughout the duration of the interview. There was playground noise throughout the interview and this meant some words were lost in the transcription.*

**Key:** Helen (H); Mr Zuhair Ali

- H: Okay so I haven't got any questions that are specific, I've just got the three subject areas that I would like to talk about (places a list of the topic areas in front of Mr Ali and proceeds to point to them in turn). So the first one is your thoughts about this school err... and then the second one is how you think learning happens, you know is it within the child, do you think it happens with other people and then lastly, wider influences, other things that may influence learning. Before we discuss these three topics I'd just like to gather a little background information. So, has Jaleela been here since nursery or...
- Z: (Interrupting) Jaleela has been here since two years
- H: Two years
- Z: Two years, yeah. Moved from (name of area)
- H: Right
- Z: I went to this area err so... four children of mine they are been in this school
- H: Right, because Faraah (Jaleela's sister) was here
- Z: Faraah was here last year and err she has moved on to high school and Jaleela is going to the sixth year and following our younger child at Year 3
- H: Right
- Z: And 1 at the moment
- H: Okay. Is it okay if I just turn that fan off because of the recording (points to the dictaphone)
- Z: Yeah, yeah
- H: Mm, yeah, because Jaleela has mentioned that she has got sisters
- Z: Oh, alright, yes
- H: Mm. Okay so do you think that the communication between the school and yourselves is good? You know in the form of letters, do you always know what's going on or...
- Z: Err...yes it is, it is better err... also with the weekly newspaper
- H: Right
- Z: That goes around at least one knows what events are happening
- H: Yeah
- Z: To updating the recent events (unclear)
- H: Yeah, yeah. And are you able or is Jaleela able... if she had a problem would she be able to talk to the teacher about it, do you think?
- Z: Jaleela she is err... at times she keeps things to her own self
- H: Yeah
- Z: And very rarely says anything, you know regarding the classroom, what has been happening to herself
- H: Mm
- Z: So unless it is err you know the... unless she feels she needs to tell she is annoyed with something
- H: Mm
- Z: Then she will come out
- H: Right
- Z: And say, other than that, no I don't think so
- H: No. Because I have noticed
- Z: Mm
- H: That although Mrs Brookes is Jaleela's class teacher, there is another classroom assistant who works in this class alongside myself, but Jaleela is more likely to approach or talk to me if she has a problem.

Z: Yeah  
H: Rather than the teacher even though I will say to her I will discuss it with Mrs Brookes  
Z: Yes  
H: She's more able to tell me...  
Z: Yeah  
H: Okay... Faraah had Mrs. Brookes last year as well didn't she?  
Z: Err, yes she has, yeah  
H: Okay, do you think that Jaleela gets on with the people in her class?  
Z: Yes, Jaleela, she is... yes she does, yes  
H: She has a group of friends doesn't she?  
Z: She has a group of friends and... it's a matter of err... she's not that talkative person  
H: No  
Z: And she can get involved with you know, any other person within the group  
H: Yeah  
Z: And she can work with any group.... and compared with the other child, Faraah, she was more talkative  
H: Yeah  
Z: And had problems with the grouping in that respect  
H: Yeah. Okay err... so if we move on to discuss the topics  
Z: Mm  
H: Okay, how do you think learning happens? Do you think it's up to the child themselves to want to learn or do you think its other people as well?  
Z: It's the atmosphere around which makes the person learn  
H: Okay  
Z: Err learning, (unclear) groups, learning, doing activities or getting them involved in different types of activities that then enhances their knowledge and also say, err... at home, parental learning within the home. Learning is an aspect which takes place err ... in most (unclear)  
H: Yeah. It's interesting because a lot of research in learning only looks at the school, but really when you work it out, only 20% of a child's time each year is spent at school  
Z: Mm, mm  
H: And Jaleela has said she does lots of things at home with yourself and that she plays with her brothers and sisters so she is learning all the time  
Z: Yes  
H: She says you help her a lot with her homework  
Z: Yes, yes  
H: With her maths  
Z: Yes  
H: And her science  
Z: Yes, that's right  
H: She told me when she was revising, that you helped her revise a lot  
Z: Yes, I happen to have time off work (unclear)  
H: Right  
Z: 'Cos school is err... even though it is become very tense of the structure of school  
H: Mm  
Z: Err... the curriculum, that the child does need to do work elsewhere away from school, which is home and the atmosphere err...where they work at home is also important  
H: Mm, mm  
Z: Our other children too (unclear) seeing this  
H: Mm  
Z: You know, so teaching children, I do what I can for them.  
H: Yeah  
Z: But it's that part of life, you discipline a child this behaviour to learn  
H: Mm  
Z: On a regular basis, which you know, err goes un err.... unpracticed (unclear)  
H: Yeah  
Z: Unless you really reinforce it, you know you have to be really strict  
H: Yeah  
Z: At times with them (laughs)

H: (Laughs) Mm, I think it can be difficult at times for teaching staff to discipline children in school because they have only certain things that they can do and children who you know perhaps don't get disciplined at home, if they are disruptive or whatever, it can be very difficult to discipline them in class

Z: Yes, you see the discipline... the word discipline has (unclear)

H: Mm

Z: And it depends how you interpret

H: Mm

Z: But discipline, discipline is... if even the children is not doing anything

H: Mm

Z: You just put him in a room, make him sit down for five minutes

H: Mm

Z: You know and stay, that's discipline, discipline... you told him something to do and he does it

H: Mm

Z: That is discipline but discipline comes with other things with it, you know

H: Yeah

Z: Throughout, that is the success of life, if one is disciplined, one will be successful and (unclear)

H: Right

Z: You know

H: Yeah

Z: In my opinion (Mr Ali laughs)

H: (Laughs) No, that's great; that's what I want hoping to gain insight into, your opinion

Z: Yeah, yeah

H: Err...you mentioned then that you have time off work to help Jaleela revise and such like

Z: Mm

H: Do you think its difficult if parents, if both parents or carers work full time, to spend time with their children

Z: Err in that case it is very difficult in fact, because when children go (unclear) there's no mother, no father at home. They can get to you know err they can do things that they never... I mean to say that err they can err... there's very less emphasis on them to do anything in fact

H: Mm

Z: Because you know, parents are there to enforce and parents are there for emotional support

H: Mm

Z: And you know any, any problems they come across err they can talk to the parents but if the parents, if they are not there, that essential part of life

H: Mm

Z: Err is missing

H: Yeah

Z: Which is very, very important

H: Mm

Z: Especially, especially the mother I emphasise and dad, especially the mother because at the same time she can give them love and affection

H: Mm

Z: And also she can be hard on them

H: Mm

Z: And father is slightly plays a different role in you know sorting out things

H: Mm

Z: Err... the mother is... the mother is very important but unfortunately err...the situation in this country or in European countries

H: Mm

Z: Is that both parents have to go out and work

H: Yeah

Z: And again that being a... discipline factor err you know can be overridden

H: Mm

Z: They can take advantage

H: Yeah  
Z: of it, unless the both parents are strict  
H: Mm  
Z: Then depending upon the age factor of the children...when they can be (unclear)  
H: Mm  
Z: But err... most parents do, they do make arrangements, either one or the other is at home when the children does go back to school, err...to home sorry  
H: Mm, do you work full-time yourself?  
Z: Yes I do. I work err full time but my shifts are longer when I am working  
H: Right  
Z: So like 24 hours and err  
H: 24 hour shifts?  
Z: Yes, 24 hour shift pattern so in that I get two days, three days off  
H: Oh right  
Z: That is the reason  
H: What, what kind of job is it?  
Z: Social work  
H: Social work  
Z: and support work  
H: Right  
Z: Social work with learning difficulties  
H: Yeah  
Z: So that's the reason I happen to have a few days off annual leave... whilst you know days off  
H: Mm, is it difficult to work that shift pattern, I'd find it really difficult (laughing)  
Z: It is err daunting at times  
H: Mm  
Z: It is err...but it has to be done  
H: And does Jaleela's mum work or...  
Z: No she just house  
H: Right, she's at home err...  
Z: She just works at home  
H: Right  
Z: She has to look after five children I have  
H: Mm  
Z: So it self is err is a job  
H: Yeah, yeah  
Z: In my opinion  
H: Yeah  
Z: And she is looking after in every way she can  
H: Err...okay do you think that this school only reflects European culture or do you think it takes into consideration your culture or  
Z: Culture is such culture we've become err how err can I say... culture blended in us  
H: Mm  
Z: From Indian sub-continent culture we were from part of India  
H: Right  
Z: What as a, as a matter of culture we don't I mean possibly don't err look into culture  
H: Right  
Z: As such, but what we have to do is err is follow the leader  
H: Mm  
Z: More than the culture itself even though culture is within (unclear)  
H: Right  
Z: It is a mixture of culture with the Indian culture  
H: Mm  
Z: And so that, really we don't place that much influences on the culture and so...  
H: Mm, but you follow the religion?  
Z: We try to, yes  
H: And does Jaleela go to mosque  
Z: Yes she does after school, they have classes here

H: After school yeah  
Z: She does  
H: And what language does Jaleela speak at home  
Z: Err she speaks err Punjabi at home as well as Urdu and the err...what they read here err which is Arabic  
H: Mm  
Z: She is trying to read Arabic, the language which the Koran is written in  
H: Mm  
Z: Then after that they start understanding, understanding side of the language  
H: Right  
Z: Of Arabic  
H: Mm... I think it's a good idea to learn everything when you're younger, it's easier isn't it?  
Z: It's easier and the emphasis on some is err is that you don't push a child at this stage, you know  
H: Mm  
Z: In my opinion the more they do is, is better  
H: Mm  
Z: On a longer term basis  
H: Mm  
Z: Err then to take it easy and then you know, very difficult to grasp later on in life  
H: Yeah. Do you agree with all the tests that they have to do in school, you know, those put in place by the government?  
Z: Ideally if you compare the private schools with the national schools, they don't do enough of them  
H: Err... the private school don't have to do them  
Z: No, private schools have to do them  
H: They may do tests but they don't have to so the SATs, you know the tests that Year 6 children do here in this school  
Z: Right  
H: Yeah, they typically have different ones  
Z: Yeah, okay  
Z: Well I mean its, its better in a way that err one err, you can't say that it's a certainness of a child does have up and down  
H: Mm  
Z: But one can measure whether things are being learnt  
H: Mm  
Z: Or if there is any problems with the child then the problems can be picked up at a very early stage  
H: Yeah  
Z: As a previous err ... previous err... schooling  
H: Mm  
Z: Ten fifteen years ago, no such thing was picked up  
H: Mm  
Z: Until we were sixteen when we were given the exams then  
H: Yeah  
Z: Then obviously it was too late. So these tests at least they are not err it is one to ... you know putting oneself in a straight  
H: Mm  
Z: Whether the child is err... you know getting the knowledge that is required  
H: Mm  
Z: So it lays out further err emphasis on each subject  
H: Mm  
Z: Err whether they have understood or not and overall erm the parents at least the parents know where the child stands on that  
H: Yeah, right. Err do you think that Jaleela would ask for help in school if she needed it?  
Z: That's what I always encourage her, to ask if she doesn't understand, ask in the classroom or ask me when I'm home  
H: Mm  
Z: It's better to be err to learn what she doesn't understand

H: Mm  
Z: Than she doesn't tell a problem (unclear) but again its err parents can only put a certain amount of emphasis when you have other children  
H: Mm  
Z: You can't go round and saying you know and start thinking what things you didn't do  
H: Mm  
Z: And what you did understand. But parents have to do their...work and they can't be more concentrated on the education side of it  
H: Mm  
Z: Because there are time gap between the parents' studies and the child's studies  
H: Mm  
Z: The things are so changing within the classroom  
H: Mm  
Z: You know one can't keep up  
H: No  
Z: Can't keep up with it  
H: Mm, at parents evening some parents said they find it difficult you know, the way that homework questions are worded or you know, specific maths words they don't understand. They find it difficult to help the child when they don't really understand it because it's different to how it was when they were at school  
Z: Mm  
H: Do you find that a problem or  
Z: Not as such because the older child has come into this school  
H: Yes, Faraah  
Z: And again she has gone through the same class  
H: Mm  
Z: Same teacher, then that understanding is there  
H: Yeah  
Z: And then I just pass it on (Mr Ali and Helen laugh) which is much easier  
H: Yeah. Did you find it difficult last year or...?  
Z: No I didn't manage to find it that difficult  
H: Mm  
Z: The only thing, she was doing the work and but she slipped up in one subject which was marked (unclear)  
H: Right  
Z: But the others were average  
H: Mm  
Z: So which was quite good  
H: Right  
Z: But she was mostly (unclear) work  
H: Does Jaleela get nervous when she does tests?  
Z: She does, yes  
H: Yeah  
Z: Yeah she got nervous  
H: A lot of the children are very nervous  
Z: Yeah  
H: Err...does Faraah help her with her work or  
Z: Only when I...  
H: Prompt her?  
Z: When I prompt her that's right, yeah  
H: Okay, so what other influences do you think are on a child, we've mentioned err a parents role is very important, is there anyone else that you think is important?  
Z: The err ... peer groups are very very influential factor on learning and also the, the friends that they associate with err  
H: Mm.. .has Jaleela always had the same friendship group over the last couple of years or  
Z: Yes I think so, yes. Cos my err few friends err with similar age  
H: Mm  
Z: Err you know similar age group of children they have, so whenever they you know, meet  
H: Mm

Z: Err they are happy to meet and again, a lot of their influences is to do with the, with learning, you know is the activities and what have you

Z: Mm (unclear) but peer group and friends around, that influence is paramount

H: Yeah, yeah. Okay, err do you think religion has a strong influence on Jaleela?

Z: Err she is err... as she is growing...religion influence does play a role

H: Mm

Z: Does play a vital role in how you view oneself within the society

H: Mm

Z: And how, that again comes from how strong your parents beliefs are

H: Mm

Z: Which is passed to a child, a child's, beliefs I think it does play a role

H: Err do you want Jaleela to go onto university or are you not

Z: For myself err I prefer all the children

H: To go to university

Z: Mm, whatever...

H: Or further education

Z: Yes, yes

H: Okay ... is there anything else that you would like to add to anything we have discussed? A big thing that I am looking at in the research is the relationship between the teachers and the children. As I mentioned before, Jaleela was more able to come to me than Mrs Brookes

Z: Mm

H: Because she has formed a different relationship

Z: That's right

H: With me than she has with Mrs Brookes

Z: Mm

H: Does you think that's true or

Z: Err yes it does happen, it happens err places of work it happened to me you know

H: Yes

Z: Its does happen, you find more leniency, more err you err probably be able to give her more time

H: Yeah

Z: Err that is one factor so also it's the way one presents himself

H: Mm

Z: As to somebody is there if you have a problem you can talk to them very easily rather than to, even the age factor gap

H: Mm

Z: Is also there

H: Yeah

Z: Again the child must speak to similar age peer group, age person than another again, again err the parents

H: Mm

Z: Some things you know, the child can't say err or tell the parents, while they can tell the (unclear)

H: Mm Jaleela mentioned you a lot more than she mentioned her mum.

Z: Right

H: I think perhaps that's because we talked about school work and I think she does more with you, or that's the impression she gives me.

Z: Right

H: Its funny the times I talk to the children, sometimes they want to talk and sometimes they don't want to talk, it depends what mood they are in. But you know I only get to know a little bit of Jaleela

Z: Mm

H: How she presents herself in the classroom. When she first came into this class she was quiet, she wouldn't speak to me at all but I think she has grown a lot in confidence you know compared to the beginning of the year

Z: It's the reserved err I mean I am the same nature but you grow out of it if you speak for a long time

H: Mm

Z: One is reserved (unclear) observation and then after observation, then you say right okay then where do I stand  
H: Yeah  
Z: And then you can ask for help. But children at this age, especially because people don't mix  
H: Mm  
Z: Err a lot  
H: Mm  
Z: Err you know, in clubs and what have you  
H: Yeah  
Z: Can't say that the other (unclear) of it but helps to err my older child  
H: Mm  
Z: She mixes... you give two minutes and she's err you know  
H: Is that Farrah?  
Z: Mm, more talkative  
H: Yeah  
Z: Jaleela, she's less talkative person  
H: Yes, she's shyer  
Z: Yes, yes  
H: Do you think she will become more talkative? Do you think she will become more confident?  
Z: Yes, at the high school  
H: Is she going to (name of secondary school of which Roseberry Hill is a primary feeder)  
Z: Yes she is, yes  
H: Okay, so is there anything that you would like to add?  
Z: No, that's err that's okay  
H: Okay, well thanks a lot for coming to meet me  
Z: Okay

**INTERVIEW WITH HEAD TEACHER: KATHRYN THOMPSON****Date:** 17/07/2002**Location:** Head Teacher's Office

**Notes:** *This interview was carried out later than scheduled as the Head Teacher went out for lunch with the Deputy Head Teacher.*

**Key:** Helen (H); Ms Kathryn Thompson (K)

- H: Okay, so first of all I'd like to talk about the school philosophy
- K: Err hmm
- H: So can you sum it up for me?
- K: (Laughing) Err...well I suppose it's that you'd want individual children to achieve their potential in every way, so not every child is academic so it's up to school really to find out, you know, what children's strengths are and you know build on those. But also to find out what their needs are and support them to develop, whether that's academically or emotionally, socially, because it's not just about, you know SATs results
- H: No
- K: Its about all those and I'd want to think that you know, my staff knew their children well enough to be able to know, you know, to access their needs appropriately, that's it really (unclear)
- H: Okay then... err... so how would you say that children learn. Would you say it's in interaction with others and the environment was important? Would you say that their genes have a role? That its personal, you know, motivation levels...what are your thoughts?
- K: I think it's a combination of all three
- H: Right
- K: I think you have to take into account that you know, that some children are academically, intellectually less able than others
- H: Right
- K: So that's obviously going to have role in it
- H: Yeah
- K: Err...and you need to take account of their different learning styles as well 'cos I think what lot of education does is, it doesn't recognise that
- H: Mm
- K: It only recognises the children who achieve in tests
- H: Yeah
- K: And so I'd want a whole raft of information to be taken on that count
- H: Right
- K: Err...whether they're sort of able or less able or more able or whatever. I think the environment does definitely make a difference 'cos I think if you, if children value learning and if their achievements are valued
- H: Mm
- K: Then, they're much more likely to achieve their full potential. So that's if a supportive atmosphere, where the appropriate kind of err...support is given
- H: Mm
- K: Which is individual to every child
- H: Yeah
- K: Then they're more likely to succeed. And I also think that its support from the teacher, its support from they're peers
- H: Mm
- K: So if they're in an environment which is not conducive to learning, which is noisy or distractible or shouty
- H: Mm
- K: From the teacher's point of view

H: Yeah

K: Or punitive, then I think they're less likely to achieve well. So I'd be wanting to go for the optimum environment, is one where they are appropriately supported which encourages them in every positive way possible and gives them a sort of structure to work within.

H: What about the role of home

*\*\* Interruption \*\**

H: Okay, so we were talking about the support

K: About parents

H: Yeah

K: Yes, I think that also can make a difference err...significant really, 'cos again it's, if the parents are very positive about their child and know their child, then they're going to be encouraging their child to be positive about learning

H: Mm

K: Err...positive about their weaknesses as well as their strengths and I think what some parents do, is they encourage academic strengths to the detriment of other areas

H: Yeah

K: But also not all parents can provide appropriate support for their children and I think that's something the school perhaps has to do more

H: Right

K: To work with it, is helping parents to not just to give the appropriate support but to want to give it and for the right reasons.

H: If the parents... for example when I've been in parents evening

K: Mm

H: Some of the parents struggle with the work themselves

K: Yeah

H: Err...how do you think that we could help them?

K: Well I, I, think we need to be very clear, I mean not all parents are going to be able to help their children academically

H: No

K: That's what schools about

H: Mm

K: But all, I think all we can do is try and make sure they have got an appropriate level of knowledge about the curriculum and what the expectations are and to enable their children, I mean if they can't actually help their children with the work. I mean some parents feel they've got to do it for them and be a teacher

H: Mm

K: Now I don't, I don't think that's their role

H: Mm

K: I think their role is to provide again, the right environment

H: Mm

K: For their child to succeed in, so really, as far as I'm concerned, children shouldn't be set homework for example which is so beyond their level that they can't do it independently

H: Right

K: So parents really need to be providing the time and space and the encouragement to achieve that

H: Mm

K: Rather than actually being able to do it themselves you know. I mean I think there were two parents I had in who took issue with some homework that Gillian (Mrs Eastwood) had set

H: Mm

K: And actually couldn't do it themselves

H: Mm

K: or misunderstood and I actually said well that wasn't the point of the homework

H: Mm

K: The point was for the child to have a go at it independently

H: Mm

K: And then for the teacher to be able to assess what that child's needs were. If parents do homework for their children, what's the point? Because there are some parents who will do it and some parents who won't so you have this kind of you know dual provision really. So I think its sort of, its telling parents about what homework is for, making sure they know that it

is for their children and not them and what they can do is provide the right environment for their child to complete it if appropriate.

H: Err...does the school encourage communication between school and home?

K: Well, I would hope so, I would hope so. I would hope you know, that I would be as open as possible and I would also ask my staff to be that. Its because you know parents are very anxious, you know we live in a very sort of err...achievement orientated society and so really parents need to be able to have access to teachers whether on an informal or a formal level and sometimes the informal is even more important because otherwise it can seem to parents that the only time they ever come in is to complain or to be anxious or whatever

H: Mm

K: Whereas if they have got a good relationship with the class teacher, then they can come and say well you know why this or why that

H: Yeah

K: Without feeling that they're mithering or failing and without teachers feeling criticised

H: Yeah

K: Because that's, that's the feeling isn't it

H: Yeah, yeah

K: You know if that's the only contact you have with a parent is when they've got something to grumble about that's not very good really. I don't think parents find that terribly easy even though you're a very open school

H: Mm

K: Some parents do find it a very formal situation and I not an area they want to come into but I think that's something you work on with individual parents.

H: Yeah. Okay, how do you think your role contributes towards the goal of helping children to learn?

K: Well I would hope that I encourage all my staff to, well, I do two things really, make sure that the curriculum is appropriate because if its not err...we've had great debates an this since the literacy and numeracy came in because I really do feel that on some levels the literacy hour and numeracy hour are not appropriate in their current form for children. You know if you're asking, because it's a very, you know a very focussed session you're gonna have less able children who just switch off

H: Mm

K: Or become distracted or whatever and err...more able children who are not challenged. So I would, I hope I have encouraged staff and still encourage staff to make sure that, they are achieving the right levels, so to go beyond the literacy hour and numeracy hour if appropriate

H: Mm

K: You know if you're like saying half your class are distracted in the literacy hour, well why are you doing it?

H: Mm

K: And you know I still do have debate about that sometimes. You know, what you are giving them is not appropriate so they need to be differentiating the learning and making sure it is appropriate. For example I mean there's one child I know in Gillian's class, Oliver, who is very, very able, now again, apart from checking out that he's acquired, he's got the right level of knowledge I can't see the point in making him go through the motions

H: Mm

K: of something that you know he can do. He really should be set from the word go more challenging tasks

H: Right

K: So there's... I still think people find it very hard, I mean it is hard to manage, is that you sort of you give all the class something to do, it might be differentiated to a certain extent but then you're more able children you just give them more work to do,

H: Mm

K: and I don't think that's appropriate

H: Right

K: I think what they need is a different task

H: Mm

K: And, and building that into a very complex curriculum I think is hard, I mean

H: Mm

K: I'm not sure I would be able to do it anyway. You know it is hard. But again if you're saying to parents that what we're doing is meeting the needs of individual children

H: Mm

K: then you've got to build that in

H: Mm

K: You know if you have a child who's very, very able or even significantly less able

H: Mm

K: We tend to do it a lot more for our less able children

H: Right

K: than we do for our more able children

H: Right

K: And I think I would like to make sure that the balance is right there, so it is meeting people's needs

H: I think it is difficult when you're... to teach and maintain the interest of those who struggle

K: Yeah

H: And...

K: Extend, yeah it is hard and I do think it has been tampered by the very, I think a lot of learning these days is, is very closed

H: Mm

K: So its very fact, it's very your objective is this... whereas I think although there was lots of disadvantages in the past about the curriculum being too err...too undefined

H: Mm

K: The kind of learning that children undertook was much more open ended and you could, it could be appropriately set at each, you know, at each level of understanding err and I think a lot of that is gone. So its not, it wasn't about completing a worksheet and then you know whether its differentiated or not and then going onto something else, it was about investigating say, you know the city where I live or you know acquiring some knowledge of research

H: Mm

K: methods which could apply at appropriate levels and I think that kind of freedom has gone because the curriculum is to crowded

H: Mm, do you think that there's a lot to do in the National Curriculum in the time in a school

K: Oh yeah

H: Yeah

K: Too much, absolutely too much and again and it doesn't really err...it doesn't allow for individual children's needs and I, I think to some extent you know perhaps schools where there are less able children or social difficulties

H: Mm

K: are even more hampered

H: Mm

K: Because what those schools tend to do is to go for a very straight jacket curriculum because it is there, it is a straight jacket size there

H: Mm

K: So those children tend to get a diet of you know err...factual learning or objective and subjective (unclear) whereas a more creative approach it's much more difficult

H: Mm

K: But you know its gives much more scope for children to learn at their own pace and to find their inclinations or whatever, its difficult and I, you know, I don't think we'll ever get there perfectly until you have a school perhaps with a dozen children in a class

H: Mm

K: You know then you can do it, but I would like to feel that's where we were moving to err...sort of being a start but it is hard

H: So do you think it would be easier, more effective, if the classes were smaller?

K: Oh yeah, yeah, I do. I think you know thirty what, whatever age is a significant number of children's needs to deal with because although again the literacy conveniently gives you, you know five groups to deal with

H: Mm

K: And you'll know from your experience that within that group it can be a massive range

H: Mm

K: And because don't think that's terribly helpful to children to be labelled this group or that group

H: Mm

K: And you know there's just a fair range within that range

H: Mm

K: as it were

H: Mm. Okay how do the LEA. and government policies impact upon the school?

K: (Laughs)

H: Kind of a broad question

K: Yeah

H: So if you could give me some examples

K: Well, the National Curriculum I think certainly impacts because it is very prescriptive although I think it is, they have eased off a little you know, the revised National Curriculum did allow for more flexibility which is good. I still think there's an awful lot in there you know, if you look at the time that you're expected to give to religious education which is a massive part of, it's all very well to quantify so many hours here, there or wherever because I very much believe in a cross curricula approach to learning

H: Mm

K: But to pick out the different elements of the National Curriculum that actually stops teachers being creative

H: Mm

K: Because it is quite hard really

H: Yeah

K: I mean I think we've done something's here err...any LEA policy is perhaps too much target based, too much on SATs results, league tables and it isn't just national league tables I mean (city name) itself, you know the kind of information it publishes about schools

H: Mm

K: Are not based on prior knowledge or you know the children that you happen to have in a year group

H: Mm

K: But that's because the LEA is under an awful lot of pressure to succeed and to meet its targets and I think the whole thing while it gives a kind of err...I think we all need challenges and we all need you know to feel, that we are extending children

H: Mm

K: So without a National Curriculum, without targets you're really depending on the quality of the teacher

H: Mm

K: to deliver a good curriculum and to make sure children are assessed and treated appropriately. All the LEA and national government do is they place those parameters on schools

H: Mm

K: It's so they can produce their own measures and you can see the reasons for them doing that and they'd say they're making better schools. I don't necessarily think they are 'cos I think it's been narrowing and I think a lot of schools feel under a great deal of pressure

H: Mm

K: to meet targets and however good a school, you know, it can be very difficult you know, when you're children are not going to meet those targets, for their efforts to be valued. I mean again, you'll know from this Year 6, I mean there are some children who have done really well

H: Yes

K: Brilliant, not recognised in the league tables

H: No

K: Not recognised in target setting if the school hasn't met its targets

H: No

K: And I think that hampers teachers' creativity and that that's bound to affect children

H: If the school doesn't achieve its targets

K: Mm

H: does that reflect badly on it?

K: Well, according to the LEA, no it doesn't because there are always reasons for you not meeting targets

H: Mm

K: However I think it makes everybody feel bad, I mean they are public targets so parents can say why didn't the school meet its targets, the governors are going to say why didn't the school meet its targets. So I suppose I feel responsible. I think the people responsible like you know in Year 6, however much you say to them I know you've worked you're socks off and you're children have made this and that progress

H: Mm

K: the fact that you haven't met it, it engenders a feeling of failure doesn't it?

H: Yeah

K: It's bound to

H: Mm

K: And err so I think it's not helpful in that sense really

H: Who sets the targets?

K: Well the LEA targets are set in conjunction with the School Advisor Inspector and again in the past, a lot of it's because the LEA has its own targets, you can see that across the city where it's got to have an aggregate

H: Mm

K: of those, say targets are 85%, well there are some schools that will never achieve that with the kind of intake or particular needs of those children so therefore its got to pressurize higher achieving schools, whatever their intake

H: Mm

K: to balance it out so I think in the past it has been very much, well these are challenging targets whether you could meet them or not. This year I have to say we've based our targets on KS1 results

H: Right

K: It's the first time we've had them actually available and I think they are more realistic, I think they're good and I think they went into great detail of what children should achieve

H: Mm

K: So I'm hoping they've been more realistic this year. But then there could be changes along route, you loose children, you gain children, there are particular social difficulties, children are like we had this year you know, one child on an extended holiday

H: Mm

K: Missing a huge chunk of work

H: Yeah

K: And you can only do so much, you know to account for that

H: Do you think there are any advantages to having the SATs?

K: Ah... I don't think there are any. I can't think of any.

H: So how do you believe the children should be assessed, by teacher assessment?

K: Oh assessed yeah. I think children should be assessed by teachers

H: Mm

K: Now that's not just about their class work, it is regular testing in a way that's appropriate; sort of match the learning that has taken place. But if you think this year how much time Gillian and Sophie have had to spend making sure that children, I mean it is coaching of a kind

H: Mm

K: I mean I don't think we do it to the extent that other schools do, but you cannot not do it

H: Mm

K: Because you know, because it is there... on two levels, its not just about school reaching their targets, its about children being given levels which they are then you know, which then serve them for high school or whatever and I don't think that's very helpful. You know, it is very unhelpful at KS1 to be told your a Level 1, 2 or 3 child, I mean they're bloody 6 years old, you know and again the sense of failure if you're a Level 3 child at KS2, when you may have made enormous progress and perhaps you know might have been Level 1 at KS1, Levels represent an average or above average achievement for that child

H: Yeah

K: And that isn't recognised and again it's that sense of labelling failure, number crunching, which I think a lot of high schools perpetuate

H: Mm, I know from being in the classroom that the children are aware that Level 4 is the level they are expected to achieve

K: Yeah, yeah

H: So if they achieve Level 3

K: Mm

H: They don't want to say it, to admit it

K: No, that's right

H: Because they are ashamed of it, even though...

K: Even though they worked. We say, you know in our letter we say, there may be a variety of factors or whatever and it is a kind of labelling and you know, apart from high schools or anything I else, I think that isn't appropriate for children I mean... it's very complex 'cos children will know where they fall in the hierarchy

H: Mm

K: of academic subjects or whatever but what SATs don't do, is recognise their overall achievements. You know there may be other strengths that they have and we don't live in a society that recognises that people have individual strengths and weaknesses because a lot of those weaknesses are regarded to be err...excluding future citizens

H: Mm

K: from being a high achieving earner or whatever, I mean there are certain things that disprove that

H: Mm

K: You know you get the multi millionaire without any 'O' Levels or whatever, but they are a bit few and far between

H: Yeah

K: And it is very exclusive and I think once it's formed... it's like I was reading err... Guardian letters last night about the number of pupils who get into Oxford who come from private schools

H: Mm

K: And you get these people who say that's because they're brighter, but then you get other people saying it's just because they've always had high expectations, they've had extra tuition, they've had the parental support

H: Mm

K: which might just push them into a grade higher than a state school pupil so therefore they get to Oxford, you know, so what kind of system are we running? So labelling of children is, I think very, very destructive

H: Mm

K: Very destructive

H: Okay, so what would you say the strengths of the school are?

K: Well I would hope that in a way we do try and minimise that, that we do try and ensure that children do have a good sense of self worth. I mean well, I was really, really proud of Gillian that she gave Harry that part to do (in the Year 6 production)

H: Yeah

K: 'Cos a lot of people wouldn't

H: I know

K: They wouldn't have trusted him to do it and in a way I mean he didn't do it as well say, as Oliver might have done, Oliver would have you know he would have relished it, it would have been so funny, and so brilliant but that would have been easy for Oliver to do that, absolutely easy and it wasn't easy for Harry to do that, it wasn't easy for him to read it, to stand up there at the front and it that's the kind of courage it takes. You can try your best to give children self worth and not that they're you know err... what do I mean. I'm saying there are hierarchies but they have you know achievements they should be proud of

H: Yeah

K: And that they should then go on and move on from there

H: Mm

K: I think the academic side is overstretched. Its either that or you get to high school and you're good at sport you know, when you get there, I mean Richard used to say this to me about (name of secondary school)

H: Mm

K: You know they'd be people at the end of your awards who were absolute rotters and didn't work in class, but were getting achievements awards for you know, football

H: Mm

K: That's not to say, you know they're good footballers and they should get it but to me, it seemed a kind of very narrow compensation

H: Mm

K: for you know, not being very good at English or whatever and I think it's much, much broader than that.

H: Mm

K: It's about a whole society valuing people isn't it, it's about, you know going two ways... or whatever. It's a biggy isn't it?

H: Yeah

K: But I do think achievement and err that's...it isn't just the big things that matter it's the little things, it is the kindnesses or the caring or a small step along the way you know that's good and I hope the staff do that as well (unclear)

H: Okay and do you think that there are any areas that you would like to develop within the school?

K: Well I would like to carry on developing that you know that sort of differentiated approach and individual approach err...I'd like to get the parents involved more. I think what we started doing this year with the drama really is... I would like it to be more creative, it's something you can't measure drama, you can't test drama and yet children learn through drama and some children learn enormously well in a kind of affective way

H: Mm

K: I think all children learn through drama in an emotional way because they're involved in a situation

H: Mm

K: That they to a greater or lesser extent have commitment to. Like the bear wolf I did with Joe (Deputy Head) their commitment to that was absolutely wonderful and it also brought them together

H: Mm

K: You can't measure that, you can't give them a test in it, so I would like that creative side to be more valued and I think it will give children, you know a greater range of learning opportunities which are not measurable, but that are for their personal growth...

H: Will you continue with the drama?

K: Yeah, well I'm hoping that in September that everybody, what I shall ask everybody to do, is make sure that they have an input of drama at least once a term

H: Right

K: So three times a year there will be some drama. It might only be a couple of lessons but they'll be a drama input that's somehow you know, looks at the curriculum whether its sort of friendship or PSHE or history or whatever because I do think it's very important that we offer that and then I hope it will become established. I've been really amazed actually, that although I did the teaching at the beginning and that Wendy did

H: Mm

K: Is that quite a lot of the people have taken it on board themselves like I mean Gillian has done drama on her own and Rachel I was talking to this morning and she's not been a full time teacher for quite a while

H: Mm

K: But she's done drama and people are taking that on board and seeing its value, is great

H: Mm

K: And encouraging, 'cos again it's giving staff the right skills to do it. Sometimes people don't do things because they don't feel skilled or competent or whatever

H: Mm

K: So part of my role is to give people the right skills or set the right sort of tone for them to do that so I'm not going to be chasing their tails about you know did they spend a hour on literacy (unclear)

H: (laughs) Okay what would you say was the way forward in the education system?

K: Oh, my goodness, am I going to become a HR now? Err...

H: Well, you expressed you weren't that keen on the SATs, would you get rid of them?

K: I would yeah. I mean well if they have to do them, then I'd like the results err...well no, there isn't a halfway house. I'd like it to be done on teacher assessment and I'd like the high schools to trust our teacher assessment because part of it is that government and high school don't trust primary schools

H: Mm

K: That again you'll know from the Year 7 transition that in fact what high schools do is underestimate what primary people can do

H: Yeah

K: Rather than it being the other way round, they say primaries overestimate what primary children can do, so yeah I think I would get rid of SATs. I'd go for teacher assessment, I'd go for regular assessment that we you know, had to report to Governor's, that you had to report to the LEA, but not on a formal level. I'd like to see much more provision for creativity in the curriculum and actually material is coming out in the autumn to be trailed in school so...

H: Right

K: Which is part of the drama project that I was in...

H: Right

K: So that is going to come out in school. I'd like to see that more creativity and more individuality however hard it is, less testing, no league tables whatsoever I don't think it serves any purpose whatsoever

H: Do parents look at the position of the school on them?

K: Oh yeah

H: And is it a good school to come to?

K: It is a good school, I mean we're always, we've always been what out of a hundred and fifty primaries I'd say we've always been in the top fifteen yeah, so you know, the thing is, err at the same time they look great because they will want to compare us with (name of another primary school)

H: Mm

K: or (name of yet another primary school) or whatever and I think that's a false comparison because like when we had our dip year, well I mean, that was a really, really hard year group, really, extremely you know... they didn't know the children that we taught that year

H: Mm

K: So really the school is being judged by the children in that particular year group

H: Yeah

K: Which is totally inappropriate but then again, parents, new parents, visiting the school, I had a parent, new parents the other day...err they live over in (name of place) and they've just moved in and they looked at the inspection reports for Roseberry Hill

H: Mm

K: and for two other popular schools in the area (names them) and they said that Roseberry Hill was definitely the best. But, they've chosen another school because of practicalities and because they thought they wouldn't get into Roseberry Hill or whatever but they do, these days, they look at inspection reports, they look at league tables, they look at your results overall.

H: Are the inspection reports the Ofsted?

K: Yeah the Ofsted reports yeah, I mean ours is '99 but as far as I understand, I don't look at other people's inspection reports I think they're really boring (Helen laughs) but as I understand it was a very, very good one.

H: Mm

K: Now if people take their time to read that, they can understand what kind of a school we are

H: Mm

K: And if that's the kind of school they want, then they will choose Roseberry Hill

H: Mm

K: Whatever our results are. Just as people choose other local schools even though the SATs results aren't going to be quite as good

H: Mm

K: Because if parents are making real choices, there'll perhaps come to Roseberry Hill and think you know we really like the social and cultural mix, I mean we are, it is brilliant here, it is so mixed...

H: It has been described by one of the research children's parents

K: Mm

H: As a community school

K: Yeah

H: They like the community atmosphere

K: Which, I think is really, really good but they're might be some parents who would prefer a more academic a more err... monocultural aspect, a more...

H: Mm

K: And if that's what they want and they want a kind of middle class ethos, then Roseberry Hill isn't the right kind of school and I'm happy for them not to choose Roseberry Hill on that basis. Parents come here and they like the school, you know, you only have to walk around it and I walk round with them and they like the children and they like the atmosphere and they like, they like the environment. But you know there are a lot of other factors you know that impinge on that, where are their current friends, like in the case of this family I was just talking about, they are taking the place actually

H: Right

K: So...but there are a lot of other factors like friendships, like travelling, you know what they're going to going to count, it's a big move, it's a big decision for parents. It's not an easy one. Parents who move their children easily from school to school are actually I think doing their children a disservice 'cos they're not you know, they're not doing it for the right reasons, so... lets hope they continue to do that

H: Can you tell me how long have you worked here?

K: How long have I worked here, now come on Helen, how long do you think I've worked here?

H: (Laughing) I don't know

K: Look at me, not long 'cos I'm so young. I came in January 1990 so I've been here... nearly thirteen years, thirteen years next January.

H: And were you a Head Teacher prior to that?

K: No, I was Deputy in (name of school) for five years, which is very different to here, so, so different. Well I've not moved around a lot, I was in (names an area) for eight years when I started teaching which was tough, tough, tough

H: Mm

K: It was really hard, very, I mean I loved it but really hard. Then I went to (name of area) they got a new Head at (name of school) and I thought this is it, I went to (name of school) and did five years there and that was super, that was really, I really, really enjoyed it. I loved the kids, really working class area but was great, then I got my Deputy Headship which again was very, very challenging

H: Mm

K: And then suddenly I applied for this, I started applying for Headships and err...I'd never heard of Roseberry Hill, I didn't even know there was, I mean I'd lived in (name of area where the school is located)

H: But it's tucked away

K: Mm and so because its not on a main road and because it wasn't sort of, 'cos you met in your (name of area) cluster or whatever and I thought well I'll apply for it you know, so I came and found out where it was and I got it and it is, it is so different but for me that's really good 'cos it's a kind of combination of all the schools I've worked in

H: Mm. Do you like the fact that it's set away from the main road?

K: I do actually, yeah I do think it makes it into a kind of haven in a way

H: Mm

K: That I do think the environment does influence the children so the greenery and you know, the fact that you're not you now... well I don't know, it's just sort of, its away from the hustle and bustle

H: Yeah

K: This is why we get called a leafy suburb, which I think is a misnomer because we're not a leafy suburb, I mean we're not all, we're not all academic and middle class

*\*\* Head Teacher took a brief phone call at this point \*\**

H: One more question, you know the budget that you receive

K: Yeah

H: How do you decide what you'll spend it on?

K: (Laughs) well, what I would do first of all, is I would look at staffing costs and that's always been, well we've got a very chequered history of budgets and we've never had much money err...but what my priority has always been and is good staffing so I want to make sure I've got enough teachers. I want to make sure I've got the support, so I'll look at staffing costs first of all.

H: Right

K: And I'll look at base line staffing. Then you've got to look at essential costs, like your gas, your electricity, your rates, really boring things and actually once you've done that and essential resources err, it's looking at where, like this year rather than saying oo you know where can I put a bit extra in

H: Mm

K: It was right where, can I take a bit off and so as you'll know I mean the staffing, I've really only paired a very small amount off, I mean perhaps a lot of people would of actually cut a lot more

H: Right

K: So the bulk of it has come off supply which means if it's in school cover that's where we do it, we don't buy supply in. Resources yet again, we manage with what we've got and that's how it is but I would say that the most important thing is staffing, so I will safeguard staffing as far as possible

H: And who, who decides the budget?

K: Well the LEA gives us our budget

H: How do they decide that you will get less than another school, what do...

K: Well there is a formula

H: Oh right

K: And the formula, there is several aspects, there is still a pupil driven aspect

H: Mm

K: So however many children you've got, you get so much per head, per child

H: Right

K: Depending on what age they are, so you get more for a nursery child than you do for a junior child

H: Right

K: Because they're deemed to have more needs and then you get certain allocations based on the size of the school, the floor space, you get some allocation based on need which goes on free school meals and then there are other little pockets that you get

H: Right

K: I mean we've always has less than some because in some parts of the city there is a very high level of deprivation so we've got 20% of free school meals, in some areas you might get 60% to 70% so that school will get correspondingly more and that's the base budget, that's what it is, that's determined by the City Council but increasingly, there are little, there are extra bits of money that come in. So nowadays we get a direct grant from the government to each primary school which depends on its size, ours in thirty one thousand this year, that's how much we got and there are other grants that come in. The grants that come in which we're very, very dependent on for things like classroom assistants.

H: Mm

K: They will also depend on your SATs results if you, if you consistently get good results, you get less money

H: Right

K: Oh yeah, because your deemed not to need such support. I know don't tell me, it is... horrendous but also what's made it really difficult this year, is that there are other pots of money like excellence in city money which is government initiative, but not all the schools in (name of city) are a part of it. So some schools even schools that have higher achieving, higher SATs levels than we do and in a more affluent area such as parts of (area)

H: Mm

K: Receive between thirty and fifty thousand pounds extra a year to provide things like learning mentors, you know and that puts our (unclear) because it is unfair, it isn't a level playing field and we are still missing out because of (name of area in which the school is located) is a very, very affluent ward. If you look at just the figures for you know, employment or housing or academic achievement, those are all the categories they keep

H: Mm

K: It is very affluent, but what it doesn't do, is take into account that you know, Roseberry Hill isn't representative of that ward, not entirely, because you know there are pockets of unemployment, there are pockets of deprivation, it takes no account of ethnic minority or English as an additional language

H: Mm

K: So it does mean that you know, the (name of area) schools, including, I have to say (name of school) which is far less affluent even than we are, does not receive a high budget.

H: Who decides which schools are in excellence in the city?

K: (Laughs) I've been trying to find that out. It apparently depends. Schools in (name of area) were not invited to apply. Other schools were invited to show an interest but again, I mean I have tried to find out, but it seems to hinge on a meeting that took place which was about two years ago, to which some schools were invited and if the Head Teacher didn't actually go to that meeting, although it was never said that going to that meeting was a commitment and a certainty, schools which didn't attend, like good friend of mine whose at (name of school)

H: Mm

K: You know, very, very difficult area (names it). It was his Ofsted week and he didn't go to the meeting and he wasn't included. So he's in the middle of (name of area)

H: Expresses disbelief

K: I know it's a bloody nonsense isn't it

H: Yeah

K: It really is, so the whole funding thing is...

H: So you've either got to be down there or up there

K: Yeah

H: And you're in the middle

K: There are other factors like I mean I've got a very stable staff here and although we've had our NQTs (names those teachers who have been NQTs over the years)

H: Mm

K: I tend not to think of them as NQTs 'cos they're not sort of bright, young, you know twenty two year olds or whatever but they were NQTs because obviously there's the staffing costs there because an N.Q.T. is paid far less

H: Yeah

K: Less experience there for a start, but nevertheless the problem this year was we didn't have a stand still, they said stand still budget and it wasn't

H: Mm

K: Because we couldn't afford to replicate what we had last year, so.....

*\*\* Interruption \*\**

H: Well thank you very much

K: Is that alright?

H: for giving up you time

K: Okay. I hope you can understand my (unclear) garbage

**INTERVIEW WITH CHAIR OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY: GEORGINA MULLEN****Date:** 27/06/2002**Location:** Staffroom

**Notes:** *Whilst Mrs Mullen was being interviewed as the Chair of the School Governing Body at Roseberry Hill, she was also the head dinner lady and a parent to a child in 6E. I had informed Mrs Mullen of the areas I wished to discuss prior to the interview via letter correspondence. In turn, she had brought along with her, a huge bag of documents and policies which she referred to throughout the course of the interview.*

**Key:** Helen (H); Mrs Georgina Mullen (G), Ms Kathryn Thompson (K)

- H: Okay, so I haven't got a list of specific questions that I want to ask you
- G: Mm
- H: But I have got several general topic areas which I would like to discuss with you err I detailed them in the letter which I wrote to you
- G: Yeah
- H: Okay, can you start by explaining to me what the Governing Body is?
- G: I have brought along a few little bits because its difficult to do it off the top of your head
- H: Okay
- G: Mm... (looks through paperwork) I got it all ready this morning and I forgot to do anything about it
- H: That's okay
- G: Oh there it is, reads aloud 'The roles of the Governing Body (unclear) Head teacher'
- H: Oh right
- G: Err it basically tells you err what they, governors do err its saying err... really Governing Bodies and the Head teacher sort of work together really
- H: Right
- G: To sort of, kind of make sure the sort of myriad of regulations and ...all the procedures and things that we have here err you know work together
- H: Right
- G: But I mean the Head teacher is really responsible for the internal; management of the school, sort of day-to-day running of the school
- H: Yeah
- G: Improvising and implementing the Governing Bodies strategic framework err it says here 'In particular, the Head teacher needs to formulate aims and objectives, policies and targets for the Governing Body to consider and to report to the Governing Body on progress at least once every school year'
- H: Right
- G: And what the Governor's do is they sort of, are there to have a largely sort of strategic role. I mean the governors decide what they want the school to achieve and set the framework for getting there. So they set suitable aims and objectives, they agree policies, targets, priorities, they monitor and interview to make sure these policies are being err carried out, and targets are being met
- H: Mm
- G: But the actual running of the school is actually sort of done by the Head teacher really
- H: Mm
- G: So they're there, one of the phrases they use is 'critical friend' (laughs)
- H: Right
- G: The Governing Body should be to the Head. So you're there to sort of...discuss and sort of work out policies and once having worked it out
- H: Mm

G: You don't then sort of stick you're ore in and tell the Head teacher how to do it

H: Right

G: The Head is there is err responsible for running the school. But you are also making sure that the head is carrying out the policies

H: Right

G: And working to achieve the targets which have been set

H: Mm

G: But the day-to-day sort of running of the school, all the things to do with err managing staff and discipline and that is all sort of for the Head to do. But the Governing Body (unclear) has a lot to do with managing the budget

H: Right

G: And making sure the funds are spent correctly and what they're spent on

H: Err how would you decide about the expenditure of the budget? Where to allocate funds, how would you go about it?

G: Well, we do a lot of our work through sort of subcommittees rather than sort of whole Governing Bodies. There's sixteen or seventeen people on the Governing Body altogether err you have parent governors, LEA governors, teacher governors, co-opted governors who are appointed by the governors themselves

H: Right

G: You have staff governors as well, who are people on the teaching staff, so all together there are seventeen governors

H: Right

G: And its difficult to get the decisions made if you have all those people round so what we normally do is split up in subcommittees and (unclear) committees and err start appraisal, well, for the Head teacher, we have err to do her performance management

H: Mm, mm

G: She does performance management on the other teachers

H: Right

G: We have...err subcommittees for school improvement plan, I mean everything you can think of, you have maybe four or five teachers in that and for our budget we also err the school appointed a financial adviser as well

H: Mm

G: Who helps us with the sort of err day-to-day working out of the budget, this much because you've spent on that, but basically we get a budget from the Local Authority and you know what you, well 83% of the actual budget goes on salaries

H: Right

G: So you've only got 17% of it left after that

H: Yeah, mm

G: So an awful lot of it, but you have to decide obviously how many teachers you're going to have, how many classes you're going to have when you appoint a teacher, although you have (unclear) consideration, you'd have to look at the pay scale to see whether you could afford them

H: Mm

G: I mean our budget this year is very tight, I won't go into the actual financial details but we haven't got a lot of money to spare

H: No

G: So you've got to be very careful on err how you spend the money, if you want, we've got lots of classroom assistants at the moment

H: Yeah

G: But that all costs money so you have to work out all that, then you've got err (unclear) teaching, lighting and rates, ground maintenance err all the resources they have in the school, sort of the pencils and rubbers and everything

H: Mm

G: So you have it all under headings. Obviously to start err percentage is the biggest bit and then you have err your resources and your as I say the outgoing bills and by the time you've sort of worked all that out, you've most probably got very little left

H: Right

G: For anything else

H: Yeah

G: We, you know we rely an awful lot on grants and Central Governance as well as the money we get from the Local Authority so basically you, in about the beginning of March I suppose, you get told how much money you've got from the Local Authority that year and then you have to start working out your budget. You know how much all your salaries are and how much you spent on resources last year. So you can work out, well can I spend the same as I spent last year and if you can't, you can't and you go into deficit and you say well, we've got these teachers, we've got to spend the salary, we can't

H: Mm

G: Well you don't want to get rid of staff but then you say can we juggle about the resources and things. I mean if you were in a terrible position, and you found you didn't have enough money from the Local Authority then perhaps you would be in a situation, well I'd have to think about staff charges

H: Yeah

G: Or you'd have to employ people on a short-term contract. That's something you don't want to do

H: Right

G: But basically you have to balance your budget

H: Mm

G: You get given so much from the Local Authority and from Central Government and you have outgoings that you have little control over and err you have to say well we've got to spend that and then see if you've got anything left

H: Right

G: The overspend

H: Do schools receive different amounts of money then?

G: Your budget is basically based on how many children you have

H: Right

G: You get so much, to simplify it, you get so much per child and then you get extra bits for Special Educational Needs (SEN)

H: Right

G: Some schools in (name of city) get loads of money for being selected for the 'Excellent in Cities' (EiC) programme (unclear). This school gets no money for that at all

H: No

G: Because we're not in one of the areas that (name of city) considers needs money under EiC. It's not city wide at the moment, so they pick out some schools that get it and some schools that don't. And I don't think there's any primary schools that get it

H: Right

G: The high schools get it, like Greenwood will get it

H: Yeah

G: (Name of school) get it, but I don't think there's any primary schools in (name of area) that get any EiC money. So there could very well be a school, exactly the same size as ours in another part of the city, that get loads more money that we do

H: Right

G: Because there's all these initiatives and they also get money for sort of as I say, SEN and also the social needs and how many children you have on free school dinners, that goes toward another grant that you get. So a lot of schools in the inner city get more money than we do. It's very, very complicated

H: Yeah

G: Which is why we have an advisor come in and help us with our budget (unclear)

H: Right. So how often do you meet?

G: This year we began meeting monthly. Err we used to meet half termly but we decided we, we discovered we just had too much to get through at meetings

H: Mm

G: So we have a meeting once a month during the school year and we, so it normally works out, maybe say two or three meetings every half term

H: Right

G: And err at those meetings you then fix what subcommittee meetings you need to have before the next governors meeting. So like next week, I've got a meeting with the building subcommittee and were walking round the school with Ms Thompson and some chap from the Local Authority, seeing what needs doing round the school

H: Right

G: We have a finance meeting, a subcommittee meeting every month as well. That's the most important thing because without the money you can't do the other things

H: No

G: Err other subcommittee's sort of meet as and when they are required. But I would say that the finance is every month err the school improvement plan meeting, I would say that's once a term, but it is as required

H: Right

G: Its sort of at your Governing Body meetings, well we need to discuss this, this and this in more detail and we'll fix up some dates for those and we've got various governors, not all governors are on all subcommittees. You know, you have people with certain expertise who hopefully will go on subcommittees where they will be of most use. You know, to spread the load so that not everybody is doing everything

H: How do you come up with, are you given an agenda by external people to discuss?

G: No, No. Myself and Ms Thompson used to work out the agenda. The thing is other governors will bring up items that are, I mean they'll say can we have this on the agenda for the next meeting. Sometimes the Local Authority will send us out (unclear) and say it's a good idea to discuss such and such

H: Right

G: Err but certain things you have to have at certain times, if you like, you've got target setting for SATs, you have to have, that has to be sorted out, I can't remember when. But it, some time during the year the governors have to have set what the targets will be. So you'll have that on the agenda

H: Right

G: For the previous meeting and then a person from the (name of city) schools improvement service will come in and talk to the Head about it and there will not be a governor present for that meeting depending on whether someone can manage to get there during the day. And then we pass that on, whatever's been discussed at the meeting to the full governors and the governors can decide whether they think those targets are reasonable, whether they are realistic basically

H: How are the targets decided upon?

G: Well, targets. Well basically they sort of come down to Central Government because the Central Government decide we want so many young children in primary schools achieving err really in the infants Level 2 and Level 3, we want so many achieving 3,4 and 5's in Year 6

H: Yeah

G: We now for the first time this year have to set targets for Level 5 and above. We didn't have to do that before

H: Mm

G: This year is the first year we've had to do that and you get notification from the DFES saying we think schools should be achieving at least this target

H: Right

G: And then governors themselves will decide if they think that their schools need, beat national targets then fair enough you might go for a target the same as or a little bit higher

H: Right

G: But on the other hand if you think your targets is not what they call a smart target

H: Mm

G: You know measureable, realistic

H: Mm

G: If you think there's no good setting a target if you're going to fail

H: Mm

G: Because there's no point, so if you say well for the total children we've got this year in this school err those national targets are not realistic

H: Mm

G: You may well set targets below that

H: Right

G: Because it's no good err and you won't increase your target each year

H: Mm

G: Because you may well, as has happened in Roseberry Hill, some years you'll, I don't know why, you'll get a group of children who'll do extremely well in their class

H: Mm

G: And the next year you might get a group of children who all the way through have always been achieving a slightly lower level for one reason or another

H: Yeah

G: Of course it could be the other way round

H: Mm

G: You get one group one year who are far better than your getting (unclear) targets better if you like

H: Yeah

G: Well you know scoring a higher percentage and you have to look at each cohort

H: Mm

G: Sometimes you'll find that you have a lot of children who've come and gone in a year group

H: Mm

G: You've maybe had a lot of children coming in as English isn't their first language

H: Yeah

G: Err you maybe have some err children who parents move round and are only in school for a year here, a year there

H: Mm

G: And that always (unclear) and you have to say well for this group of children this is a realistic target and you can't say well next year were going to increase it be 5%

H: Right

G: It doesn't work like that. So each year, so when you go to look at what they're gonna get in Year 6, you say well, what did that group of children do when they did their SATs in Year 2. It can be a guide but if you've had a lot of changes in the meantime

H: Yeah

G: Then you have to look at the individual err achievement for the individual children that did go through and say well, what is a realistic group and that's the sort of thing the Head discusses with the school improvement officer

H: Right

G: They say well, is this a realistic target? And then you set what you hope to say stretches the realistic target because as I said, it's not good setting these targets if these children have no chance of attaining them, so

H: Mm, do the children know what the targets are, or are their teachers told?

G: The teachers will, the children won't. The children won't be told that you know, that we're expecting you to get so much

H: Yeah, so if the targets aren't met what happens?

G: Well it... just sort of... in all the sort of league tables

H: Mm

G: It just makes the school sort of err (unclear) not to actually get a slap on the wrists but the school improvement officer will say, why didn't you achieve these targets

H: Right

G: Yeah, so it's, you're setting a target and saying we hope we will do this

H: Right

G: If you don't achieve your targets then they will say why haven't you achieved it

H: Right

G: And so reasons for it, perhaps if you've had you know, an OFSTED inspection and they've come round and said well you're not achieving

H: Right

G: Which is why it's not good to set targets that are too high

H: Mm

G: Because you're never going to achieve them

H: Mm

G: So that's, basically its all part of a big scheme where you have the school improvement officer and the Local Authority and then those reports go off to the BFEN in London

H: Mm

G: And basically if you ended up with what they call 'unclear school' you know, that would be because your setting targets you're not achieving and your getting no where near the national targets

H: Mm

G: And then they would like to know why. If you've got to that stage they can go in and they can replace the Governing Body and they can replace the Head, you know that's what they can do. They have the power to do that if they think you are, that the school is not achieving what they should it should

H: Mm, how do they think up the targets though, is there like a, do you think there will be a philosophy behind it?

G: Goodness knows err I don't know who fitted, I mean when they first brought out these targets and they gradually, as I say, you don't normally, you wouldn't say targets are definitely going to go up

H: Mm

G: But if you look at targets when they first brought in targets

H: Mm

G: (Unclear) they have consistently gone up, the targets have

H: Mm

G: But how the people in the BFEN set the targets I don't know

H: So do LEA and government policies influence the Governing Body?

G: Oh yeah

H: A lot?

G: Yeah, you get loads and loads of guides and stuff. I mean like I've got that 'LEA and school relations' and its got in it here, err tells you all about the sort of LEA powers and rues and all the things about teachers, staffing and appraisal

H: Maybe I can get the name of it and then look at it again later

G: Yes...that might be a bit, I'm not too sure when it was published, I've had that one quite a long time

H: Right

G: What might be of use to you and you can have if you want is this, nice light reading, 'school governors, making it better, improving school governors'

H: That would be good

G: This is from Ofsted. \*\*Continues to look through the materials she brought along to the interview\*\* Yes, I mean we get masses of stuff, sort of instructions and this book here which err is a guide to the law for school governors, I mean we get full err this is something that comes from the DFES as well, roles of Governing Bodies and Headteachers.

H: I didn't realise it was so complicated, so much paperwork

G: Oh yeah. I mean there's all... and we get err all sorts of regulations, things from the city council, changes to the law for Governing Bodies, whose allowed to be on subcommittees, who isn't

H: Right

G: Err we get, all governors, they get things about guidance, about school and parents and then all this, is legal responsibilities about err you know, if you look down the index, you can see its got: how Governing Bodies are made up, how you have to elect them, Governing Bodies - their powers and their duties, there's masses and masses

H: What's this called?

G: This is the guide for the laws for school governors err this is err SGLC, school governors and that's done by the DFES. And they send us updates for that

H: Mm

G: You know it's err the last one we had was in November 2001

H: Right

G: And we get stuff form DFES about teachers pay and err all the policies, we've just had to work out a way to (unclear) the policies of the school, work out equal opportunities policy for the school. Err... got a list here \*\*looks through material\*\* Governing Body policies and publications legally required, that's the ones which are legally required.

H: So you have drawn up all these?

G: Some we get from the LEA and some we make up ourselves. The Local Authority do provide us with some but we have to err... that's provided by the Local Authority, but we have to do an annual report for parents which is what I was giving to Gillian this morning

H: Right

G: (Unclear) it had my bits on it. We have to set tentative targets err a charging policy to let out the school, we have to have a curriculum policy which obviously follows the National Curriculum

H: Mm

G: But you have to say how you're teaching it, what, how you're going about it

H: Right

G: We have to have a complaints policy, if parents are unhappy with what's going on in the school, a health and safety policy, we have to have home-school agreements

H: Mm

G: Which we are starting to introduce to the parents err we have to have performance management policy which we set up ourselves (unclear), discipline policy (large sigh) err a policy on sex education, err we have to err set the teacher days. All (unclear) ones are but then we have six teacher days throughout the year

H: Yeah

G: We have to set when we're going to have those

H: Right

G: The Governing Body decides that

H: Right. When you pointed out earlier that we have a lot of classroom assistants in this school

G: Yeah

H: Err is that the Governing Bodies' idea or the Head Teacher's?

G: Well a bit of both. What happens is we talk to the Head Teacher and we say what is the best way to improve the teaching standards in this school. And the Head Teacher talks to the management committee which involves the senior teachers (lists four names, includes Mrs Eastwood for the juniors)

H: Yeah, is Mr Tate involved?

G: Mr Tate does get involved in it but I'm not sure he's on the actual management committee because he's the Deputy Head

H: Yeah

G: But Ms Thompson will have management meetings with those senior teachers and those teachers will have meetings with teachers in their year group and (unclear) what is the best way to spend our money

H: Did you become involved with the Governing Body because of your daughter?

G: Well that was partly to do with it, but I'm actually a LEA governor which when I first became a LEA governor it meant you were usually, it was because you were a member of the political party, and I'm a member of the Labour party and so (unclear) err its very difficult to get LEA governors from the Labour party because (unclear) and they said they didn't have any space at this school so I went to see some people at the constituency office

H: Yeah

G: (Unclear) but err they have widened the scope now for LEA governors, practically anybody can be an LEA governor (unclear) if your not a parent and your not a teacher at the school where you want to be a governor and you live in the area, you can basically be appointed by the LEA

H: Right

G: You don't fit into any other of the categories

H: Mm

G: You can be appointed; you can just write to the LEA and say I would like to be an LEA governor. Err but if you are an LEA governor you can continue whether you have children at the school or nor

H: Right

G: So once my daughter leaves here in July, I will continue being an LEA governor, where as if I was a parent governor you can complete the term but you can't carry on

H: Right, yeah. So I would think that the general goal of school is to help children learn, to educate them

G: Yeah

H: Okay, so how would you say the role of the Governing Body contributes to this goal?

G: Well, you have a slightly different view than the teachers who are there teaching all the time, you see different, you have perhaps a different purpose because they're sort of

working on teaching and the National Curriculum all the time. An awful lot of what we tend to do, I mean I know we set targets and we do have a lot to do with what is taught in the school but we don't actually have much of a hands on to do with that

H: Mm

G: We talk an awful lot about money (both laugh) because you can't do anything else without money. We do a lot of building for the environment that the children are in (unclear) but then you can't do that unless you've got the money

H: Mm

G: Err really what they're there is they're there to support the teaching staff, make sure that everything sort of works well you know

H: Mm

G: But sort of, so that the clogs sort of tick around

H: Yeah

G: Without not so much poking your nose in, but no you want to let the experts, the teaching staff do their work

H: Mm

G: And support them as much as you can

H: Mm, yeah

G: You want to make sure that the policies which are being carried out

\*\*Tape ends\*\*

G: So really what you're really doing is sort of backing up the teachers err in their err professional role but you also sort of bring a non-teaching perspective to things

H: Mm

G: And a lot of, we have like a health governor who works (unclear) we've got our healthy school award

H: Yeah

G: We have a health governor who works on that, we have a governor whose responsible for children in public care, to see that everything, if there are any children in public care in the school, that they are progressing as well as they should

H: Mm

G: We have err governors who are responsible for literacy and numeracy, to make sure that anything which they err experience they have, pass on to teachers that are doing the... one of our governors is, actually teachers at the local university in the education department

H: Mm

G: Which, she's our literacy and numeracy governor

H: Mm

G: The National Curriculum is taught err but you're doing that and you're also doing a lot of you know day-to-day stuff like you know err...appointing staff (unclear) making sure that as I say, all the sort of policies and things that you don't have to use that often (unclear) if to need to use them

H: Mm

G: So a lot of the stuff you do, perhaps people who come into the school (unclear) notice they're here

H: Yeah

G: But obviously these things need to be there to sort of...ensure the smooth running of things, you know supporting the Head

H: Mm

G: That is if you feel that what the Head is doing is right, the Governing Body also have the responsibility, if they have a Head who is not doing as they think they should be done

H: Mm

G: They're then to sort of say to the Head then perhaps they should be done in this direction

H: Right

G: The Governing Bodies do actually have a lot of power and if you have a Head that you think is not up to the job

H: Mm

G: You actually have a lot of power to change that and got to be err worst scenario you could actually sort of end up you know removing a Head

H: Mm

G: And getting you know, the same with teachers

H: Mm  
G: But hopefully that never happens but most of the time you're working there in partnership with people  
H: Yeah  
G: I'm actually generalising here because your sort of main people, you haven't got expertise in every field  
H: Mm  
G: Then you don't want to be telling people how to do their job. But you're there to (unclear) really sort of err...making sure things are working well really and you know sort of being a link between the parents and the staff and the teacher and the Local Authority  
H: It's a network isn't it?  
G: Yeah that's right, so that's really sort of how it goes but err  
H: Do all schools have Governing Bodies?  
G: Yeah all schools have a Governing Body. Err I'm not too sure what it means in other schools err in non-community schools but (unclear). \*\*Looks through material\*\* This is the 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the guide to the law (unclear) based on the schools standards and framework act 1988. It sets out the exact composition of the Governing Body, and this is all laid down by the Central Government. Right, err we are a community school here and it says there that primary schools of up to ninety nine pupils have three parents, two LEA governors, one teacher and one or zero members of the non-teaching staff (unclear). But we are a school with more than that and because of that we actually have five parents, four LEA governors, two teachers, one member of the non-teaching staff (unclear) three or four co-opted governors, we actually have four vacancies but we've only got three appointed at the moment. So we've actually got seventeen governors including the Head  
H: Right  
G: So it depends how many pupils you have in a community school  
H: Do you know how many there are on the school roll?  
G: Yeah, there was four hundred and thirty five about a month ago and we're about the same now  
H: Right, would you say that was a rather large primary school?  
G: Yeah err yeah. It's certainly bigger than most of the other primary schools in (name of area). I mean (name of a primary school) is about the same size. So it is quite big this primary school. It has sort of grown since Ms Thompson's been here  
H: Yeah  
G: So now we have two-form entry  
H: Right  
G: Where (name of another primary school) only have one class in each year  
H: Yeah  
G: Err so yeah, it is quite a big school, which is not a bad thing seeing that most of them are going off to Greenwood  
H: Mm  
G: I mean this school is bigger than my high school. It was three hundred where I went to secondary school (both laugh)  
H: So the Central Government have a big role to play in influencing Governing Body policy and practice?  
G: Yeah they do  
H: Do they dictate a lot?  
G: They, you do have a lot of stuff that are statutory things that you have to carry out  
H: Mm  
G: You have little or no choice on a lot of things err \*\*Looks through paperwork again\*\* Governing Body decisions (unclear) you see? (laughs). And it tells you all the things that you have to do: (unclear) budgets, staffing, curriculum, performance management, target setting, all this sort of stuff. You can actually have that if you want  
H: Thanks  
G: And it tells you there, who has to do what. Some of it you will do with the Head, some of it you will do on your own and some of it you will do together and that's all the things that you have to do (unclear). There is statutory guidance on what you have to do  
H: Right  
G: Things like White Papers, you know

H: Yeah

G: Everything is you know, done up, you don't sort of say 'oh well I think we'll do this', you have a little bit of leeway on how you interpret things and what you do at your particular school but the roots of it are laid down in legislation. And if you have an Ofsted inspection, they will look and see the Governing Body are carrying out the statutory duties which they are responsible for doing

H: Right

G: And if you're not then you will be criticised and they will say 'well, you're not doing this' and when you think the governors are all volunteers

H: Mm

G: You know and they're all...you know lay people, although you have expertise, you have a lot of training

H: Mm

G: Training courses that you can go on, but the problem is finding the time to go on the courses

H: Yeah

G: Err...I don't go on as many as I should simply because by the time you've sort of done all the things in school and writing letters and sorting out (unclear)

H: Mm

G: You could spend all your time doing it

H: Yeah

G: And obviously you don't get any financial reward for it, you can claim expenses (unclear) so really there is an awful lot put on people who are you know, a complete volunteer, unpaid

H: Yeah

G: And (unclear) that's always how it's been, there's been more and more put on governors, they're you know telling us that they're their trying to cut burdens on school governors but I'm not convinced, I'm not convinced

H: Were you here when the previous Head Teacher was here?

G: No, I wasn't, no. Ms Thompson's been the head for... I suppose two or three years before my daughter came to school

H: Right

G: And then I got started off (unclear) the PTA and then started getting involved with the governors about.... 1997 something like that

H: Mm... you've been involved quite a while then

G: Yeah, yeah. You know it's, you know your term of office is four years. When mine finished in 2001, I said well I'll carry on doing another one but I don't know how long I'm going to carry on

H: Right

G: I'm not going to commit myself

H: Mm

G: But you know the Governing Body changes because parent governor's terms of office finish

H: Mm

G: Co-opted come and go, so it is generally sort of changing

H: Mm

G: It's not static

H: Mm, when I first started looking at children's learning, the focus in the textbooks is the child and his or her activities in the classroom but in practice it is far more complex. It goes beyond that, there are a lot more factors to consider besides the initial picture you collect from classroom observation. You know I'm also interviewing teachers, parents and carers, LEA representatives and Governing Body representatives. The picture has become more and more complicated

G: Yeah, yeah. I mean basically when you get down to it, I mean the most important things is the child in the classroom

H: Mm

G: But to get to that stage and I mean it's always been such a forefront of the politics in the country

H: Mm

G: And I think that's why you have so many initiatives, sort of objectives, how can you do this and how can you do that. Because education along with health is one of the big things

H: Mm

G: Whether you've for the Labour party in or the Conservative party in

H: Yeah

G: It doesn't matter. There's always someone there tinkering with the education system, to, whether to make it better or for one reason or another

H: Mm

G: There's always changes going on and I think that's why there's so much legislation, I mean there's masses and masses of legislation

H: Mm

G: I mean and we don't sort of, I don't see as much as the Head, I mean the Head Teacher has masses of legislation. I think anyway (unclear)

H: Mm, yeah

G: But you have to sort of try and work on the bits that you're concerned with and sort of get advice from other people. That's why we sort of get advice from the Local Authority on err (unclear) policies, teaching, staffing policies

H: Mm

G: We do get a fair amount of help from the Local Authority

H: Is that because you ask for it?

G: No, but a lot of stuff which the city council will send to use, sometimes we ask for stuff and we don't get it, like we wanted help with making our own regulation policy (unclear). But we get stuff on pay policy and staff discipline policy. Things are worked out between the Local Education Authority and the (unclear) and they will say this is the policy which we recommend your school accepts. Governors do not have to accept this policy but if they don't accept it, they have to present a err reviewed policy which is along the same lines and seeing, having a legal expert saying this is in agreement with the union or the sort of people who could help tribunals if anyBody was going to unfair dismissal sort of

H: Mm

G: Then it's in your own interest to have got this policy approved by (unclear)

G: So you do get a lot of guidance on that but the bottom line is it's actually you that accepts that policy or not

H: Mm

G: And the performance management policy which you had to adopt in school

H: Mm

G: There was various models, there was one produced by the DFES, there was a model produced by the teaching union and you had to decide whether to adopt one or the other (unclear) and you do get some guidance but when it comes down to the bottom line, the responsibility is there to the school itself

H: Mm

G: Because now schools manage themselves much more than they did when I was at school

H: Yeah

G: In those days, you know everything was sort of decided by the Local Authority and that was it. But now you have this management (unclear)

H: Do they promise more or not?

G: Well what happens is, the Central Government stand up and say oh (unclear) and then you find that they are giving less money to the Local Authority, so therefore the Local Authority give you less money

H: Right

G: So what you get from the Central Government, you find you've got almost exactly the same amount less than the Local Authority. So people think schools are getting masses and masses of money

H: Mm

G: And there are we sort of scrapping around to see if we can afford to get the grass cut on the school playing field, you know?

H: Mm, is it a disadvantage being in (name of area)?

G: It might just well be yeah because I mean to be fair to the city council, they have more sort of problems in other areas, but what they, they would obviously lie but the impression you get is 'oh you're in (name of area), heavens' sort of thing (unclear) basically sort of attitude

H: Mm

G: Not in this school but in a lot of community schools, it does seem some their governors are involved in trying to set up schemes for young people

H: Mm

G: In (name of area) things to do, you know day and night, you know because there is hardly anything to do

H: Mm

G: If you know (name of area), apart from the places where you can drink and if you're fifteen or sixteen years old, you shouldn't be doing that anyway

H: No

G: But there's very little err sports facilities or leisure facilities or anything for young people but (unclear) are available to them (unclear)

**\*\*Head Teacher enters the staffroom\*\***

G: We were just talking governors

K: Oh, you're talking governors

H: Yeah, just getting an insiders view

G: Yeah, laughing. Well, yes that's you know, that's it.

**\*\*unclear discussion between GM and KT about an unrelated issue\*\***

G: So I've just been giving Helen a few little bits of (unclear) on the role of the Governing Body

K: Oh right...too much work without pay (unclear)

G: Helen was just asking are we at a disadvantage being in (name of area) money wise

K: (Exaggerated laughter) oh, the meeting tomorrow is definite.

G: Oh right

K: The only problem is, that I mean (unclear)

G: Let me know how it goes

K: I will do, definitely will

**\*\*Head Teacher leaves the staffroom\*\***

G: Moaning about money to our MP

H: Right

G: So is there anything else that I can help you on?

H: No, that's been great. Thanks very much for making the time to come in and talk to me

G: That okay, I didn't have to come far

**INTERVIEW WITH LINK ADVISOR: ANDREA HOLMES****Date:** 27/07/2002**Location:** Café of Andrea's choice

**Notes:** *I arrived ten minutes early and Andrea was midway through her lunch, she asked me to talk about my research whilst she finished. I outlined the gap in the psychological and educational literature regarding research with Year 6 children and explained that my research aimed to address this by exploring the learning experiences of a group of eight children. I mentioned the different perspectives I has accessed, starting with the proximal relationships and working outwards; justifying the inclusion of the LEA story. I used topic areas as a cue to our discussion; these are highlighted below. As there was background noise, I couldn't utilise my dictaphone. This record of our conversation is based on my written and headnotes and have been read and amended by Andrea. A number of quotes written down in verbatim in the interview were subsequently changed, 'to ensure that you accurately reflected my meaning and comments' (personal email communication from Andrea 16/12/2002). The amendments meant many that much of the potency expressed in the original comments was lost and with some details omitted, a different impression was therefore projected to that I gained during the interview.*

**Key:** Helen (H); Andrea Holmes (A)**Background information**

- ◆ Andrea's title is a 'Link Advisor' (or a school improvement officer). She has worked in (name of city) at the LEA for one year. Previously she worked in a similar job for another LEA. She will be leaving at Christmas to work independently taking on multiple roles including work as an inspector for OFSTED and a trainer. Her role as Link Advisor is a challenging and interesting one but she would like to have more flexibility in her working patterns.
- ◆ 'School are complex organisations' and she works with 18, including secondary, primary and special. The (name of area) is split up into districts and all Link Advisors work together in pairs. She works in the South district with her colleague and they jointly manage the schools by dividing them up.
- ◆ The Link Advisor role is about 'knowing schools well' including knowledge of leadership, management and includes working with the governing body
- ◆ Schools are grouped into one of six categories (see *securing school improvement policy*) and they receive support accordingly. The category is decided upon by a joint review of the school by Link Advisor, Head Teacher, and others in the school who 'through their cumulative knowledge of the school' are able to build a picture.
- ◆ She visits each of her schools on a termly basis (or more if they require more support i.e. depending on their category in light of the above report)
- ◆ Schools are compared to others deemed similar in the PANDA (accessible via the Web) i.e. those with similar amounts of children on free school meals (contentious with some schools) and on children's prior attainment
- ◆ Roseberry Hill has not received extensive school support to date. It will be in receipt of more Adviser time next term as an OFSTED inspection of the school is due this year. The school received a very good report last time but the inspection framework has recently been changed. In an OFSTED inspection 60% of time is spent observing lessons. Documentation is also read, interviews conducted and children's work is scrutinised. The following groups are interviewed: Head Teacher, key staff, specific governors, children and parents.

**The role and function of the LEA**

- ◆ LEA aim: 'To identify schools needing support and training, to support high quality leadership and management, and to promote and share best practice.'
- ◆ The LEA provides support e.g. behaviour support, second language support, special needs support, literacy and numeracy training. Schools receive this support in proportion to need. If

they are maintaining high standards against a number of criteria, less support is available (as in the case of Roseberry Hill).

- ◆ However, the LEA also promotes many other initiatives and school improvement strategies which schools are invited to participate in e.g. 'university of the first age' which looks at teaching and learning, promoting creativity and looking at children's learning styles and teachers teaching styles. The schools learn about these through their Link Advisor and through flyers and then it would be their responsibility to opt into it; such opportunities would be available to all schools including Roseberry Hill.

### **LEA policies**

There are many but the key documents in the day-to-day workings include:

- ◆ *(City name) Education Development Plan*: this identifies the LEA educational priorities. The Director of Education takes the main lead, although all schools and LEA officers contribute. Key issues currently include: inclusive education attendance, and raising core standards
- ◆ *National Curriculum*: QCA puts this 'program of study' together. The NC provides a broad overview but much of the interpretation and planning is left up to the individual schools. For example although it states the primary core subjects to be taught, the literacy and numeracy hours are not obligatory, it is the school's choice how to incorporate them into their timetables and to decide their particular curriculum emphasis.
- ◆ *Excellence and enjoyment document (new)*: aims to readdress the balance and promote more creativity in the primary curriculum, while maintaining core standards. There are concerns that curriculum breadth has narrowed. *'It is the performance agenda versus the learning agenda.'* *'Teachers are concerned that if they lessen the emphasis on the core subjects then the standards will slip.'* I commented so it's *'Do this, but watch that'* and Andrea replied *'yes exactly.'* She added that there was already a strong focus on creativity in the curriculum at Roseberry Hill.
- ◆ *School improvement policy* (mentioned above)
- ◆ There is a strong emphasis on the *inclusion agenda* in (name of city) and they are currently piloting an accreditation award. Children of various abilities to be taught as far as possible within the mainstream classroom setting rather than being taught separately (in my experience as a Teaching Assistant this occurred frequently e.g. in the case of booster classes)
- ◆ *Race equality policy and plan*
- ◆ *Child protection*
- ◆ *Performance management*: this is a legal responsibility of the school where the Governors and external advisor annually meet with the Head Teacher and set performance objectives, who in turn reviews the senior team, who in turn reviews other members of staff. This is an annual linear review process.
- ◆ *Special educational needs review*
- ◆ *Workforce remodelling* (this is a working document and will come into practice from September 2004). This provides among other things a list of 24 tasks a teacher should not be doing and basically limits administrative jobs which are delegated. It outlines different categories of teaching assistants and the associated qualifications that would be required e.g. some will be permitted to teach under the supervision of the class teacher who will also provide the lesson plan and aims etc. There is current consultation with the teacher unions and involves schools in careful planning and negotiations.
- ◆ *Every Child Matters*
- ◆ The impact of all these policies upon the child in the classroom is *'to ensure that children get the best possible chance.'* (Thought: there are many different policies to incorporate here and lots of interpretations to be made). Andrea said its about them *'filtering back down'* *'to access support and get the best possible standards for all'*
- ◆ *'In essence all policies within the (name of city) LEA are developed with the aim of improving and supporting schools to get the best possible experience for each child.'*

### **Funding**

- ◆ Termed the *Standards Fund* and it is currently more flexible than before. The allocation of government funds is based on a formula - the number of pupils within a school and the older

the pupil the greater the funding. There is a separate LEA department that deals with funding issues.

- ◆ Through the School development plan, there is an implicit message as to how to allocate the budget. Within this discussion areas are highlighted that require funds.

### **SATs**

- ◆ *'The best results don't always automatically mean the best schools.'* Some schools focus on coaching children to perform well in the end of key stage tests, it's about *'getting children to jump through hoops'* and this can impact negatively on some learners (Andrea acknowledges this is only one perspective). The value added data which is now available about schools, is another helpful measure to indicate the quality of education which a school is providing for the children. Data is complex and needs to be considered carefully.
- ◆ I commented that in my experience children felt thick if they didn't achieve the expected Level 4 in the SATs. She asked where this came from and I said some parents had mentioned it during parents evening and that some children brought it into the classroom. One teacher had addressed her class telling them that the government expectation was for children to attain Level 4's, adding that she just wanted the children do their best (I noted that I wasn't sure about the other teacher). Teachers need to strike the balance between wanting the best possible attainment for each child while through their teaching, raise their self-esteem and confidence. This achievement will be different for different children. I remarked yes, if they are not attaining Levels 1, 2 or 3, but if the child is a high achiever, Level 4 outcomes or Levels 5 and 6 would provide the child with a sense of achievement, confirming that they were doing well and she agreed, noting that Level 4 provided the norm. She said this message was for the school to present to parents and it was about pointing out the key messages to children and parents, explaining the difference between achievement and attainment.
- ◆ The government in some ways puts pressure on schools to perform through the process of target setting. Targets are agreed annually by Link Advisors in conjunction with the Head Teacher and (optionally) key members of the management team and class teachers and then approved by the School Governing Body. They are based on the pattern of the children's prior attainment i.e. their past test performance with *'additional challenge'* to set high expectations. Roseberry Hill maintains a consistent pattern of attainment reflecting a varied intake of pupils.
- ◆ Schools view these targets in a variety of ways, most use them constructively, others' see them as aspirations to work towards. There are usually very specific reasons if schools do not achieve the targets they set. For example many schools have moving populations, absences, or may have many second language learners.
- ◆ I commented that whilst carrying out the research there was low morale when the teachers did not achieve their targets (who incidentally hadn't had any input in setting them)
- ◆ Schools are autonomous institutions
- ◆ The LEA policies provide guidance and promote cohesion between schools
- ◆ The use of tests including the SATs provides a national consistency. A lot of funding has been put behind the use of such tests, alongside training and resources and particularly the professional development of teachers and this has lead to a national rise in children's literacy and numeracy standards. If children lack these core skills then they won't be able to access other learning and that's why the SATs are only in the core subjects of literacy, numeracy and science.

### **League tables**

- ◆ Each year the government publishes the school league tables. Andrea thought they were of limited value unless the information was explored in much greater detail *'They provide an overview of attainment not necessarily explaining achievement.'* She said the figures provided a measurement tool, similar to the approach used in hospitals, *'a data focus.'* The press might focus on the top twenty performing schools in the league tables but although these schools achieved notable results they didn't give anything like the full picture; *'a school near the bottom of the table may have made exceptional progress.'* Andrea added a lot of schools have a *'special identity'* e.g. Roseberry Hill works hard to create a caring community and league tables don't provide this type of information to parents. The LEA provides all

schools with a wide range of data, including from the Fisher Family Trust, to help them look at their performance.

**Strengths of the LEA**

- ◆ Their *'knowledge of schools'* within (name of city) enabling them to access the *'big picture'*
- ◆ *'Working partnerships and the emphasis on collaboration and sharing best practice'*
- ◆ The incentives available enable schools to access LEA expertise and support according to their needs, on an individual basis
- ◆ The LEA are a big team with various forms of expertise which can be *'used as a tool to support schools'*
- ◆ The Chief Education Officer frequently reminds schools that they are all part of the LEA team, it is he who is responsible for the appointment of Head Teachers and standards.
- ◆ Central training is available
- ◆ Andrea perceived the partnership between the schools and the LEA to be a growing one of collaboration. Head Teachers have currently increased opportunities to provide their views and opinions in consultative groups and district meetings.

**Limitations**

- ◆ Improving communication through *'IT and communication systems within the LEA'* and hence the *'reduction of paperwork'*
- ◆ *'Schools like stability'. 'The LEA has been going through many changes'* while the schools *'value consistency'*

# Appendix

## 4.W

### Children's diary: 'A week in the life of...'

#### 6E: BETH

This booklet is for you to write down a short summary of the things you do this week, and with whom you do them. I would like to know about the activities you do, inside and outside school (during the evening and at the weekend).

For example, you may include some of the following within the summaries you write.

- Any school lessons you particularly enjoyed or disliked
- Who you spent your break and lunch time with and what you did
- Watching television
- Playing on the computer
- Playing basketball/football etc.
- Music lessons
- Visiting friends/family members

This task should not take a long time to do – five minutes or so a day.

Date: Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March

I go in the car with my mum and little brother. I had a lot of school. Had a treat (Jupiter) did posters. A design of a coat of arms was given. Then break with 2 friends then math test posters / 1st lunch with 3 friends then played football then math home car with mum. Little brother took dog on walk. Mum & brother, me did homework (myself & watch) TV go bed.

Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> March

got up go in car with mum & brother. got to school. Played Jumper. A game in class. Then played football with 2 friends. That was OK. The Art that was Brilliant. story - was OK. Then I went home in car with mum & little brother had tea. I did Lacrosse practice (Gould Lacrosse) for 15. Went in car back home got home watch TV go bed.

Date: Friday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2002

go in the car with mum & my little brother. got to school had assembly. then breaks maths literacy lunch then played football. silent reading then Art which was good. home time got home watched 5 TV go to a play. teacher sat with Tom (brother) & watch TV go home.

Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> March  
got up went to cricket club with Tom (brother) & mum. got a lift to mellow with Emily (friend) played. got the same lift back. had lunch went back to cricket club watch mens lacrosse. got home had take away watch TV went to bed.

Date: 17 March 2002

wake up went to carboot with mum & Dad & 2 brothers. then went to my Nanna's which 2 brothers & Dad & two cousins & uncle. when went home about 4 o'clock pm.

then went to youth club with mum & Tom. played Foosie with 6 friends. came home went to bed.

18 March

wake up all with swollen gums. lie in bed all day on my arm & with mum.

19/3/02

wake up swollen throat & swollen gum went shopping with mum. got back went to sleep. Wake up at 5pm went back to 10.

Rebecca  
Date: 20/3/02

was up getting better  
still swollen throat & gum  
taken stuff in for school  
it to school with Mum & little brother  
got school gate Mrs Macdonald  
for my capel & thoughts  
went  
assembly that was ok then  
math that was good  
and let that was good  
break, literacy / ~~writing~~ that  
was ok then lunch, played Basketball  
with @ 6 friends got tired twice that  
wasn't good the Eric that was ok then  
~~that~~ ~~that~~ European activities  
that was Brill.

Thanks u for reading  
my weekly use



Becky  
Date:

Becky

## 6E: LEANNE

This booklet is for you to write down a short summary of the things you do this week, and with whom you do them. I would like to know about the activities you do, inside and outside school (during the evening and at the weekend).

For example, you may include some of the following within the summaries you write.

- Any school lessons you particularly enjoyed or disliked
- Who you spent your break and lunch time with and what you did
- Watching television
- Playing on the computer
- Playing basketball/football etc.
- Music lessons
- Visiting friends/family members

This task should not take a long time to do – five minutes or so a day.

Date: Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March

I walked to school with my childminder. I go to school my childminders at 8:00am because my mums got to go to work. At playtime I was spending my playtime with some of my friends chatting. came in for lessons then I went for dinner and I sat with Olivia & Katie & Emma then went and played football. Then I went in for silent reading and watched a video then tidied up and went home. I ~~went~~ walked home with my childminder and stayed there till 5 o'clock when my mum picked me up from work. When I got home my brother was there with his girlfriend watching T.V. I went I changed and did my homework then played on the computer. Then my other brother came and we just messed around for a bit. Then I had my tea then watched T.V for a bit then had a bath & went to bed.

Date: Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> March

Went to my childminder for 8:00 walked to school with childminder did lessons had break spent it with Emma & Rebecca I did more lessons then it was lunch I sat with Olivia & Katie then played football then had silent reading then did art then school finished then I walked home by myself and my mum was there because she had finished work early. I played on the computer had my tea then watched T.V.

Date: Friday 15<sup>th</sup> March

Went to childminders house for 8:00 Then walked to school with childminder stood outside talking to my friends then went inside had assembly and did lessons. Had break spent it with Emma & Becky had Becky & Katie then went back in for more lessons. Then sat for dinner (sat with Katie and some other people) came in for silent reading and did the then school finished went home with my childminder then mum picked me up at five then went to the doctors went home brother was there did homework watched T.V had tea had bath then went to bed.

Date: Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2002

Went out with mum to shops mum bought me a new brown suitcase then came home had lunch then tidied up went and sat in room for a bit then brother came back Mum yelled at him for not washing up then he took me to Mc Donalds then went home he had a bath then we watched T.V with Mum then he went out other brother came with girlfriend got changed went out then I went to bed.

Date: Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> March

Woke up had a shower went downstairs had breakfast then played on computer then tidied up then had lunch watched T.V had dinner played outside. My mums friend came over chatted for ages and ages and I had to stay in my room my mum said it was grown up business then my mums friend went then went to watch T.V had dinner had a bath then went to bed.

Date: Monday 18<sup>th</sup> March

Woke up had breakfast went to school childminders house for 8:00 then went to school for 9:00 then went home at 3:20 to childminder then my mum picked me up at childminders at 5:00 then went home got changed had tea went played on computer then me and mum watched T.V then brother came played on computer together then had a bath then went to bed.

Date: Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> March

Woke up had breakfast had breakfast or dressed then went to childminders house for 8:00 childminder then I walked to school then I had assembly sat with me with a couple of friends at lunch then childminder picked me up and took me to her house then mum picked me up in car took me home went to bed early because I was ill didn't have any dinner brother came up ask me how I was and he went to the shop for me to get some runs.

## 6E: TARIQ

This booklet is for you to write down a short summary of the things you do this week, and with whom you do them. I would like to know about the activities you do, inside and outside school (during the evening and at the weekend).

For example, you may include some of the following within the summaries you write.

- > Any school lessons you particularly enjoyed or disliked
- > Who you spent your break and lunch time with and what you did
- > Watching television
- > Playing on the computer
- > Playing basketball/football etc.
- > Music lessons
- > Visiting friends/family members

This task should not take a long time to do – five minutes or so a day.

Date: Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March

I come to school with a Haris and Awas on foot. When I go home I watch tv for I play out if I can. Then I have a shower and then have dinner. If I don't get any home work I play on the computer or download music and listen to them or I go to my friend's house or we go football and cricket at Parkwood.

## 6B: CHARLOTTE

This booklet is for you to write down a short summary of the things you do this week, and with whom you do them. I would like to know about the activities you do, inside and outside school (during the evening and at the weekend).

For example, you may include some of the following within the summaries you write.

- > Any school lessons you particularly enjoyed or disliked
- > Who you spent your break and lunch time with and what you did
- > Watching television
- > Playing on the computer
- > Playing basketball/football etc.
- > Music lessons
- > Visiting friends/family members

This task should not take a long time to do – five minutes or so a day.

Date: Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March

I sometimes walk to school with my brother and I sometimes come in the car. Today I walked to school.

I like to play with my friend Phurie. We often play football with the boys at school.

at home I like to chill out with Lucy and Olivia. (not Olivia in 6w!)

Date: Friday 15th March

Came to School in a car today with my dad and brother.

Last night I watched T.V and did my Science homework - boring. and played with my neighbour.

Today I have violin lesson.

Date: ~~the~~ Tuesday/Monday

MONDAY - I came to School with my Dad in the car. School was a bit boring today because we did the usual stuff like Maths and Spelling. It was wet play. After School I watched T.V and played on the computer.

TUESDAY - I came in the car. We did 'own goal' in Literacy which I enjoyed. It is European week this week. I go to basketball training tonight. I am training with my team.

## 6B: ISABEL

This booklet is for you to write down a short summary of the things you do this week, and with whom you do them. I would like to know about the activities you do, inside and outside school (during the evening and at the weekend).

For example, you may include some of the following within the summaries you write.

- > Any school lessons you particularly enjoyed or disliked
- > Who you spent your break and lunch time with and what you did
- > Watching television
- > Playing on the computer
- > Playing basketball/football etc.
- > Music lessons
- > Visiting friends/family members

This task should not take a long time to do - five minutes or so a day.

Date: 13th Wednesday March

I got to school by car with my sisters and my mum.

Literacy: 9:45 We watched 'Own goal' which is alright but a bit boring.

Numeracy: 11:10 We did an investigation on making cubes nets we got three different ones and stuck them on. It was a bit boring as well!!

At morning break I played with Hadeer, Saiedah, and Chloe. At afternoon break I played with Loree, Rebecca and Chloe.

Silent reading I did this!!

At games I was Hadeer's partner we did netball it was great.

I didn't do a flood poster because it's boring I have practised my German.

We did the German songs but I didn't know what half the words were.

I'm going to After School ICT then I'm going to Chloe's house and doing my homework then going home at 8.

Date: Thursday 14th March 2002

Numeracy: We did finding areas of rectangles in

Literacy: News paper article in

first play: Rebecca, Loreece

Second play: Jenny B, Elisha, Rebecca, Loreece, Hadeer, Sajedah, Chloe,

Science: clown's shadow :-

Netball practice then home. :)

Date: Friday 15th March 2002

Numeracy: Was alright but I only did corrections and 2 questions.

PE: We did the usual and played Pinate.



Afternoon was good I did this a flood poster with Rebecca.

This morning at play I played with Elisha, Jenny B, Chloe, Sajedah, Hadeer.

This afternoon I played with Rebecca, Loreece, Chloe, Hadeer, Sajedah, May.

Date: Saturday 16th March

9:30am left for hairdressers for Auntie Marion to have her hair done.

2:30pm left for my haircut.

Sunday 17th March

didn't do anything or go anywhere

Date: Monday 18th March

Mum drove me <sup>and my sisters</sup> to school.

Numeracy: We did Data in

Played with Rebecca, Chloe, Loreece, May.

Literacy: We did Comma + apostrophe

in

played with Rebecca

Euroquest + Europlo worked in partner with Rebecca <sup>in</sup> alright

Date: Tuesday 19th March

Numeracy: Data  weird/chucky!!

Literacy: Our OPAL was good but the rest was rubbish. I mean rubbish.

1. Played with Rebecca, Loreece, chloe May.

2. Rebecca, chloe, ~~Laiaiga~~ Harpreet, Shamila, Manjam

Euroquest + Europlus  alright

Netball Match ~~St Bernades~~ ~~X~~  
Score: 1 to ~~Bernades~~  
We WAS CONCERNED!

Then I went to chloe's.   
And then I went to ~~guides~~ <sup>Acc-</sup> ~~guides~~ <sup>ig</sup>

PS: sorry about <sup>cool!!</sup> ~~the mess!~~ 

Date: Wednesday 20th March

Numeracy: We did Adding 4-digit numbers which was rubbish.

I did a bit of the jig saw

Euro activities: ~~powerpoint~~

1. Played with: Semmy B, Jenny O, Elisha, chloe

2. Played with: Rebecca, Loreece, chloe

Practiced assembly: boring



### 6B: JALEELA

This booklet is for you to write down a short summary of the things you do this week, and with whom you do them. I would like to know about the activities you do, inside and outside school (during the evening and at the weekend).

For example, you may include some of the following within the summaries you write.

- > Any school lessons you particularly enjoyed or disliked
- > Who you spent your break and lunch time with and what you did
- > Watching television
- > Playing on the computer
- > Playing basketball/football etc.
- > Music lessons
- > Visiting friends/family members

This task should not take a long time to do – five minutes or so a day.

Date: Wednesday 13th March

I walk to school with my brother and sisters. My brother is in year 3 and my sister is in year 1. I spend my play times with my friends. I play on my computer. I like football. I hate music. I like visiting my friends and family.

Date: Thursday

today I did maths I like that because it is my best subject. I played with my friend in the street as well.

Date: Friday

I had a party on my table with one horrible girl (Lorece) I did like it then we had class meeting. It was good so I like maths the most

Date: Monday 18th March

It was good we got Euroquest books it was good

Date: Tuesday 19th March

we had a fat fight with the ugly Lorece it was good but I got in trouble of Mrs Marchant.

### 6B: ROBERTO

This booklet is for you to write down a short summary of the things you do this week, and with whom you do them. I would like to know about the activities you do, inside and outside school (during the evening and at the weekend).

For example, you may include some of the following within the summaries you write.

- Any school lessons you particularly enjoyed or disliked
- Who you spent your break and lunch time with and what you did
- Watching television
- Playing on the computer
- Playing basketball/football etc.
- Music lessons
- Visiting friends/family members

This task should not take a long time to do – five minutes or so a day.

Date: Wednesday

The date is 19/3/02  
I go in the car either with mum or dad to school today I came with my mum  
I like to play with Hango, Harris, Tom, Robert and many more

At home I play with Nirvana (not the band) and Stuart I have a basketball net so we play B ball after school I went to basketball at school.

After Basketball club I went home (my mum and Dad bought me and my sister a PlayStation 2)  
I played on it all day then I did my science homework then went to sleep

Date: Thursday

Today I was referee in football until the ball went on the roof I think I was a good one. Nothing more to do in the morning I played for ages then went to school.

Date: Friday

Today is a good day I went to guitar and now my best friend is in my guitar group (Hanson) we did P.E with Mrs. Wadsworth in a boring group I was the only boy we had a game of football Hanson was the referee this time.

Date: Saturday and Sunday

Saturday

I went shopping with my friends (my school friends) we went to the fringe in town and then we hung out near there then we went home and played some Bball then there was a film on TV so we went in and they went home.

SUNDAY

On Sunday I hung out again on the street because it was a lovely day I got my bike and we mess'd on the street we went to the nearby shop and got chewing gum and sweets then I went in and played for hours on the PS2

Date: Monday & Tuesday

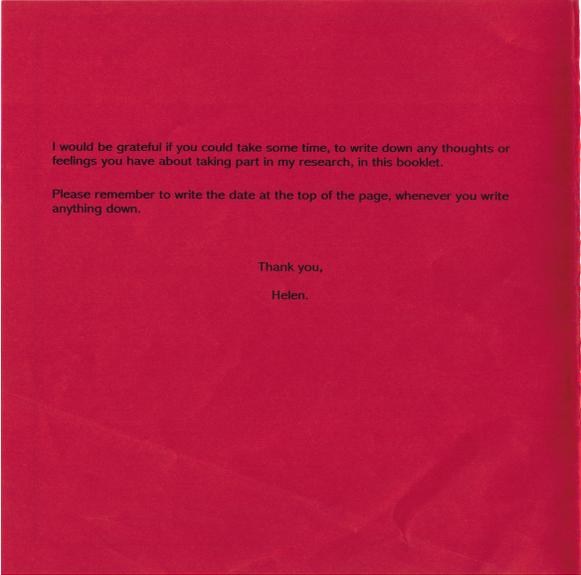
Monday

Today we did not go to C.L.C because a man from Finland came we and scarlet (my school friend) showed him around the school we got Europlus & Eurobest books I got home watched Simpsons then I had dinner it lasted more than the day was finished

Tuesday

Today

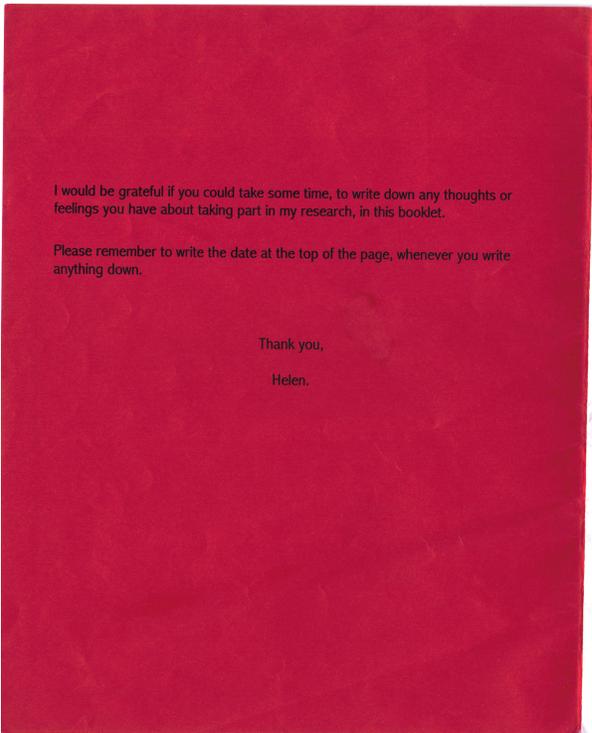
6E: TARIQ



Date: Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March  
When Helen chose me I thought ~~she~~ I was special

Date:

6B: CHARLOTTE



Date: Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March  
I was pleased when Helen picked me to do this because I get to miss assembly. Yes!!  
Today it was fun because we got to chat

Date:

6B: JALEELA

I would be grateful if you could take some time, to write down any thoughts or feelings you have about taking part in my research, in this booklet.

Please remember to write the date at the top of the page, whenever you write anything down.

Thank you,  
Helen.

Date: 13th march  
When Helen picked me I was so surprised I was glad to be picked. Helen told me outside that she picked me I came back in the classroom and everyone was asking me why where you were outside.

Date: 19th march  
I liked to be picked because it was so surprised I couldn't believe my eyes.

Date: 18.14.02.  
Today we missed assembly to do Helen work with her I enjoyed that today. Now at 3:00 I have done art it is so good I like it.

Date: 5. July.  
I liked being in the restera with Helen because she has been very kind and helped us all with question and sported us all through the year six

Date: 21.5.02.  
On May 19th it was my birthday I had a great time playing with my friends but it was sad because my uncle's dad died that's why I couldn't come to the trip.

Date: