

**The nature and extent of  
bullying in North West  
secondary schools:  
Investigating pupil and  
staff perceptions of the  
problem**

**Rachel Elizabeth Maunder**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements of Liverpool John Moores University for  
the award of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph. D)

March 2005

***“What doesn’t break you makes you stronger”***

**Dedicated to mum & dad**

**With thanks to Professor Alex Harrop, Dr Juliet Reid & Professor Andrew Tattersall for their guidance and everyone who supported me through the highs and the lows (of which there were many....)**

## **Abstract**

Bullying is a widespread problem in schools and a vast amount of research has been conducted on the subject. In order to examine how members of the school community perceive bullying, self-report questionnaires were devised for completion by secondary school pupils from two year groups, teachers and support staff. The scenario-based questionnaires compared their views on defining bullying, the perceived seriousness of different behaviours and the bullying perceived to occur in the school. The questionnaires indicated that perceptions of bullying were mediated by the age, gender and group (pupil, teacher and support staff) of participants. Indirect behaviours (such as social exclusion) were less likely to be defined as bullying and were perceived as less serious than direct behaviours. Where the victim portrayed in the questionnaire was female, perceptions of seriousness for the incidents described were higher than for male victims. Staff rated direct and indirect behaviours more seriously than did pupils. Differences between schools indicated that perceptions were not fixed and there was potential for change.

Open-ended comments made on the questionnaires revealed further complexity in perceptions of bullying and illustrated the benefits of utilising qualitative techniques to study bullying. Therefore, an additional study was conducted whereby a sample of teachers and support staff from participating schools were interviewed, using a semi-structured approach, about their experiences of bullying. Results were analysed using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (Smith, 2003) and findings suggested the need to consider bullying in a wider context, focusing on schools as organisations with external and internal influences affecting their functioning.

The research highlighted the importance of schools working together to focus on what is understood by the term bullying. Interventions need to recognise the complexity of bullying and not treat it in isolation. Practical issues for studying bullying in schools and the potential benefits of combining quantitative and qualitative research are discussed.

# Contents

<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Page</b>
	Acknowledgements	ii
	Abstract	iii
	Contents	iv
	List of Tables	xi
	List of Figures	xv
<b>1</b>	<b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	Background to research on bullying	2
1.2	What is bullying?	3
1.3	The nature and extent of bullying in schools	5
1.3.1	Prevalence of bullying	5
1.3.2	Types of bullying	6
1.3.3	Nature of bullying	8
1.3.4	Where bullying occurs	11
1.4	The characteristics of children involved in bullying	11
1.4.1	Bullies	12
1.4.2	Victims	14
1.4.3	Bully-victims	16
1.4.4	Participant roles	16
1.4.5	Friendship	17
1.4.6	Feelings about bullying	18
1.5	Effects of bullying	19
1.5.1	Victims	19
1.5.2	Bullies	22
1.5.3	Bully-victims	22
1.6	Attempts to deal with bullying	22

1.6.1	Establishing policies	23
1.6.2	The curriculum	24
1.6.3	Supervision	25
1.6.4	Improving the playground	26
1.6.5	Involving the school community	26
1.6.6	Work with bullies and victims	26
1.6.7	Peer support and involvement	27
1.6.8	Assertiveness training and self-esteem work	29
1.6.9	Success of interventions	29
1.7	Staff perceptions	31
1.7.1	Identifying incidents	32
1.7.2	Reliability of pupil reports	35
1.7.3	Staff intervention	36
1.7.4	Mediating factors	42
1.8	Summary and rationale	44
<b>2</b>	<b>Chapter 2: Method</b>	<b>46</b>
2.1	How to measure bullying	47
2.1.1	Peer nomination	47
2.1.2	Teacher reports	48
2.1.3	Interviews	50
2.1.4	Observation	51
2.1.5	Self-report measures	51
2.2	Details of research approach	53
2.3	Construction of the questionnaires	55
2.4	Pilot study	63
2.4.1	Informal feedback	63
2.4.2	Response to informal feedback	65
2.4.3	Procedure	66
2.4.4	Feedback report	68

2.4.5	Internal consistency	69
2.4.6	Order effects	69
2.4.7	Open-ended comments	70
2.4.8	Questionnaire for staff supervising pupil completion of questionnaires	74
2.4.9	Feedback on pilot project	74
2.5	Main study	75
2.5.1	Changes to questionnaires	75
2.5.2	Sampling	78
2.5.3	Procedure	78
2.5.4	Feedback about the project	80
2.5.5	The participating schools	81
<b>3</b>	<b>Chapter 3: Statistical findings</b>	<b>86</b>
3.1	Response rate	87
3.2	Data preparation and screening	89
3.2.1	Item totals	89
3.2.2	Missing value analysis	90
3.2.3	Normality tests	90
3.2.4	Multicollinearity	92
3.3	Defining bullying	92
3.3.1	Direct bullying scenarios	93
3.3.2	Indirect bullying scenarios	97
3.3.3	Ambiguous scenarios	100
3.3.4	Inferential analysis for group, gender and school	103
3.3.5	Defining bullying: summary of findings	105
3.4	Perceived seriousness of behaviours	106
3.4.1	Pupils	107
3.4.2	Staff	108
3.4.3	Comparing the mean ratings	109

3.4.4	Using item totals	109
3.4.5	Direct bullying	110
3.4.6	Indirect bullying	111
3.4.7	Using combined item totals	112
3.4.8	Effect of group, gender and school	113
3.4.9	Relationship with experience (staff)	117
3.4.10	Effect of definition of bullying	118
3.4.11	Link between direct and indirect seriousness ratings	119
3.4.12	Summary of findings for perceived seriousness	119
3.5	Reported frequency of hearing about bullying behaviours	121
3.5.1	Describing the mean ratings	123
3.5.2	Using item totals	123
3.5.3	Direct bullying	124
3.5.4	Indirect bullying	125
3.5.5	Using combined item totals	126
3.5.6	Effect of group, gender and school	127
3.5.7	Relationship with experience (staff)	134
3.5.8	Relationship with perceived seriousness	134
3.5.9	Effect on definition of bullying	135
3.5.10	Link between hearing about direct behaviours and indirect behaviours	136
3.5.11	Summary of hearing about bullying	137
3.6	Self-reported victims of bullying	139
3.6.1	Summary of self-reported victims of bullying	140
3.6.2	Summary of mean ratings	141
3.6.3	Using item totals	141
3.6.4	Effect of group, gender and school	142
3.6.5	Relationship with ratings of perceived seriousness	147
3.6.6	Relationship with hearing about behaviours	147
3.6.7	Effect on definition of bullying	148
3.6.8	Combined item totals	149



3.6.9	Overall bullying experience	150
3.6.10	Relationship with perceived seriousness	152
3.6.11	Relationship with hearing about behaviours	153
3.6.12	Effect on definition of bullying	153
3.6.13	Summary of findings for self-reported experience of bullying	154
<b>4</b>	<b>Chapter 4: Feedback on the project</b>	<b>156</b>
4.1	Dissemination of Feedback Reports	157
4.2	Content of Feedback Reports	158
4.3	Findings	160
4.4	Action since project	162
4.5	Overall feedback	163
<b>5</b>	<b>Chapter 5: Discussion of statistical findings</b>	<b>165</b>
5.1	General findings	166
5.2	Pupil perceptions	170
5.3	Teacher and support staff perceptions	175
5.4	Gender differences	177
5.5	Pupil and staff differences	179
5.6	School differences	181
5.7	Methodological issues	185
5.8	Summary	188
<b>6</b>	<b>Chapter 6: Open-ended comments</b>	<b>189</b>
6.1	Defining bullying	190
6.2	Gender issues	197
6.3	Importance of friendship	198

6.4	Attitudes towards bullying	200
6.5	Action	201
6.6	Personal experience	202
6.7	The questionnaire itself	203
<b>7</b>	<b>Chapter 7: Discussion of open-ended comments</b>	<b>207</b>
7.1	Link to statistical findings	208
7.2	Additional findings	209
7.3	Questionnaires	214
<b>8</b>	<b>Chapter 8: Semi-structured interviews with staff</b>	<b>218</b>
8.1	Rationale for additional study	219
8.2	Semi-structured interviews	222
8.3	Procedure	223
8.4	Analytical process	226
8.5	Analysis	229
	8.5.1 Complexity in perceptions of bullying	229
	8.5.2 Identification of bullying	236
	8.5.3 Organisational factors affecting staff behaviour	243
	8.5.4 Dealing with bullying	250
	8.5.5 Outside influences on school environment	257
	8.5.6 Policing terminology	261
	8.5.7 Integration	264
<b>9</b>	<b>Chapter 9: Discussion of semi-structured interviews with staff</b>	<b>268</b>
9.1	Link to statistical findings	269
9.2	Link to open-ended comments	272
9.3	Additional findings	276

9.4	Methodological issues	282
10	<b>Chapter 10: Overall summary and conclusions</b>	291
10.1	Findings about perceptions	292
10.2	Implications for intervention	294
10.3	Practical issues for researching school bullying	296
10.4	Future research	299
	<b>References</b>	302
	<b>Appendices</b>	341
1	Year 8 Pilot Questionnaire	342
2	Year 11 Pilot Questionnaire	368
3	Cover sheet for Teacher Pilot Questionnaire	394
4	Cover sheet for Lunchtime Supervisor Pilot Questionnaire	396
5	Cover sheet for Support Staff Pilot Questionnaire	398
6	Main body of staff Pilot Questionnaire	400
7	Questionnaire for staff supervising questionnaire completion	425
8	Instruction sheet for pupil completion of questionnaires	427
9	Instruction sheet for staff questionnaires	429
10	Feedback Report for Pilot Study	431
11	Internal consistency analysis	515
12	Order effects analysis	517
13	Final draft of Pupil Questionnaire	521
14	Cover sheet for final draft of Teacher Questionnaire	547
15	Cover sheet for final draft of Support Staff Questionnaire	549
16	Main body of final draft of staff questionnaires	551
17	Feedback Report example (School 1)	565
18	Support data for statistical results	623

## List of Tables

<b>Table</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Page</b>
1	Response rate for pilot study	67
2	Details of participating schools in comparison to national averages	82
3	Response rate for School 1	87
4	Response rate for School 2	87
5	Response rate for School 3	88
6	Response rate for School 4	88
7	Total number of respondents	88
8	Percentage of respondents defining direct behaviours as bullying, partitioned by group	93
9	Percentage of respondents defining direct behaviours as bullying, partitioned by group and gender	94
10	Percentage of respondents defining direct behaviours as bullying, partitioned by school	96
11	Percentage of respondents defining indirect behaviours as bullying, partitioned by group	97
12	Percentage of respondents defining indirect behaviours as bullying, partitioned by group and gender	98
13	Percentage of respondents defining indirect behaviours as bullying, partitioned by school	99
14	Percentage of respondents defining ambiguous behaviours as bullying, partitioned by group	100
15	Percentage of respondents defining ambiguous behaviours as bullying, partitioned by group and gender	101
16	Percentage of respondents defining ambiguous behaviours as bullying, partitioned by school	102
17	Chi-square analysis for questions about defining bullying	104
18	Perceived seriousness ratings of pupils for individual scenarios	107

19	Perceived seriousness ratings of staff for individual scenarios	108
20	Perceived seriousness for direct bullying based on the gender of the victim	110
21	Perceived seriousness for indirect bullying based on the gender of the victim	112
22	Descriptive statistics for perceived seriousness of direct bullying based on group	113
23	Descriptive statistics for perceived seriousness of direct bullying based on gender	114
24	Descriptive statistics for perceived seriousness of direct bullying based on school	114
25	Descriptive statistics for perceived seriousness of indirect bullying based on group	116
26	Descriptive statistics for perceived seriousness of indirect bullying based on gender	116
27	Descriptive statistics for perceived seriousness of indirect bullying based on school	116
28	Effect of definition of bullying on ratings of perceived seriousness	118
29	Reported frequencies of hearing about individual behaviours for pupils and staff	122
30	Reported frequencies for hearing about direct bullying based on the gender of the victim	124
31	Reported frequencies for hearing about indirect bullying based on the gender of the victim	125
32	Descriptive statistics for reported frequencies of hearing about direct bullying based on group	127
33	Descriptive statistics for reported frequencies of hearing about direct bullying based on gender	127
34	Descriptive statistics for reported frequencies of hearing about direct bullying based on school	127

35	Descriptive statistics for reported frequencies of hearing about indirect bullying based on group	130
36	Descriptive statistics for reported frequencies of hearing about indirect bullying based on gender	131
37	Descriptive statistics for reported frequencies of hearing about indirect bullying based on school	131
38	Effect of reported frequencies of hearing about bullying on how bullying is defined	136
39	The percentage of pupils who reported experiencing particular bullying behaviours once a week or more	139
40	Self-reported experience of bullying behaviours by Year 8 pupils	140
41	Self-reported experience of bullying behaviours by Year 11 pupils	141
42	Descriptive statistics for self-reported experience of direct bullying based on group	142
43	Descriptive statistics for self-reported experience of direct bullying based on gender	142
44	Descriptive statistics for self-reported experience of direct bullying based on school	143
45	Descriptive statistics for self-reported experience of indirect bullying based on group	145
46	Descriptive statistics for self-reported experience of indirect bullying based on gender	145
47	Descriptive statistics for self-reported experience of indirect bullying based on school	145
48	Effect of self-reported experience of bullying on how bullying is defined	148
49	Descriptive statistics for overall bullying experience based on group	150
50	Descriptive statistics for overall bullying experience based on gender	150

51	Descriptive statistics for overall bullying experience based on school	151
52	Effect of overall bullying experience on how bullying is defined	153

## List of Figures

<b>Fig.</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Page</b>
1	Means plot describing the interaction between group and gender for perceived seriousness of direct bullying	115
2	Means plot describing the interaction between group and gender for reported frequency of hearing about direct bullying	129
3	Means plot describing the interaction between school and group for reported frequency of hearing about direct bullying	130
4	Means plot describing the interaction between gender and group for reported frequency of hearing about indirect bullying	133
5	Means plot describing the interaction between school and group for reported frequency of hearing about indirect bullying	134
6	Means plot describing the interaction between school and group for self-reported experience of direct bullying	144
7	Means plot describing the interaction between school and gender for self-reported experience of direct bullying	144
8	Means plot describing the interaction between school and group for self-reported experience of indirect bullying	146
9	Means plot describing the interaction between school and group for overall bullying experience	151
10	Means plot describing the interaction between school and gender for overall bullying experience	152
11	Graphical representation of integrated themes illustrating staff experience of dealing with bullying in the school environment	267



# **Chapter 1**

## **Introduction**

# **1. Introduction**

## **1.1 Background to research on bullying**

On Wednesday 2 July 2003, 11 year-old Thomas Thompson took an overdose of painkillers and died as a result of school bullying ('Suicide boy' link, 2003). Alarming, incidents of child suicides like these are not uncommon (see Marr & Field, 2001) and highlight the importance of researching the problem of bullying in schools. What was once an underground phenomenon, with victims having to suffer in silence, has received increasing attention in the past 30 years in academic literature, media and government initiatives.

The work into the field of bullying began in Scandinavia with the work of Dan Olweus (1978). His findings raised concerns and led to a national initiative to reduce bullying in primary schools. This initiative was supported by a longitudinal survey and suggestions for successful interventions. A European seminar on school bullying was held in Norway, 1987, where the results of Olweus' work were discussed. This led to an explosion of interest in the field of bullying and delegates from the seminar began work in their own countries (O'Moore, 1995). In Britain for example, The Elton Report (1989) recommended school initiatives to combat bullying in schools. These recommendations were largely based on the work already being undertaken in Norway (Olweus, 1989) and fuelled research into school bullying in Britain. The Sheffield Project (Whitney & Smith, 1993) included a large-scale survey and intervention study and revealed much about the nature and extent of bullying in British schools. The results of the survey were adapted to form an Anti-Bullying Pack that was sent to all schools in England via the Department for Education in 1994 (DfES, 1994). The use of the pack was evaluated in 1997 (Smith & Madsen, 1997) and led to an updated pack being launched in 2000 (DfES, 2000), and a further edition in 2002 (DfES, 2002). In 1989, Mellor (1994, 1999) surveyed 10 secondary schools in Scotland and found similar trends to those reported in Norway. As a result of the survey, a pack entitled *Action Against Bullying* was produced in

1992 to assist in developing anti-bullying policies and sent to schools in Scotland, England, Wales and some abroad. A second pack focusing on involving families and non-teaching staff was produced and distributed in 1993. Byrne (1999) noted that the work of Olweus also fuelled research into bullying in Ireland (e.g. O'Moore, 1989, 1995). Therefore, it can be seen that there is widespread national and international interest in bullying.

## **1.2 What is bullying?**

*Bullying* can be regarded as a subset of aggressive behaviour (Houndoumadi & Pateraki, 2001; Smith & Thompson, 1991; Smith, Cowie, Olafsson & Liefoghe, 2002) that is defined by Besag (1989) as:

*...the repeated attack – physical, psychological, social or verbal – by those in a position of power, which is formally or situationally defined, on those who are powerless to resist, with the intention of causing distress for their own gratification, (1989, p.4).*

This is not a universally agreed definition and, as Arora (1996) notes, there has been debate about how to define bullying. Initial definitions just focused on the physical aspects of bullying until it became accepted that psychological abuse could also be regarded as bullying. The terms *bullying* and *victimization* are used interchangeably in the literature (Graham & Juvonen, 1998) and appear to refer to a similar form of aggression:

*By victimization we mean the kind of bullying, terrorizing and intimidation of targeted children that takes place in and around school, (Graham and Juvonen, 1998, p.587).*

Borg (1999) has noted that researchers tend to adopt varying definitions of bullying in their studies, despite the fact that there are common features such as a) the intention to cause distress to another pupil; b) it is carried out by one or more pupil; c) it occurs repeatedly over time and d) there is an imbalance of power between the

perpetrator and the victim. However, not all researchers agree on these features (Madsen, 1996; Smith & Brain, 2000). For example, Arora (1996) and Stephenson and Smith (1992) note that the concept of repeated attacks should not be required for a definition of bullying. One incident can be enough to make an individual feel frightened at the prospect of renewed incidents (Arora, 1996). This suggestion appears to focus on how the *victim* interprets and feels about the situation (Guerin & Hennessy, 2002). In addition, the bully can re-establish the victim's fear just by threatening looks (Sharp & Smith, 1994). Supporting this argument, Branwhite (1994) and Keise (1992) found that pupils dwelt upon bullying episodes after the incidents were over – emphasising that the frequency of events is not necessarily required in a definition of bullying. However, Hazler, Miller, Carney and Green (2001) and Siann, Callaghan, Lockhart and Lawson (1993) regard *repetition* as important in the definition of bullying, although not all teachers and counsellors included repetition in their definitions of bullying (Hazler *et al.*, 2001). There is also debate surrounding the concept of intent (Madsen, 1996; Guerin & Hennessy, 2002; O'Moore, 1995). For example, a widely recognized definition used by Whitney and Smith (1993) does not include intent of the perpetrator as a requirement:

*We say a young person is being bullied, or picked on, when another young child or young person, or a group of young people, say nasty or unpleasant things to him or her. It is also bullying when a young person is hit, kicked or threatened, locked inside a room, sent nasty notes, when no-one ever talks to them and things like that. These things can happen frequently and it is difficult for the young person being bullied to defend himself or herself. It is also bullying when a young person is teased repeatedly in a nasty way. But it is not bullying when two young people of about the same strength have the odd fight or quarrel, (Whitney & Smith, 1993, p.7).*

Different definitions are used across studies, making comparison of results difficult (Borg, 1999). Furthermore, research has suggested that members of the school community may not hold the same definitions of what bullying involves (Madsen, 1996; Siann *et al.*, 1993; Smith & Levan, 1995). For example, younger pupils have been found to have a much broader definition of bullying than older pupils (Arora,

1996; Gumpel & Meadan, 2000; Madsen, 1996; Smith & Levan, 1995; Smith, Madsen & Moody, 1999; Smith *et al.* 2002; Swain, 1998) and that their definition becomes closer to the educational definition as they get older (Begotti & Bonino, 2003). Guerin & Hennessy (2002) found differences between researchers' and Irish secondary school pupils' definitions of bullying. Pupils did not regard repetition of behaviours or intention of the bully as important in their definition. The term *bullying* does not have an exact translation in other languages (Smith *et al.*, 2002; Smorti, Menesini & Smith, 2003) making international comparisons difficult. The concept of bullying in the English language has also changed, with the focus on psychological elements developing in more recent years (Smith *et al.*, 2002). Besag (1989) suggests that adopting a rigid definition of bullying can be counterproductive. She argues that the bully and the victim's interpretation of the behaviour is the most important.

### **1.3 The nature and extent of bullying in schools**

#### **1.3.1 Prevalence of bullying**

A range of findings have been revealed about the extent of bullying in schools, but the different definitions adopted by researchers and the variety of methods used to measure bullying make direct comparison of findings difficult (Boulton & Smith, 1994; Boulton & Underwood, 1992; Solberg & Olweus, 2003). To measure bullying, the most common methods used by researchers are self report questionnaires for pupils to complete, interviews, observations of children's interactions and nomination methods where children are identified by peers or teachers on a variety of characteristics. The figure of *one in five* pupils as being victims of bullying is widely quoted (Boulton & Underwood, 1992; Smith, 1991) and indicates the high and worrying prevalence of bullying in schools. Besag (1989) suggests that up to 10% of children are involved in bullying either as a bully or a victim at any one time. The Sheffield Project (Whitney & Smith, 1993) found that 27% of primary school pupils reported being bullied at least once or twice a term,

with 10% being bullied at least once a week. 12% of children reported bullying others more than once or twice a term, with 4% admitting they bullied at least once a week. In secondary schools, reported bullying was lower with 10% of pupils claiming they were bullied at least once or twice a term, and 4% saying they were bullied at least once a week. 6% of secondary school children admitted to bullying others more than once or twice a term, and only 1% admitted to bullying others more than once a week. A large-scale survey carried out in 25 Cheshire, Staffordshire and Shropshire secondary schools revealed that 10% of children had been victims of bullying in the previous year, 17% had been bullies, 58% had been both bullies and victims ('bully-victims'), and 14% had not been involved. 5.2% of children experienced frequent bullying and 6.1% frequently bullied others (Cartwright, Glover, Gough, Gleeson, Johnson, Miller & Taylor, 1997). It is extremely difficult to provide a summary of bullying prevalence in the UK because studies that have been conducted have used a variety of techniques to collect data. Surveys have often used different questionnaires, each with different definitions of bullying and carried out under different conditions. In addition, Solberg and Olweus (2003) note how different time periods are used for children to base their reports on. So, some studies will be based on experiences in the last week, whereas others could be based on experiences in the last term. Aside from statistics however, Arora (1989) suggests that a high proportion of children worry about bullying even though they have never experienced it. As Cullingford (1993) explains "There are no children who are unaware of bullying and no children who do not, at one stage or another, fear it," (1993, p.55).

### 1.3.2 Types of bullying

Different studies of bullying have included different behaviours in their definition. A common classification is that of *direct* (physical and verbal) and *indirect* bullying (Björkqvist, Lagerspetz & Kaukiainen, 1992; Rivers & Smith, 1994) where direct behaviours involve face-to-face actions and indirect behaviours refer to those that occur through a third party, or those that target peers' relationships with others (also

called *relational* behaviours, Chawla, 2003). Pateraki and Houndoumadi (2001) describe direct behaviours including hitting; pushing; teasing; threatening and calling names and indirect behaviours including social exclusion and rumour spreading. Jerome and Segal (2003) highlight the internet as a tool for bullying including e-mails and text messages – supporting evidence by Oliver and Candappa (2003) that small proportions of children receive nasty e-mail or text messages. As the ‘Text message’ link (2002) notes, this new form of psychological bullying is believed to be on the increase. Regarding commonality of bullying behaviours, 11-14 year olds in Italy reported that nasty name-calling and social exclusion were the most common forms of bullying (Baldry & Farrington, 1998, 1999). Name-calling has been found to be the most common form of bullying in other studies (e.g. Borg, 1999; Crozier & Dimmock, 1999; Karatzias, Power & Swanson, 2002; Oliver & Candappa, 2003; Whitney & Smith 1993). Despite this, Besag (1992) suggests that school staff can underestimate the distress caused by nasty name-calling. It is possible that because this behaviour occurs more frequently, staff become ‘desensitised’ to its effects. Therefore they may not see it as a cause for concern and choose not to intervene if they witness it. However, Besag (1992) argues that name-calling is often used in the early stages of bullying hence prevention of this behaviour can help to stop situations escalating. So, if staff do choose not to intervene, the result of their inaction could lead to further bullying episodes.

Racial bullying has been largely neglected in bullying research (Eslea & Mukhtar 2000; Moran, Smith, Thompson & Whitney, 1993). Interestingly, Moran *et al.* (1993) found that Asian children’s experience of bullying did not differ significantly to that of white children, except that they reported to experience being called names about their race. Only a minority of children have reported to experience racist name-calling, and this occurred more in primary than secondary schools (Oliver & Candappa, 2003). As Eslea and Mukhtar (2000) note, research into bullying often uses the term *name-calling* to refer to various forms of teasing and verbal abuse including racism – but they question whether this overlap is justified. In fact, the DfES (2000, 2002) outline a range of behaviours that fall under the category of

*racist bullying* extending far beyond name-calling such as graffiti, threats, attacks and wearing provocative badges. However, problems with defining racism, the complexities of studying race due to the sensitive nature of the topic and gaining access to schools have created difficulties in researching the issue (Eslea & Mukhtar, 2000). According to research by Siann *et al.* (1993), teachers viewed *bullying* and *racism* as separate entities. The authors suggest that this could be explained by a subjective interpretation that bullying is a personal attack, whereas racism is a group attack. The same rule was applied to sexual attacks. In a further study, Siann, Callaghan, Glissov, Lockhart and Rawson (1994) reported that pupils also distinguish between bullying and racism, and would not label a racist attack as bullying, but Swain (1998) is critical of such a separation and argues that sexual and racist taunts should both be included in the definition of bullying. Keise (1992) acknowledges that the term *bullying* is used to include a variety of aggressive acts including racial abuse partly because schools find the term is meaningful to pupils. However, she notes that it is important for researchers to be aware of the limitations the term poses for examining specific experiences such as racial prejudice. It seems sensible to regard racial harassment as a subset of bullying. Evidence from Land (2003) suggested that pupils regarded sexual harassment as a distinct subset of bullying and therefore it is likely racial abuse could be perceived in a similar way. This is not denying the seriousness of behaviours targeting children's race or sexuality, but the argument is that they form distinct categories of bullying and therefore should be treated as such.

### **1.3.3 Nature of bullying**

The extent of bullying has been shown to decrease with age (Borg, 1999; Boulton & Underwood, 1992; Cartwright *et al.*, 1997; DfES, 2000, 2002; Kumpulainen, Räsänen, Henttonen *et al.*, 1999; Oliver & Candappa, 2003; Rivers & Smith, 1994; Whitney & Smith, 1993) although this has not been a universal finding (Boulton, Trueman & Flemington, 2002; Slee & Rigby, 1993a; Yates & Smith, 1989) and the fact that younger children have been found to have a broader definition of bullying



may lead to increased reporting (Smith *et al.*, 2002). Boulton and Underwood (1992) suggest that it is the age of pupils relative to others in the school that is important rather than actual age. For example, the younger pupils in primary school are more likely to be bullied, as are the younger pupils in secondary schools (Salmon, James & Smith, 1998) because they are weaker than the other pupils. Contrary to this suggestion, Smith, Madsen and Moody (1999) found that new pupils at secondary school reported lower rates of bullying than they had done in their final year of primary school – despite there being many more older pupils above them who could bully them. Evidence by Salmivalli (2002) indicates that there is no actual age decline in bullying, rather it is the self-identified rate (number of children who say they are bullied but are not identified as victims by their peers) of bullying that decreases with age. There is clearly a lot of conflicting evidence about the relationship between age and bullying meaning it is inappropriate to make overall conclusions.

Rivers and Smith (1994) found that boys were more likely to use physical forms of aggression (e.g. hitting, kicking) with their peers whereas girls tended to use more indirect forms such as social exclusion and rumour spreading. There were no significant gender differences in the use of verbal aggression (e.g. name-calling, threats), but Craig (1998) found that as pupils increased in age, there was increased verbal aggression and a decrease in physical aggression. Boys also report to experience more direct forms of bullying when compared to girls who report slightly higher levels of indirect bullying (Baldry & Farrington, 1999; Crick & Nelson, 2002; Eslea & Smith, 1998; La Fontaine, 1991; Olweus, 1995; Pateraki & Houndoumadi, 2001) – but this finding has not always been replicated (e.g. Boulton *et al.*, 2002; Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1997; Siann *et al.*, 1993) and interviews with teachers have revealed that they sometimes reject this popular stereotype of gender differences (Siann *et al.*, 1993). Regarding gender of bullies, boys are believed to bully more than girls (Baldry & Farrington, 1999; Boulton & Smith, 1994; Lowenstein, 1978b; Rigby, 1998) and they bully both boys and girls (Olweus, 1978; Smith & Shu, 2000), whereas girls tend to bully other girls (Olweus, 1978; Smith & Shu, 2000).

However, because girls tend to use more indirect forms of bullying that are more covert, the incidence of bullying amongst girls may be higher than expected (Besag, 1989; Munthe, 1989). Girls are slightly more likely than boys to be bullied (Baldry & Farrington, 1999; Borg, 1999), but this has not been a universal finding with some studies reporting that boys and girls were equally likely to be victims (Boulton & Smith, 1994; Mynard, Joseph & Alexander, 2000; Oliver & Candappa, 2003), or that more boys were victims than girls (Crick & Grotpeter, 1996; Olweus, 1995; Sourander, Helstelä, Helenius & Piha, 2000). According to Besag (1989), parents and teachers claim that the same amount of bullying occurs in boys and girls. This could be because girls complain about being socially excluded but may not label this behaviour as bullying, whereas adults do consider it to be bullying (Besag, 1989; Stanley & Arora, 1998). The children reported to be involved in bullying as either bullies or victims appears to remain relatively stable across a school year – especially with boys (Boulton & Smith, 1994). The stability of bullying has been reported elsewhere (Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996; Kumpulainen *et al.*, 1999; Perry, Kusel & Perry, 1988; Sourander *et al.*, 2000; Camodeca, Goossens, Meerum-Terwogt & Schuengel, 2002) and it is suggested that bully-victim relationships become established as early as kindergarten (Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996). The size of the school has not been found to bear any relationship to levels of reported bullying (Arora, 1999; Whitney & Smith, 1993), although other studies have shown that school size may be related to levels of bullying (e.g. Stephenson & Smith, 1992). Class size has been found to be a factor (Stephenson & Smith, 1992) although school ethos and leadership are believed to be more significant factors (Arora, 1999; Smith, 1997). There is a slight tendency for schools to have higher rates of bullying in socially deprived areas (Smith, 1997; Whitney & Smith, 1993), but again there have been inconsistent findings (Stephenson & Smith, 1992). It is clear that there is much conflicting evidence surrounding the nature of bullying and, as previously mentioned, this is likely to be a result of varying definitions, methods of measurement (questionnaires, interviews, observations and nominations) and sources of information (pupils themselves, peers, teachers or parents).

### **1.3.4 Where bullying occurs**

When children are asked where bullying tends to occur, various responses have been given. Many children report being bullied in the classroom (Baldry & Farrington, 1999; Borg, 1999; Cartwright *et al.*, 1997) – especially through indirect means (Rivers & Smith, 1994) - and also in the corridors (Baldry & Farrington, 1999; Borg, 1999; Cartwright *et al.*, 1997). Borg (1999) emphasizes that secondary school pupils are particularly vulnerable when changing lessons because corridors are usually unsupervised at these times. Travelling to and from school has also been identified as a time when pupils experience bullying (Glover, Gough, Johnson & Cartwright, 2000; Sharp & Smith, 1994). The playground in particular has been identified as a place where bullying often occurs (Baldry & Farrington, 1999; Borg, 1999; Cartwright *et al.*, 1997; Mellor, 1999; Moran *et al.*, 1993; Rivers & Smith, 1994; Siann *et al.*, 1994; Smith & Shu, 2000; Whitney & Smith, 1993). Boulton (1992) outlines research indicating that participating in playground activity can be very beneficial for children and he claims that children who are often alone at these times may suffer adjustment problems as a result. When children involved in bullying were observed in the playground, their behaviour was related to their peer relationships (Boulton, 1999). For example, there was a positive relationship between the amount of time spent alone and the victim scores of both boys and girls. The evidence suggests therefore that bullying occurs at various locations in and around school, although certain areas (such as the playground) emerge as particular ‘hot spots’. It is likely however that these will vary in individual schools based on their particular layout.

### **1.4 The characteristics of children involved in bullying**

The difficulty with describing the characteristics of children believed to be involved in bullying is that findings come from studies that have used different procedures to measure bullying, utilised different designs, interpreted findings differently and not necessarily used the same definition of bullying (Hazler, Carney, Green, Powell &

Jolly, 1997). In addition, much of the evidence is based on correlational data meaning that causality cannot be implied. Despite these problems, numerous characteristics have been associated with children involved in bullying as bullies, victims or bully-victims.

### 1.4.1 Bullies

When experts in the field of bullying were given a list of characteristics believed to describe bullies, they identified qualities such as aggressiveness, lack of empathy towards others, anger and problems at home (Hazler *et al.*, 1997). Children classified as bullies have been found to be low in pro-social behaviour (Baldry & Farrington, 1998), be less popular with their peers than non-involved children (Boulton & Smith, 1994); have lower self-reported scores on scholastic competence; social acceptance and behaviour conduct (Mynard & Joseph, 1997) and be physically stronger and more confident than their peers (Besag, 1989). Their personalities have been associated with psychoticism on the *Eysenck Personality Questionnaire* (EPQ; Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975) (Chuanhua & Wenxin, 2003; Connolly & O'Moore, 2003; Mynard & Joseph, 1997) and they have also been found to have higher scores on extraversion and neuroticism compared to children who do not bully others (Connolly & O'Moore, 2003). In contrast to the common stereotype of the *big bully*, no effect of height has been found (Borg, 1999). The socio-economic status of bullies has also not been found to be a significant indicator (Borg, 1999). Children who bully others have been associated with high levels of risk taking behaviour such as delinquency, alcohol consumption, smoking and cheating (Berthold & Hoover, 2000).

Numerous parental and family factors have been linked to children who bully others. For example, children exposed to interparental violence were more likely to be bullies at school (Baldry, 2003). Bullies also tended to have parents who disagreed (Baldry & Farrington, 1998; Lowenstein, 1978b); have parents who advocate an authoritarian approach to parenting (Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2004); were more likely

not to have a father at home (Bowers, Smith & Binney, 1994; Smith & Myron-Wilson, 1998); report a lack of cohesion in their families (Bowers *et al.*, 1994), have more siblings (Eslea & Smith, 2000) and negative relationships with their siblings (Bowers *et al.*, 1994; Connolly & O'Moore, 2003; Smith & Myron-Wilson, 1998). Eslea and Smith (2000) did not find evidence that parental attitudes predicted children's bullying behaviour, but children who were maltreated by their caregivers were more likely to bully other children than non-maltreated children (Shields & Cicchetti, 2001). Many of the studies investigating family functioning have relied on questionnaire-based measures but Stevens, De Bourdeaudhuij and Van Oost (2002) found that the perceptions of parents often differed from those of their children. The authors note that this could cast doubt on the validity of such measures and they recommend using alternative methods such as observation to study family interactions.

A recent angle of research has focused on the possibility that certain children may use bullying strategically for personal gain. For example, research by Sutton, Smith and Swettenham (1999) suggests that some children who bully others possess a higher level of cognitive skills and theory of mind that enable them to manipulate social situations and know how to hurt people effectively. Their behaviour could be interpreted as understandable because they bully for reasons such as winning friends or appearing powerful to others (Sutton, 2003). Supporting this, some bullies have been found to score higher on Machiavellian attitudes (beliefs that people can be manipulated in social interactions) compared to other children (Sutton & Keogh, 2000). Some children who bully are reported to have high social skills and some are reported to have low social skills, therefore indicating that bullies may not form a unified group (Kaukiainen, Salmivalli, Lagerspetz, Tamminen, Vauras, Maeki & Poskiparta, 2002).

### **1.4.2 Victims**

The idea of bullies not forming a unified group is consistent with the suggestion that victims can also be classified into several sub groups. Asher and Dodge (1986) make the distinction between pupils who are neglected by their peers and those who are rejected. Being rejected by the peer group has been associated with being victimized (Hodges and Perry, 1999). Cassidy and Asher (1992) found that rejected children experienced more feelings of loneliness and social dissatisfaction than neglected or popular children. Within the group of rejected children, Boivin, Hymel and Bukowski (1995) report evidence of a further division between children who are aggressive and behave inappropriately, and children who are submissive and withdrawn. Aggressive victims have been linked to hostile, restrictive and punitive parenting (Schwartz, Dodge, Petit & Bates, 1997). Aggressive rejected children can be included in the description of 'provocative victims' who provoke bullying by antagonising their peers (Besag, 1989; Boulton & Smith, 1994; Hodges, Malone & Perry, 1997; Sharp & Smith, 1994; Stephenson & Smith, 1989). In contrast, 'passive victims' are described as children who avoid confrontation and often find it difficult to make friends (Besag, 1989). Their behaviour signals that they are insecure and would be unlikely to retaliate should they be bullied (Olweus, 1995).

Teachers have indicated that it is easier to identify the types of children who are at risk of bullying than to identify typical *bullies* (Siann *et al.*, 1993). A number of physical characteristics have been linked to children who are likely to be bullied (Lowenstein, 1978a). For example, children with special educational needs have been identified as being particularly vulnerable to being bullied (O'Moore & Hillery, 1992; Sharp & Smith, 1994; Thompson, Whitney & Smith, 1994). Victims are also rated as being less popular with their peers than non-involved children (Boulton & Smith, 1994). They have been identified by experts in the field of bullying as having self-perceived weakness, an over-involved family and blaming themselves for their situation (Hazler *et al.*, 1997). There is focus in the literature on victims exhibiting behaviours that indicate they would be unable to defend themselves against attacks

(Hodges *et al.*, 1997). In support of this, Egan and Perry (1998) claim that victims of bullying have low self-regard and are likely to be unassertive during conflicts – possibly inviting victimization. They are likely to be unassertive and submissive (Schwartz, Dodge & Coie, 1993) and have been found to cry easily, withdraw themselves socially and be weaker physically than their non-bullied peers (Hodges & Perry, 1999). Victims are also reported to be cautious, sensitive and quiet (West & Salmon, 2000); introverted; attention-seeking and low on social skills (Lowenstein, 1978a). Problems with social behaviour including hyperactivity, low social skills and emotional problems are believed to put children at risk of being bullied (Johnson, Thompson, Wilkinson, Walsh, Balding & Wright, 2002). It has been suggested that the cycle of bullying will continue unless there is some form of intervention because people tend to seek out environments that support their self-perceptions (Andreou, 2001; Egan & Perry, 1998). In addition, victims who become timid and submissive as a result of their treatment may encourage children to continue bullying them – a downward spiral (Besag, 1989). Victims tend to be low in cooperativeness (Rigby, Cox & Black, 1997); report having fewer friends and being unpopular (Slee & Rigby, 1993a) with low self-reported scores on scholastic competence; social acceptance; behaviour conduct; athletic competence and physical appearance (Mynard & Joseph, 1997). They are more anxious and insecure than ‘non-involved’ pupils (Olweus, 1995; Berthold & Hoover, 2000) and their personalities have been associated with introversion on the *Eysenck Personality Questionnaire* (EPQ: Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975) (Mynard & Joseph, 1997; Slee & Rigby, 1993b). As with bullies, no effect of height or socio-economic status has been found (Borg, 1999). They are more likely to have authoritarian and high-supportive parents, with the suggestion that they are over-protected at home and therefore lack assertiveness (Baldry & Farrington, 1998; Smith & Myron-Wilson, 1998). Bowers *et al.* (1994) found that victims reported positive relationships with their family members - even more so than children not involved in bullying. The authors suggest this could indicate *over-involved* or *over-intense* family structures. However, a cautionary note should be added. Hepburn (1997) is critical of the idea that children involved in bullying have fixed personality traits because she argues

that this results in pupils being labelled. She views schools as social systems where children learn about accepted behaviour and differences between people. It is therefore seen as unsurprising that bullying occurs (Hepburn, 1997). Similarly, Perry, Williard and Perry (1990) argue that all the research identifying qualities in children who are bullied by their peers should not be interpreted as the victim being to blame for their situation. They emphasise that it is the children who bully others that should be the focus of intervention.

### **1.4.3 Bully-victims**

A difficulty with shifting the focus away from victims is that there has been increasing emphasis in the literature to focus not just on children who are only bullies or only victims, but also those who are both bullies and victims – known as bully-victims (Baldry & Farrington, 1998; Besag, 1989; Cartwright *et al.*, 1997; Glover *et al.*, 2000; Kumpulainen *et al.*, 1998; Mynard & Joseph, 1997; Stephenson & Smith, 1989). Bully-victims have been found to have authoritarian (Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2004), punitive and low-supportive parents (Baldry & Farrington, 1998); and they are more likely to not have a father at home (Bowers *et al.*, 1994). They have scored lower on self-report measures of social acceptance than victims or bullies (Mynard & Joseph, 1997). In addition, bully-victims report troubled relationships with their parents focusing on over-protectiveness or neglect (Bowers *et al.*, 1994; Smith & Myron-Wilson, 1998). They have also been related to hyperactivity and referrals for psychiatric consultation (Kumpulainen *et al.*, 1998). Interestingly, the evidence suggests that bully-victims ‘share’ characteristics associated with children who are bullies and those who are victims. This emphasises the duality of bully-victims’ experience.

### **1.4.4 Participant roles**

Because of the apparent overlap between bullies and victims and the evidence that they may not form distinct groups, Besag (1989) and O’Connell, Pepler and Craig



(1999) highlight the importance of viewing bullying in the context of social interactions between children, rather than treating it in isolation. The term 'participants roles' has been used to describe what children are doing when a bullying incident is taking place (Salmivalli, 1999). Craig and Pepler (1997) observed children in the playground and reported that peers were involved in some way in 85% of the bullying incidents, yet only 11% tried to intervene. This lack of intervention may lead bullies to think their behaviour is condoned, therefore reinforcing the behaviour (O'Connell *et al.*, 1999). Some peers have been found to join in with the bully and assist them (known as *assistants* - Salmivalli, 1999), or just observe what is happening (known as *reinforcers* – Salmivalli, 1999) – showing the bully that their behaviour is drawing attention (O'Connell *et al.*, 1999; Salmivalli, 1999). Children who do try and intervene to help the victim are referred to as *defenders* (Salmivalli, 1999) and non-involved children are referred to by Salmivalli (1999) as *outsiders* because they do not take sides, and tend to stay away but could still be encouraging the bullying by allowing it to continue. Children with different participant roles have been shown to display particular personality characteristics (Engert, 2002; Tani, Greenman, Schneider & Fregoso, 2003). As O'Connell *et al.* (1999) explain, bullying goes beyond the bully and the victim – it extends to other contexts including the peer group and school environment.

#### **1.4.5 Friendship**

The peer group in particular has emerged as important in the discussion of bullying because friendship and positive social interactions are believed to contribute significantly to the development of adolescents (Berndt, 1982; Bradford Brown, Eicher & Petrie, 1986; Crick & Grotpeter, 1996; Parker & Asher, 1987; Renshaw & Brown, 1993). For example, popular children have been shown to have a positive perception of themselves compared to others (Boivin & Bégin, 1989). Besag (1989); Parker and Asher (1987, 1993) and Renshaw and Brown (1993) claim that children who are isolated with no friendships are at a severe disadvantage both in their current situation and in later life. It is unclear whether the characteristics of children

who have problems with their peer group are a cause or effect of their social experience (Boivin *et al.*, 1995), but it seems clear that the quality of peer relationships is an important factor in an individual's personal and social development (Boivin *et al.*, 1995; Parker & Asher, 1987, 1993), and also in their self-identity (Gavin & Furman, 1989). It has been suggested that victims of bullying are less likely to have a supportive friendship group (Boulton, 1995; Sharp & Smith, 1994) and that having a supportive social network can protect victims from some of the effects of being bullied (Boulton & Smith, 1994; Rigby, 2000), or from being bullied at all – termed the *friendship protection hypothesis* (Boulton, Trueman, Chau, Whitehand & Amatya, 1999; Egan & Perry, 1998; Hodges *et al.*, 1997; Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1997; Smith, 1991). One explanation for this is that the skills required when forming meaningful lasting friendships are the same as those needed to avoid being bullied (Boulton *et al.*, 1999). The implication for the evidence surrounding friendship is that the negative effects associated with being a victim of bullying may be attributable to children not experiencing the positive benefits of friendship rather than being bullied itself. However, a more realistic interpretation may be that it is a combination of being bullied and also missing out on certain elements of friendships that create difficulties for bullied children.

#### **1.4.6 Feelings about bullying**

Primary school pupils have been found to associate acts of victimization towards another child with positive emotional consequences in the bully and negative emotional consequences in the victim (Arsenio & Kramer, 1992). There was found to be an age shift in this response, with older children (up to 8 years old) attributing more mixed emotions to the perpetrator, especially when the negative feelings of the victims were emphasized (Arsenio & Kramer, 1992). Children declaring themselves as victims of bullying reported experiencing feelings such as vengefulness, anger, self-pity, helplessness and even indifference after a bullying incident (Borg, 1998b). For bullies, primary school children expressed more regret than secondary school children, and a higher proportion of secondary school children reported feeling

satisfied or indifferent (Borg, 1998b). When 8-10 year old children classified as bullies were asked why they bullied others, most said it was because the victim had provoked them – suggesting they viewed their behaviour as justifiable (Boulton & Underwood, 1992). This finding has also been reported elsewhere (e.g. Hara, 2002; Menesini, Eslea, Smith, Genta, Giannetti, Fonzi & Cosatabile, 1997; Smith & Shu, 2000). Owens, Slee and Shute (2000) suggest that blaming the victim removes any guilty feelings experienced by the perpetrators. Victims also have been found to blame themselves for their treatment (La Fontaine, 1991) and only a quarter of bullies reported to feel guilty afterwards (Boulton & Underwood, 1992). Overall however, children have been shown to exhibit negative attitudes towards bullies and supportive attitudes towards victims (Boulton, Karellou, Lanitis, Manoussou & LEMONI, 2001; Boulton *et al.*, 2002; Eslea & Smith, 2000; Glover *et al.*, 2000; Menesini *et al.*, 1997; Rigby & Slee, 1991), but as they get older they seem less willing to help victims (Menesini *et al.*, 1997) and have less sympathy for them (Rigby & Slee, 1991; Rigby, 1997; Zhang, Gong, Wang, Wu & Zhang, 2002). Favourable attitudes towards bullying and disregard for victims peaked at 15/16 years of age (Rigby, 1997). Parents have been found to express sympathy towards victims and support anti-bullying work, although a minority were unsympathetic (Eslea & Smith, 2000). Evidence suggesting most people are against bullying is encouraging, although the existence of any supportive attitudes towards bullying is cause for concern and requires further investigation in order to examine the impact such beliefs could have on intervention strategies.

## **1.5 Effects of bullying**

### **1.5.1 Victims**

Researching the children involved in bullying has led to the discovery that being a bully or victim of bullying is associated with a multitude of problems for the individual. In the short term, victims have been found to have lower self-esteem than their unaffected peers (Baldry & Farrington, 1998; Boulton & Smith, 1994;

Callaghan & Joseph, 1995; Egan & Perry, 1998; Mynard & Joseph, 1997; Mynard *et al.*, 2000; O'Moore & Hillery, 1992; Rigby & Slee, 1992; Slee & Rigby, 1993b; Stanley & Arora, 1998); health symptoms (Dawkins, 1995; DfES, 2000, 2002; Rigby, 1998; Storch, Brassard & Masia-Warner, 2003; West & Salmon, 2000; Williams, Chambers, Logan & Robinson, 1996); psychosomatic symptoms (Natvig, Albrektsen & Qvarnstrom, 2001); mental health problems (Rigby, 2000); anxiety (Craig, 1998; O'Moore & Hillery, 1992; Salmon *et al.*, 1998); depression (Austin & Joseph, 1996; Callaghan & Joseph, 1995; Craig, 1998; Kaltiala-Heino, Rimpelä, Marttunen, Rimpelä & Rantanen, 1999; Roland, 2002; Slee, 1995b; West & Salmon, 2000); emotional problems (Bond, Carlin, Thomas, Rubin & Patton, 2001); suicidal thoughts (Roland, 2002); absenteeism from school (Kumpulainen *et al.*, 1998; Reid, 1989; Sharp & Smith, 1994) and high levels of stress (Rigby, 1999) including posttraumatic stress (Storch & Esposito 2003) – especially after experiencing more indirect forms of bullying (Mynard *et al.*, 2000). High levels of stress have been shown to lead to poor health in the long-term (Rigby, 1999) and victims have been found to show long-term effects such as health problems (Rigby, 1999); mental health problems in girls but not boys (Rigby, 1999); low self-esteem into adulthood (Olweus, 1992; Matsui, Kakuyama, Tsuzuki & Onglatco, 1996; Van der Meulen, Soriano, Granizo, del Barrio & Korn, 2003); inferiority complexes in interpersonal situations (Araki, 2002); problem drinking behaviour (Kaukinen, 2002) and depressive symptoms (Olweus, 1992, 1993; Matsui *et al.*, 1996). The long-term effects of bullying are complex and evidence suggests individuals respond in different ways (Hanish & Guerra, 2002). Victims of school bullying have been found to be at higher risk of experiencing bullying in the workplace when they reach adulthood (Smith, Singer, Hoel & Cooper, 2003). Children who are victims of bullying have also reported to feel unhappy at school (Slee, 1995b) and lonely (Boulton & Underwood, 1992; Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996; Storch *et al.*, 2003; West & Salmon, 2000). Frequent female victims have been associated with severe suicidal intent (Kaltiala-Heino *et al.*, 1999); lower scores on self-perceived global self-worth; scholastic competence; physical attractiveness and popularity. A meta-analysis of studies carried out between 1978 and 1997 investigating the effects of

bullying on victims revealed that depression and anxiety are the effects most strongly related to being bullied (Hawker & Boulton, 2003).

With much of the research investigating the effects of bullying relying on correlational data, there have been arguments about whether the reported effects in victims are a cause or effect of being bullied (e.g. Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996; Rigby, 1998). For example, it has been suggested that children with low self-esteem may attract bullying (Boulton & Smith, 1994; Egan & Perry, 1998; Rigby & Slee, 1992; Stanley & Arora, 1998) rather than the bullying itself causing low self-esteem. Matsui *et al.* (1996) argues that a 'vicious cycle' occurs whereby children who have low self-esteem are vulnerable to bullying, and the experience of being bullied perpetuates the child's low self-esteem. In fact, Branwhite (1994) emphasises the fact that other stressful events occur in adolescence and an interaction effect may occur when a further stressor, such as bullying, is added in to the equation. It is this interaction effect, he argues, that may lead to the effects that have been observed in victims of bullying. Further to this, the effects that bullying has on victims is believed to be largely dependent on how victims attribute their treatment (Chawla, 2003; Graham & Juvonen, 1998). Victims who blamed an uncontrollable aspect of their character (i.e. the way they are) for the bullying appeared to be more maladjusted compared to victims who blamed their situation on more controllable situational factors (i.e. the way they behave) (Graham & Juvonen, 1998). In fact, Chawla (2003) suggests that girls who blamed situational factors for their experience of relational (or indirect) victimization were 'protected' from the negative psychological effects experienced by children who attributed their treatment to aspects of their character. Overall, the consequences of being bullied are complex and effects seem to be mediated by the gender of the victim, their age, severity of the incidents and how they respond and cope with the bullying (Hanish & Guerra, 2002).

### **1.5.2 Bullies**

There have also been short and long-term effects associated with children who bully others. Bullies have demonstrated health concerns (Forero, McLellan, Rissel & Bauman, 1999; Rigby, 1998); low self-worth (Mynard & Joseph, 1997; O'Moore & Hillery, 1992; O'Moore & Kirkham, 2001); depression (Kaltiala-Heino *et al.*, 1999; Roland, 2002; Salmon *et al.*, 1999; Slee, 1995b); suicidal intent (Kaltiala-Heino *et al.*, 1999; Roland, 2002), and are shown to be more likely than others to engage in acts of delinquency (Rigby & Cox, 1996) including street violence and weapon carrying (Andershed, Kerr & Stattin, 2001) and criminal activities in adulthood (Farrington, 1993; Sharp & Smith, 1994). They also report to dislike school (Forero *et al.*, 1999; Slee, 1995b). The fact that bullying others is associated with negative effects for the individuals emphasises the importance of targeting their behaviour rather than focusing purely on the victims.

### **1.5.3 Bully-victims**

Bully-victims have been associated with the most severe psychological and psychosomatic symptoms (Forero *et al.*, 1999; Kaltiala-Heino, Rimpelä, Rantanen & Rimpelä, 2000; Kumpulainen *et al.*, 1998; O'Moore & Hillery, 1992), the lowest levels of self-esteem (O'Moore & Kirkham, 2001) and they report disliking school and feeling alone (Forero *et al.*, 1999). They have also demonstrated high levels of absenteeism from school (Kumpulainen *et al.*, 1998). It is likely that bully-victims are associated with such negative effects because of their shared experience of being both a bully and a victim.

## **1.6 Attempts to deal with bullying**

The research findings about the immediate and long-term effects of bullying on both the victims and the bullies has heightened the importance of finding ways to prevent bullying from happening in the first place and deal with it successfully when it

occurs. Olweus (1995) argues that it is a democratic right for children to feel safe at school and not to have to experience bullying, and not taking relevant action to address such issues could lead to liability claims against schools (Parry, 1994). Since November 1999, all schools are required by law to have anti-bullying policies in place (DfES, 2000, 2002; Smith & Shu, 2000; Smith & Samara, 2003), and the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) inspections include examining how schools are addressing bullying (Eslea & Smith, 1998; 'Schools face anti-bullying' link, 2003; Smith & Shu, 2000). Because of the variety of ways that bullying can manifest itself, it is important for schools to have a range of strategies in place that are both preventive of bullying occurring and reactive if it does occur (Mellor, 1999; O'Moore, 1995). Eslea (1998) comments that there is a need to embed bullying initiatives within the curriculum so they become part of school life. A variety of approaches have been developed to tackle bullying, each with varying levels of success.

### **1.6.1 Establishing policies**

Establishing a documented school policy against bullying is widely acknowledged as being important in addressing the problem (Besag, 1989; Cartwright *et al.*, 1997; DfES, 1994, 2000, 2002; Elliot, 1992; Sharp & Thompson, 1994b) providing that it is re-appraised and revised frequently (DfES, 1994, 2000, 2002; Glover, Cartwright, Gough & Johnson, 1998; Sharp & Thompson, 1994a). Having an anti-bullying policy was found to be the most common action schools had taken to address bullying (Smith & Madsen, 1997; Smith & Samara, 2003). The policy is "a statement of intent that guides action and organisation within the school" (Sharp & Thompson, 1994a, p.23). The written policy should include a definition of bullying, aims and objectives, procedures to follow when an incident occurs and a description of the interventions in place (DfES, 1994, 2000, 2002). Arora (1994) reports that it is important for schools to focus on being a community and not see bullying in isolation. By establishing a supportive framework through policies on cooperation, good behaviour and non-aggressive conflict resolution, Arora (1994) argues that

bullying becomes an obvious element to focus on through encouraging collective responsibility. Establishing a school ethos is an example of this (Besag, 1989; Naylor & Cowie, 1999; Stephenson & Smith, 1989) and this cultural shift is regarded as more important in implementing change than the policy itself (Glover *et al.*, 1998). Addressing these wider issues is important because an anti-bullying initiative in isolation is unlikely to be effective (Jenner & Greetham, 1995; Sharp & Thompson, 1994a). In fact, primary schools that had detailed, comprehensive anti-bullying policies were found to have higher rates of reported relational (indirect) bullying, whereas no relationship was found between detailed policies and rates of direct bullying (Woods & Wolke, 2003). This indicates the importance of using additional methods to target particular types of bullying behaviour.

### **1.6.2 The curriculum**

According to Cowie and Sharp (1994) and the DfES (1994, 2000, 2002), using the school curriculum to address bullying is important for making sure pupils are aware of the policies in place and also to keep bullying in the forefront as an important issue. They suggest using drama and role-play to address issues such as why people bully and what affect it can have. They also introduce the idea of incorporating quality circles into the curriculum. Cowie and Sharp (1992) outline how quality circles (also known as 'circle time', DfES, 2000, 2002) can be used to address the problem of bullying in school. In this approach, a group of between five and twelve children meet together at regular intervals with a trained facilitator (usually a teacher) to discuss common problems, identify potential solutions and present them to relevant parties (Cowie & Sharp, 1994; DfES, 1994, 2000, 2002). By the pupils themselves analysing problems associated with bullying, Cowie and Sharp (1994) argue that it fosters a feeling of collective responsibility that can help address the issue through peer pressure. Teachers have reported positive experiences of using quality circles with pupils to address bullying (DfES, 1994). Intervention approaches using class-based activities such as role-play, discussions and video have been found to lead to reductions in reported experience of being bullied, but not in bullying



others (Gini, 2004). It is difficult to conclude how effective curriculum-based approaches are because they are rarely used in isolation and often form part of a whole-school intervention strategy. Overall however, Gini (2004) suggests that curricular approaches seem to have more success with changing attitudes towards bullying rather than reducing incidence rates.

### **1.6.3 Supervision**

Improved supervision is believed to be crucial to an effective preventative bullying intervention (Besag, 1989; DfES, 1994; Foster, Arora & Thompson, 1990; Maines & Robinson, 1991). This supervision needs to be active rather than passive, as ignoring incidents can be interpreted as staff condoning the bullying behaviour (Besag, 1989). Sharp and Thompson (1994) claim that staff should listen to pupils, be alert to incidents and follow them up quickly. There are problems associated with this type of intervention, such as having enough staff for effective supervision. Thompson and Smith (1991) suggest that pupils could become involved through a prefect system, to ease the load on staff. Staff (including teaching and non-teaching staff) may also require training in effective behaviour management and supervision techniques (DfES, 1994, 2000, 2002). Schools have reported some difficulties in creating consistency in approach between teachers and lunchtime supervisors, and also delays in implementing training schemes (DfES, 2000, 2002). Such experiences may be off-putting for schools considering using this approach. In addition, focusing on supervision alone does not target the problem from its source. Staff could resort to assuming a policing role, which could alienate them from pupils further. It therefore seems important for improved supervision to form part of a wider school approach to bullying. Supporting this claim, literature searches failed to identify success data for this approach used in isolation.

#### **1.6.4 Improving the playground**

Making the playground a more effective and aesthetically pleasing environment has been recommended for addressing bullying (DfES, 1994, 2000, 2002; Stephenson & Smith, 1992) and many schools have made attempts to improve their school grounds through including more play equipment, having designated spaces for different activities and organising games (Smith & Madsen, 1997). Stephenson and Smith (1992) argue that playgrounds should be designed so that they encourage a variety of types of play. Reductions in the number and seriousness of bullying incidents reported were found in an Australian school that introduced a playground improvement scheme indicating the potential of this intervention approach (Soutter & McKenzie, 2000). However, with evidence from only one school, the generalisability of the results are questionable. In a similar way to other strategies, playground schemes tend to form part of a larger intervention programme making it difficult to state efficacy for individual approaches.

#### **1.6.5 Involving the school community**

Having one day set aside, such as an INSET day, is recommended for having focused, allocated time to address the issue of bullying (Besag & Packer, 1992; Maines & Robinson, 1991). It is regarded as important for all members of the school community to be involved, including governors, parents and supervisors (DfES, 1994, 2000, 2002; Elliot, 1992; McNamara, 1995; Sharp & Thompson, 1996). In addition, all members of the school community should be regularly consulted and updated about work going on in the school (DfES, 1994, 2000, 2002). Because involving the school community tends to form part of a wider intervention programme, it is not possible to isolate efficacy statistics pertaining purely to this approach. However, schools incorporating meetings with parents and discussions of written policy documents alongside other interventions have found decreased numbers of children experiencing bullying (DfES, 2000, 2002).

### **1.6.6 Work with bullies and victims**

According to Cartwright *et al.* (1997), because children who bully have been found to have qualities such as low self-esteem, it is more effective for teachers to raise awareness and educate them about their behaviour rather than taking punitive action. Maines and Robinson (1992) developed the *no blame* approach (similar to the 'support group approach' – DfES, 2000, 2002) to tackling bullying in schools. This involves teachers talking with the children involved, following a script, to identify how the problem is affecting the victim and agreeing what each person can do to help resolve the situation (Tyler, 1998). There are similarities with this approach to that of the *method of shared concern* (Pikas, 1989), except for the fact that the concern approach involves skilled manipulation on behalf of the teacher to encourage the 'bully' to see things in a particular way (Tyler, 1998). The DfES (2000, 2002) pack claims short-term success using these mediation methods, but it is argued that it cannot tackle all bullying and in the long-term other approaches need to be used in conjunction. Furthermore, evidence that some bullies may be skilled manipulators who are aware of the effects of their behaviour, suggests that awareness-raising strategies like this would not be effective (Sutton, 2001). Using a slightly different approach, Mahdavi and Smith (2003) outline how *bully courts* have been used to tackle bullying. Using student representatives and staff members, children accused of bullying through pupil reports (usually anonymous) are brought to the council to explain their behaviour with subsequent action being taken where appropriate. Strong support has been found for the approach, and Mahdavi and Smith (2003) claim that bully courts can contribute to reducing bullying. Direct evidence for effectiveness of the approach is not evident in the literature.

### **1.6.7 Peer support and involvement**

Sharp, Sellars and Cowie (1994) explain that school-based bullying interventions often focus on getting victims to talk about their experiences. If successful, the increase in reports of incidents can be a burden for staff but a solution has been to

actively involve pupils in interventions as helpers (Sharp, Sellars & Cowie, 1994). Informally, this could be through fostering a sense of responsibility for pupils to discourage bullying, intervene in incidents, challenge behaviour of bullies and include victims in social groups (DfES, 1994, 2000, 2002; Sharp & Thompson, 1994a). Formalised peer support systems include a range of strategies involving a selection of pupils in a school being trained in techniques such as counselling; conflict resolution/mediation; advice-giving; mentoring and befriending (DfES, 2000, 2002; Menesini, Codecasa, Benelli & Cowie, 2003; Naylor & Cowie, 1999). Benefits of these interventions have been reported including reductions in some of the negative effects of being bullied (Naylor & Cowie, 1999), personal benefits such as increased confidence for the pupils being trained (Price & Jones, 2001) and the opportunity for victims to have positive experiences with peers (Salmivalli, 1999). Peterson and Rigby (1999) described a similar intervention where students were involved as helpers through setting up a committee, training pupils who could talk to bullied pupils and poster/drama groups. In the short term, such interventions have not shown a decline in levels of reported bullying (e.g. Cowie & Olafsson, 2000), but it is unclear whether this could be due to such support systems taking a while to have an impact, or because the increased awareness results in more bullying being reported (Naylor & Cowie, 1999; Peterson & Rigby, 1999). Along similar lines, peers are believed to be crucial in dealing with bullying problems, because of the influence they can have on bullying episodes through their *participant roles* (Salmivalli, 1999). The behaviour of children on the fringe of the situation (such as the *reinforcers; defenders; assistants* or *outsiders* described earlier) might be easier to target through awareness-raising than the bullies and victims themselves, and these changes could subsequently affect the behaviour of bullies and victims (Salmivalli, 1999). In particular, Sutton and Smith (1999) suggest that the *defenders* could be utilised in anti-bullying interventions. Their assertive action against bullying could be encouraged, hopefully targeting the *assistants* and *reinforcers* (Sutton & Smith, 1999). Overall, the suggestion is that interventions need to make it *uncool* to be a bully (Sutton, 2001). Through a *support group* approach (DfES, 2000, 2002), where pupils involved in an incident come together with a facilitator to

discuss the situation and agree a shared responsibility to resolving it, bystanders are targeted along with bullies and victims. The DfES (2000, 2002) pack describes efficacy statistics of only 6% of victims experiencing continuing bullying using this approach.

### **1.6.8 Assertiveness training and self-esteem work**

According to Foster *et al.* (1990) and O'Moore and Hillery (1992), the evidence that victims of bullying tend to have low self-esteem is unsurprising and this sense of inadequacy can lead to ineffective responses to bullying. They outline how a school used a system of academic and non-academic rewards and incentives. The aim of this was to increase pupils' self-esteem. A problem with approaches like this is that research suggests that academic achievement can bring unpopularity to some children and rewards from teachers could have a negative impact (Sutton & Keogh, 2000). Assertiveness training can also be implemented to teach children how to deal effectively with bullying if it occurs (DfES, 1994, 2000, 2002; Stanley & Arora, 1998). Work like this is time consuming and expensive to run (DfES, 1994, 2000, 2002) but, according to O'Moore and Hillery (1992), work that improves the ethos of the school and builds pupil confidence will produce positive pupil behaviour. Direct evidence for the success of self-esteem and assertiveness approaches is lacking in the literature because they tend to form part of larger intervention schemes. Therefore, as with many of the approaches outlined, it is not possible to report the effectiveness of one isolated strategy.

### **1.6.9 Success of interventions**

Olweus (1993) reported findings from his intervention programme conducted in Norway in 1983 that resulted in 50% reduction in reported bullying. He argued that a successful intervention should involve:

a) At school level: Improved supervision at break and lunch times; questionnaire survey; conference or INSET day on the issue

- b) At classroom level: Class rules against bullying and meetings to discuss the issue
- c) At individual level: serious talks with pupils involved and their parents

Following on from the success of Olweus' project in Norway, The Sheffield project (Whitney & Smith, 1993) encouraged participating schools to develop whole-school policies about bullying focusing on preventing and responding to bullying (Eslea & Smith, 1998). In addition, further work took place such as watching films about bullying; role play activities; drama from local theatre groups; quality circles (Cowie & Sharp, 1992); improving supervision at break and lunchtimes; improvements to the playground environment; assertiveness training for pupils; teacher and lunchtime supervisor training and peer counselling (Cowie & Sharp, 1994). An evaluation of the interventions revealed that schools that had done the most work had the most success with reducing the amount of reported bullying (Smith & Sharp, 1994). The authors noted that it seemed important for all staff to be involved in policy development and for one senior staff member to co-ordinate the activities. A longer-term evaluation of the interventions (Eslea & Smith, 1998) highlighted the importance of continued efforts to address bullying in the long term to keep the issue in the forefront. Also, there was a need for more focus on female bullying because the interventions had more success at reducing boy's reported experiences of bullying. Finally, none of the schools studied in the follow-up evaluation had improved the number of pupils reporting bullying incidents to staff, and the authors recommended that staff should be more vigilant (Eslea & Smith, 1998).

Implementing an intervention scheme can take up to two years (Eslea, 1998) and Arora (1994) suggests that substantial reductions in levels of bullying can take two years to occur after an intervention has taken place. Secondary schools are believed to be more resistant to change because they are larger and less flexible than primary schools (Arora, 1994). Organisational factors have also been considered such as the complex timetabling and varied role of teachers in secondary schools (Stevens, De Bourdeaudhuij & Van Oost, 2000). In support of this, intervention studies have reported more success in reducing bullying in primary schools compared to

secondary schools (e.g. Smith & Sharp, 1994; Smith & Ananiadou, 2003; Stevens *et al.*, 2000; Whitney, Rivers, Smith & Sharp, 1994). However, despite problems, the attention being paid to anti-bullying initiatives is a positive development. The 'Drop in claims' link (2004) reports that the number of cases of legal action taken against schools because of bullying have reduced, indicating that schools are moving in the right direction.

## **1.7 Staff perceptions**

It seems that the role of staff in the success of intervention programmes is crucial. Many bullying interventions rely on work being carried out by staff in the school and teachers have a central role in implementing policies (Birkinshaw & Eslea, 1998; Menesini, Fonzi & Smith, 2002; Nicolaides, Toda & Smith, 2002). This relies on the assumption that they are in touch with the situation in the school. As Nicolaides *et al.* (2002) argue, for anti-bullying work to be effective, teachers need to be knowledgeable and confident about bullying. However, when teachers have been shown results of pupil surveys, they have reported being shocked by the extent of reported bullying (Peterson & Rigby, 1999). Many researchers claim that teachers are largely unaware of the bullying in their school (Borg, 1998a; Cullingford, 1993; Foster *et al.*, 1990; O'Moore & Hillery, 1992; Pervin & Turner, 1994; Smith, 1999; Smith & Thompson, 1991) and underestimate the extent to which it occurs (O'Moore & Hillery, 1992; O'Moore, 2000; Pervin & Turner, 1994; Pervin, 1995; Rigby & Slee, 1991; Smith, 1999; Thompson *et al.*, 1994). There have been gender differences found, with female teachers being more aware of bullying than their male colleagues (Jaeger, 2003). It is possible that claiming to be unaware of bullying reduces the feeling of responsibility to intervene. In an environment where staff are extremely busy, dealing with bullying effectively is not only difficult, but very time consuming - raising the possibility that 'turning a blind eye' to a certain extent may be a useful strategy adopted by staff as a coping mechanism. In fact, Soutter & McKenzie (2000) claim that many schools are reluctant to implement intervention schemes to address bullying because they are afraid of "opening a can of worms"

(2000, p.104). The authors suggest it can be easier for teachers to ignore it. However, it may be that staff genuinely do not have an accurate awareness of the bullying that occurs in their school, despite being keen to address it. There are several reasons why this might be the case.

### 1.7.1 Identifying incidents

An explanation for why some teachers seem to remain *in the dark* about bullying in their school could be due to the difficulty of identifying incidents when they occur. Pupils often report that bullying occurs in places in the school where adults are not present (Arora, 1989; Borg, 1999; Boulton, 1997; La Fontaine, 1991; Moran *et al.*, 1993; Siann *et al.*, 1994; Woolfson, 1989), or is deliberately hidden from them (Sharp & Smith, 1994; Smith & Sharp, 1994). Besag (1992) claims that it can be hard to identify behaviour intended to cause harm when it occurs in a large busy playground. Boulton (1997) raises the point that teachers may not view playground activity – specifically bullying - as being their responsibility and this could have impact on the success of any intervention programmes. Due to pupil reports that much bullying occurs in the playground (Mellor, 1999; Moran *et al.*, 1993; Slee, 1995a; Smith, 1991; Tattum, 1989), where teachers may not be present (Leff, Power, Costigan & Manz, 2003; Moran *et al.*, 1993; Tattum, 1989; Smith, 1991), some studies have focused on the importance of including lunchtime staff in bullying research (Boulton, 1996; Leff *et al.*, 2003; Sharp & Smith, 1996; Whitney *et al.*, 1994). Disputes that occur in the playground are often brought into school when the break is over – highlighting the importance of lunchtime supervisors' role in prevention (Besag, 1992). It is possible that they may witness more bullying incidents than teachers due to their presence at break and lunch times, when teachers are typically off duty. If there are not sufficient channels of communication in place between lunchtime and teaching staff, there could be a large amount of information about bullying that teachers do not have access to. This may make lunchtime supervisors a more reliable source of information about bullying in the school than teachers.



However, for both teachers and lunchtime staff, certain forms of bullying would be particularly difficult to detect (Boulton, 1992; Cullingford, 1993; Graham & Juvonen, 1998; Kikkawa, 1987; Leff, Kupersmidt, Patterson & Power, 1999; O'Moore & Hillery, 1992; Rivers & Smith, 1994) even if they were actively looking for it. Crozier and Dimmock (1999) claim that name-calling can be difficult to interpret because of subtle ambiguities in intent of the perpetrator and response in the recipient. Indirect or 'invisible' forms of bullying such as social exclusion or rumour spreading are notoriously difficult to identify (Hudley, 1993; Keise, 1992; Kikkawa, 1987; Sharp & Smith, 1994). These indirect behaviours often occur within friendship groups (Besag, 1992; Crick & Nelson, 2002; Cullingford, 1993; Keise, 1992; La Fontaine, 1991; Stanley & Arora, 1998) hence staff may be even less likely to notice it, and may see it as part of the normal disruption in a hectic day at school (Besag, 1989). Boulton (1992, 1995) suggests that lunchtime supervisors are likely to spend more time dealing with obvious misbehaviour and will often overlook children who are isolated. Children are also reluctant to report indirect bullying in particular (Rivers & Smith, 1994). Therefore, teachers may underestimate the frequency of indirect bullying in the school (Austin & Joseph, 1996; Smith & Sharp, 1994). In addition, indirect bullying is often not perceived as bullying by teachers (Birkinshaw & Eslea, 1998; Boulton, 1997; Keise, 1992; Sutton *et al.*, 1999) or pupils (Boulton, 1997; Keise, 1992; Smith & Levan, 1995; Smith, Madsen & Moody, 1999; Stanley & Arora, 1998). Therefore, even if teachers witness it, they may not intervene because it is not perceived as being bullying (Boulton, 1997; Birkinshaw & Eslea, 1998; Menesini *et al.*, 2002), or they may be less concerned about it than obvious physical acts (Menesini *et al.*, 2002). Similarly pupils may not report it to teachers if they themselves do not think it is bullying. It is also often perceived as being less serious than other forms of bullying despite children reporting it to be the most distressing behaviour to experience (Birkinshaw & Eslea, 1998). This difference in opinion between teachers and pupils mirrors comments by Lang (1985, as cited in Sharp & Thompson, 1992) who claims a contrast between how teachers and pupils perceive reality, with teachers underestimating how seriously pupils can feel about particular issues.

Children will often dismiss incidents as being a 'game', and it can be hard to distinguish between episodes with hurtful intent and those that are part of normal play (Besag, 1992; Boulton, 1993a, 1993b, 1996; Kikkawa, 1997). Schåfer and Smith (1996) explain that playful fighting is common between children and occurs between friends, who both enjoy the game. When primary school children watched videotapes of playground fighting behaviour and were asked to identify whether the episodes were 'real' or 'play' fighting, factors affecting decisions were the actual physical actions, inferences about the intent of those involved, facial expressions and the outcome of the incident (Boulton, 1993b). Although there was high agreement between children about the incidents, there were ambiguities and therefore it is possible that incidents in the playground could be misconstrued. When teachers and lunchtime supervisors were shown videotapes of playground fighting, similar results were found (Boulton, 1993a, 1996). There was a generally high level of agreement, but some errors were noted. In a similar study, Schåfer and Smith (1996) found that teachers overestimated the amount of real fighting taking place, compared to play fighting. Teachers are believed to find it difficult to distinguish between bullying incidents and those that are part of normal peer conflict (Garner, 2003). Supporting this, Lowenstein (1978b) found that teachers were unreliable at identifying bullies and victims because they often confused bullying with general aggression and disruption. When teachers and counsellors were asked to identify from a list of scenarios, which were bullying and which were not, the presence of some form of physical action increased the likelihood of an incident being labelled as bullying (Hazler *et al.*, 2001). They were less likely to interpret situations as bullying if there was a verbal or social/emotional element (Hazler *et al.*, 2001). Boulton (1993a) claims anecdotally to have witnessed adults intervening in incidents that appeared playful, but ignoring incidents that seemed aggressive. He argues that adults should be encouraged to make decisions about whether or not to intervene based on more concrete observable criteria rather than making quick subjective judgments.

### 1.7.2 Reliability of pupil reports

Another explanation for teachers being unaware of bullying could be because of the importance of pupils reporting incidents to them. Pupils report that they rarely tell anyone if they are being bullied (Eslea & Smith, 1998; Kumpulainen *et al.*, 1999; Lines, 1999; Sharp & Smith, 1994; Smith & Shu, 2000) and, if they do tell, teachers are the least likely people for pupils to confide in (Arora, 1989; Cartwright *et al.*, 1997; Cullingford, 1993; Houndoumadi & Peteraki, 2001; Pervin & Turner, 1994; Sharp & Smith, 1996; Smith, 1997). Pupils claim to tell lunchtime staff about bullying episodes more often than they tell teachers (Thompson *et al.*, 1994) – possibly making lunchtime staff more knowledgeable about bullying in the school than teachers. Hunter and Boyle (2004) found that the longer bullying persists, the less likely pupils are to seek support. Reasons why pupils are reluctant to tell have focused on concerns about the bullying getting worse (Boulton & Underwood, 1992; Jones, 1994), feeling teachers can do little to help or worries about not being taken seriously (Arora, 1989; La Fontaine, 1991; Oliver & Candappa, 2003). Contrary to this view, Menesini *et al.* (1997) found that children in Italy and England had confidence that their teachers would try to stop bullying. There are other reasons however why teachers appear to be rarely informed about bullying incidents. Children are often ashamed to be experiencing bullying and do not want to admit to being *rejected* by their peers (Besag, 1989; O'Moore, 1989). The confused emotions experienced by children who are isolated by their peers may be difficult to verbalise (Besag, 1989) meaning teachers are not told. Borg (1998b) argues that most victims of bullying do not feel “comfortable or safe talking about their experience with school staff” (Borg, 1998b, p.442). In a study that compared pupil and teacher views of the sources of pupil stress, teachers were found to be unaware of stressors experienced by pupils (Sharp & Thompson, 1992). The authors suggest that stressors such as *falling out with friends* are regarded by pupils as being part of their own personal world and separate to school – creating barriers for communicating such problems with staff (Sharp & Thompson, 1992). It has also been suggested that the culture against *snitching*, *grassing* or *telling tales* reduces the amount of reported

bullying (Besag, 1989; Cartwright *et al.*, 1997; Glover *et al.*, 2000; La Fontaine, 1991; Oliver & Candappa, 2003; O'Moore & Hillery, 1992). Pupils have been reported to witness other children being bullied but not say anything to teachers (Besag, 1989; Foster *et al.*, 1990). Arora (1989) claims that her research in a secondary school revealed that in one week, only 20 per cent of bullying incidents were reported to teachers. Therefore, teachers are likely to have a distorted impression about bullying in the school. If they do not witness it personally, they are unlikely to find out about it and, as Arora (1989) notes, adults only tend to find out about bullying through hearsay and they rarely witness it personally (Besag, 1989). Different teachers may be told about separate incidents so they may only find out about snippets of a bullying situation (Besag, 1989). In contrast to this, children have reported that when they tell a teacher, the information is passed on to other teachers – making the situations like *Chinese Whispers* (Oliver & Candappa, 2003, p.8) and this can create barriers for communication.

### 1.7.3 Staff intervention

Even if pupils do report a bullying incident, or staff witness it, they have to make the decision to intervene (Priest, 1989). Rigby and Bagshaw (2003) found that 14 year-olds, compared to 10 year-olds, had increasingly negative attitudes towards teachers' general interest to intervene in problems and their ability to resolve conflicts when they do intervene. This apparent lack of confidence that pupils hold about teachers could affect the efficiency of intervention strategies, which often involve pupils and staff working closely together. According to an interpretation of evidence by Craig, Henderson and Murphy (2000), teachers are inconsistent and infrequent in their intervention and are more likely to intervene if they witness an incident than if a pupil reports an incident to them. The evidence outlined indicates that pupils tend not to report incidents and teachers are unlikely to witness them. Therefore, according to Craig *et al.* (2000), intervention by teachers would be unlikely. Furthermore, teachers have reported to be concerned that intervening in bullying could make the problem worse, or stop future disclosures of incidents (Besag, 1989).

Their decision to intervene is also likely to be affected by the teacher's perception of the seriousness of the behaviour (e.g. Borg, 1998a; Borg & Falzon, 1989, 1990, 1993; Craig *et al.*, 2000) and also whether they regard it as bullying (Boulton, 1997; Glover *et al.*, 2000). Teachers seem to have different perceptions of pupil behaviour depending on the gender of the child (e.g. Borg, 1998a; Borg & Falzon, 1989, 1990) and the gender of the teacher being questioned (e.g. Borg, 1998a; Borg & Falzon, 1989; 1993). For example, Borg and Falzon (1989) asked Maltese primary school teachers to rate the seriousness of a variety of undesirable pupil behaviours. They found that 'stealing' and 'cruelty/bullying' were rated as the most serious behaviours for both boys and girls. In a similar study, 'under-achieving' was rated as most problematic in first year secondary school pupils, and 'impertinence, insubordination and defiance' was rated as most problematic in fifth year pupils (Kyriacou & Roe, 1988). Overall, seriousness ratings for undesirable behaviours were higher for fifth year pupils than first year pupils – indicating an age effect (Kyriacou & Roe, 1988). When teachers were asked to rank a list of undesirable behaviours in order of severity, there was a high correlation between their ranks and those of the pupils, suggesting pupils and teachers were in agreement about the severity of behaviours (Ziv, 1970). Teacher ratings of seriousness for several behaviours have been found to be affected by the gender of the pupil involved and also by the gender of the teacher making the rating (Borg, 1998a; Borg & Falzon, 1989; 1993; Kyriacou & Roe, 1988). This finding was still evident when behaviours were abstracted into a factorial model (Borg & Falzon, 1993). Condry and Ross (1985) explain that research has shown that adults respond differently to children based on the gender of the child, and those different actions and perceptions follow gender stereotypes. In particular, girls and boys are judged differently in terms of aggression (Condry & Ross, 1985; Merrett & Wheldall, 1984). Langfeldt (1992) did not find gender differences in teacher ratings but did reveal cultural differences in teachers' perceptions of undesirable behaviours. It has also been found that the age group of pupils the teachers taught moderated their perceptions of seriousness for undesirable behaviours, with teachers of older primary school children rating the undesirable behaviours as more serious than teachers of younger pupils (Borg & Falzon, 1990).

Also, teachers with less experience tended to rate the behaviours as being more serious than teachers with more experience (Borg, 1998a; Borg & Falzon, 1990). There are several possible reasons for this. Borg (1998a) suggests that teachers become increasingly tolerant of pupil misbehaviour. Also, new teachers may be highly motivated and enthusiastic to address undesirable behaviours such as bullying. In support of this, Nicolaides *et al.* (2002) found that trainee teachers were reasonably knowledgeable about bullying and did not underestimate how much it occurred. This conflicts with research previously outlined indicating that qualified teachers claimed to be unaware of a large amount of the bullying that occurs. It is possible that the reality of dealing with it on a long-term basis, the time it takes and possibly the lack of visible success achieved may lead more experienced teachers to dismiss behaviours as being less serious. Alternatively, experienced teachers, who are likely to have witnessed a repertoire of pupil behaviours, may be reflecting on incidents that appeared trivial or less serious when put in context to other incidents they may have witnessed. New teachers won't have these experiences to reflect on – possibly explaining the difference in ratings of seriousness.

When secondary school teachers were asked to rate the seriousness of pupils' undesirable behaviours, 'drug abuse', 'cruelty/bullying' and 'destroying' were regarded as the most serious (Borg, 1998a). The gender of the pupils involved in the behaviours and the gender of the teachers were significant moderators in seriousness ratings, as were the age of the pupils, their ability and the level of experience of the teachers – reflecting the findings from primary school teachers (Borg & Falzon, 1989, 1990, 1993). Regarding attitudes towards bullying, teachers generally hold negative attitudes towards bullies and positive attitudes towards victims but this again seems to be mediated by gender (Boulton, 1997). Female teachers were slightly more negative about bullying than their male colleagues, and length of teaching experience was related to negative attitudes towards victims (Boulton, 1997). The way teachers perceive their pupils and how they expect them to behave is believed to influence their behaviour towards the pupils (Center & Wascom, 1987). The evidence outlined suggests that teachers have different perceptions of

undesirable pupil behaviour in general based on their own gender; the gender of the pupil involved and also the particular behaviour. It would therefore seem logical to assume that similar trends could be found when focusing specifically on different types of bullying behaviours. In support of this, Craig *et al.* (2000) used a scenario-based questionnaire with trainee teachers and found that they were more likely to define physical aggressiveness as bullying compared to other behaviours and also rated it more seriously than any other form of aggression. Teachers scoring highly on empathy were also more likely to notice bullying, intervene and take it seriously highlighting further that individual characteristics of teachers appear to moderate the way they perceive and respond to bullying.

O'Moore (2000) claims that many teachers don't regard bullying as a serious issue. Schools may have an anti-bullying strategy meaning that teachers are more aware about the importance of dealing with bullying, but intervention will be affected by perception of what constitutes bullying in the first place (Boulton, 1997, Madsen, 1996, Craig *et al.*, 2000). In a study investigating this issue, Boulton (1997) gave teachers a list of behaviours and asked them to rate whether each one was bullying or not. The behaviours reported to be bullying in the highest percentage were 'hitting, pushing and kicking'; 'threatening people verbally' and 'forcing people to do things they don't want to do'. It is interesting to note that all of these behaviours fall under the category of *direct bullying*, and supports the claim made previously that indirect behaviours may be less likely to be defined as bullying. Teacher responses were compared to pupils, although a problem with the methodology of the study was that slightly different wording was used on the pupil and teacher questionnaires and Boulton (1997) recommends that future research should use the same wording to ensure that significant differences between groups could not be attributed to this. Nevertheless, when teacher responses were compared to pupils, for every behaviour (with the exception of name-calling) a significantly higher proportion of teachers regarded them as bullying. Research on the behaviours pupils believe constitute bullying revealed that 'hitting and pushing', 'threatening people' and 'forcing people to do things they don't want to do' were defined as bullying by

four out of five pupils, but only one in five pupils regarded 'leaving someone out' as bullying (Boulton *et al.*, 2002). If pupils have varying definitions of bullying (Boulton, 1997; Madsen, 1996), this is likely to affect the bullying that is actually reported to teachers – distorting their views. Siann *et al.* (1994) found that social exclusion is particularly under-reported and supports evidence by Cartwright *et al.* (1997) that teachers report pupils as misinterpreting the term *bullying*. Rivers and Smith (1994) argue however that children do regard indirect behaviours as bullying – contradicting this view. In fact, focus groups and interviews with children revealed that they view a variety of physical and verbal behaviours as being included in the term *bullying*, with varying degrees of severity (Oliver & Candappa, 2003). However, there is evidence that pupil conceptions of bullying may vary in different countries. For example, Boulton, Bucci and Hawker (1999) found that Swedish pupils were more likely than English pupils to include social exclusion in their definition of bullying whereas English pupils were more likely to include nasty-name calling. These differences could be explained by the variety of terms used to refer to bullying in different countries (Smorti *et al.*, 2003).

Differences have been found between pupil and teacher definitions of bullying (Menesini & Fonzi, 2003; Menesini, Fonzi & Smith, 2002), school differences have been found in teacher perceptions and attitudes towards bullying (Siann *et al.*, 1993) and pupil perceptions (Siann *et al.*, 1994). Gender differences have also been found when investigating how pupils define bullying, with girls being more likely to label acts as bullying (Siann *et al.*, 1994). However, Boulton *et al.* (2002) and Smith *et al.* (2002) did not find gender differences in definitions of bullying and Smith *et al.* (2002) argued that pupils of a particular age share a common understanding of what bullying involves. Correlations between self-reported experience of being bullied and the tendency to label acts as bullying have also been found (Siann *et al.*, 1994). This suggests that victims may be more sensitive than non-victims to the behaviours that constitute bullying. In contrast, Boulton *et al.* (2002) predicted that children who bullied others would be less likely to define the behaviours they engaged in as bullying. The assumption here would be that bullies would not want to label what



they do as bullying because of the negative connotations associated with people who bully. However, with the exception of the behaviour of 'forcing people to do things they don't want to do', no association was found (Boulton *et al.*, 2002). When Birkinshaw and Eslea (1998) showed teachers 'bullying' scenarios, they perceived physical acts as more serious than verbal acts. The least serious forms of bullying were perceived as being the indirect behaviours. Bullying of girls by boys was seen as more serious than bullying of boys by girls, and Birkinshaw and Eslea (1998) express concern that such differences based on gender should exist. They argue that future research should examine the perceptions of non-teaching staff in the school.

Non-teaching staff such as lunchtime supervisors have been largely neglected in terms of bullying work until fairly recently (Boulton, 1996) so they are unlikely to have received any training on how to identify and deal with incidents (Boulton, 1993a; Sharp & Thompson, 1994a; Smith, 1991) and are also unlikely to be involved in policy work and anti-bullying initiatives in the school (Cartwright *et al.*, 1997). For example, in schools that had received a copy of the DfES Anti-bullying Pack (DfES, 2000) very few lunchtime supervisors had seen it (Smith & Samara, 2003). Lunchtime staff may be regarded as a separate 'team' who arrive at lunchtime and leave shortly afterwards without much contact with the rest of the staff in the school. Besag (1992) and Smith (1999) outline that they are often untrained and on low pay, yet they supervise pupils for the longest break in the school day. In fact, Boulton (1996) suggests that they can have more influence than others (for example, teachers or parents) when it comes to encouraging certain forms of interaction between children and discouraging or ignoring other forms. Besag and Packer (1992) report that many such staff feel helpless when dealing with bullying situations and would welcome the assistance of higher status teaching staff with supervision. Supervisors should know how to identify and respond to bullying and should be informed about behaviour policies in the school (DfES, 1994, 2000, 2002; Sharp & Smith, 1996). Of course, in some schools teachers are involved in playground supervision either in addition to or instead of lunchtime staff (Slee, 1995a). The DfES (1994, 2000, 2002) and Slee (1995a) argue that adults need to be

trained how to manage the playground effectively. Therefore, research is needed on this group of staff in order to investigate how they define and perceive bullying and how much bullying they are aware of in the school.

#### **1.7.4 Mediating factors**

There are other related issues that could explain why teachers are unaware of bullying. For example, Boulton (1997) found that teachers reported to lack confidence with dealing with bullying. If they lack confidence, they may choose not to intervene in incidents for fear of handling it incorrectly. Teachers have claimed that initial teacher training was inadequate at preparing them for managing children's behaviour in the classroom, despite the fact that they spend so much of their time on it (Merrett & Wheldall, 1993). Classroom management by teachers was related to the social structures of the class and levels of bullying in Norwegian primary schools, suggesting that teachers can have a strong influence on pupil relations (Roland & Galloway, 2002). The study was correlational in design, making it difficult to imply causation. It is possible that bullying in the class may make it more difficult to manage for teachers. Either way, it is argued that there is a need for more training especially in dealing with bullying (O'Moore 2000; Nicolaides *et al.*, 2002). Low self-confidence in this respect could contribute to teacher stress (Boulton, 1997). Research in the field of teacher stress has increased in recent years (Borg, 1990). Teaching has been reported as one of the most stressful occupations (Borg, 1990) with the main sources of stress reported by teachers being pupil misbehaviour and time/resource difficulties (Borg, Riding & Falzon 1991). Pupil misbehaviour in the classroom has been found to be associated with burnout in English primary school teachers (Hastings & Bham, 2003). Although these authors noted that the association was weak and discussed several methodological weaknesses, there is a general consensus in the literature that pupil behaviour in the classroom is associated with teacher well being. Other studies have shown that dealing with pupils' misbehaviour has been reported as a source of stress for teachers – but with lower frequency than other factors (Borg, 1998a; Hart, Wearing

& Conn, 1995). The phenomenon of pupils bullying teachers has been reported as a further source of stress (Terry, 1998). It could be that the stress of the other elements of the teaching role lowers the priority of dealing with pupil bullying (O'Moore & Hillery, 1992). According to Branwhite (1994), teachers are already stretched with high teaching commitments and he argues that it is unfair to expect them to be aware of pupils' personal relationships and problems – especially with the limited training they have in this respect. Besag (1989) suggests that because it is only the victim who experiences distress as the result of bullying and teachers and the rest of the group are largely unaffected, signs of distress or complaints on behalf of the victim may be missed in a busy classroom. In support of this, busy teachers have been found to miss incidents frequently (Lines, 1999). Whether teachers actually fail to notice incidents, or just choose to dismiss them because they don't have time to intervene is unclear. Evidence suggests that teachers lower their involvement in their job because of stress (Kyriacou, 1987). Therefore, less time is spent trying to find out about bullying resulting in a distorted perception of the climate in the school.

How teachers deal with high stress has also been investigated. Kyriacou (2001) recommended research into this area in particular. It has been suggested that struggling to cope with the stress of the job may affect the pupil-teacher relationship (Kyriacou, 1987, 2001). The quality of the relationship between teachers and pupils is argued to be very important when dealing with bullying (Besag, 1989). The evidence pertaining to pupils' reluctance to report incidents to teachers is highly relevant here. If pupils do not feel they have a good relationship with their teacher, they are unlikely to go to them for help if they are being bullied. Even if pupils do report bullying to them, teachers may not have the mental or physical resources to spend time dealing with pupil behaviour. They may dismiss reports from pupils or not be able to spend enough time getting to the bottom of pupil disputes in an attempt to cope with their own stress. This again may result in teachers having a distorted view of the bullying climate in the school. It can also give the wrong impression to pupils who look to teachers for guidance and often treat them as role models (Besag, 1989; Madsen, 1996; Maines & Robinson, 1991; O'Moore, 2000;

Soutter & McKenzie, 2000). Children have been shown to vary in their views of whether their teachers set good role models for dealing with bullying – highlighting the importance of teachers' role in this respect (Oliver & Candappa, 2003). The behaviour of teachers is likely to have a significant impact on the behaviour of pupils and if they do not respond to particular forms of bullying, pupils may interpret teachers as condoning the behaviour. Therefore it seems important to investigate teachers' knowledge and understanding about bullying to identify what messages pupils may be receiving.

## **1.8 Summary and rationale**

Bullying continues to be a pervasive problem in schools despite the surge of interest in the subject in the last 30 years. The number of children involved and evidence of the short and long term effects of bullying have emphasised the importance of finding ways to deal with the problem. Many interventions involve extensive work from staff in the school, but their role is largely dependent on children reporting incidents to them. Pupil reports have been shown to be highly unreliable and staff decisions to intervene once an incident has been reported involve a complex interaction of interpretations and judgments. Also, the reviewed research indicates that there are differing perceptions of the term 'bullying'. Teachers and pupils define the term differently, include different behaviours in the definition and rate the seriousness of these behaviours differently. Gender, age, experience and school factors appear to mediate these perceptions. However, studies that have attempted to investigate differences in pupil and teacher perceptions have used slightly different techniques for both groups making direct comparisons difficult. In addition, non-teaching staff such as lunchtime supervisors have a significant role to play but are often neglected both in research on bullying and by the schools themselves. It seems necessary to investigate perceptions of bullying more thoroughly, using consistent techniques, in order to identify how members of the school community define and perceive it and also how much bullying they are aware of in the school environment. Research on defining bullying has tended to focus on examining the differences in

academic definitions of the term rather than examining the behaviours that people regard as bullying and their perceived seriousness. Without further knowledge and understanding of these important issues, the potential success of intervention schemes is likely to be significantly impeded (Menesini *et al.*, 2002).

### **Research aims and objectives**

Overall, the evidence suggests that there is a need for a closer examination of both teacher and non-teaching staff perceptions of bullying in comparison to pupils. Such an investigation would bring to light differences between pupils and school staff and inform the development of intervention or change programmes.

Consequently, the aims of the research are to:

- Design an instrument suitable for measuring perceptions of bullying
- Conduct a survey of pupils, teachers and lunchtime supervisors in a sample of schools in North West England, investigating their perceptions of the nature and extent of bullying in their school
- Compare pupils, teachers and non-teaching staff on their definitions of bullying, perceived seriousness of bullying behaviours and perceived frequencies of how often bullying behaviours occur in the school
- Discuss the potential impact of the findings for further research and practical school intervention programmes on bullying

# **Chapter 2**

## **Method**

## **2. Method**

### **2.1 How to measure bullying**

The first aim of the research was to design an instrument suitable for measuring perceptions of bullying. In order to do this it was necessary to identify a suitable method for measuring bullying. There are several methods that have been used by researchers to measure bullying in children and each of these were considered in detail.

#### **2.1.1 Peer nomination**

Peer nomination is a method whereby pupils in a class have to nominate classmates who fit specified criteria such as who they most and least like to play with (Asher, Singleton, Tinsley & Hymel, 1979; Hodges & Perry, 1999). As Coie and Dodge (1988) explain, peers are virtually in daily contact with each other and therefore should be able to identify classmates who meet various behavioural descriptions. The process of peer nomination can be done by either showing pupils photographs of their classmates or giving them a register of names. A child's score is calculated from their total number of nominations (Asher *et al.*, 1979; Parker & Asher, 1987). Rating scales have also been used whereby individual pupils have to rate each child in their class on a number of criteria, and have been shown to be more reliable than pure nomination procedures (Asher *et al.*, 1979). Researchers have used the peer nomination method to try and assess the popularity of individual children (i.e. who children say they like the most and the least in their class e.g. Boulton & Smith, 1994; Cassidy & Asher, 1992) and to examine whether friendships are reciprocated (i.e. "Who is your best friend?" – Boulton *et al.*, 1999) (Parker & Asher, 1993). For measuring bullying, children are asked to nominate classmates who fit the description of bullies or victims (e.g. Hodges *et al.*, 1997). This method has been found to be a very reliable way of measuring peer relationships (Hodges *et al.*, 1997; Hodges & Perry, 1999). A benefit of this method is that information about individual

children is gathered from multiple sources (i.e. the rest of the class) and one rater will not have more influence than another rater (Leff *et al.*, 1999). Criticisms have been made (e.g. Asher & Dodge, 1986; Terry & Coie, 1991) due to the ethical problems of asking children to make negative nominations, but evidence from a study has suggested that children were not affected by the procedure (Hayvren & Hymel, 1984). Also, a rating scale method was found to be reasonably accurate and reliable (test re-test coefficient = 0.81,  $p < 0.01$ ) for identifying neglected and rejected children when only positive ratings were used (i.e. not asking children to make negative nominations) (Asher *et al.*, 1979). This method is mainly suitable for primary school pupils because there needs to be a constant class group for it to work. In secondary school pupils tend to be moved around from class to class depending on the subject being taught (Smith, 1999). They may be part of a different group for each lesson. In addition, it is very difficult to use peer nomination to measure the frequency and types of bullying behaviour taking place (Perry *et al.*, 1988; Rivers, 2001) – it is more appropriate for identifying individual pupils.

### **2.1.2 Teacher reports**

Numerous studies (e.g. Coie & Dodge, 1988; Connolly & Doyle, 1981; Hudley, 1993; Ledingham, Younger, Schwartzman & Bergeron, 1982; Pakaslahti & Keltikangas-Jarvinen, 2000) have used teacher reports to identify bullies and victims or general social acceptance in a similar way to the peer nomination procedure. Teachers are often used as sources of information about pupil behaviour (e.g. Cassidy & Asher, 1992; Chazan & Jackson, 1974; Hartley, 1979). Because teachers have experience with youngsters and have the opportunity to observe them in a variety of situations, their reports are often used as early diagnostic criteria for identifying pupils with a range of behaviour problems (Abikoff, Courtney, Pelham & Koplewicz, 1993; Hudley, 1993; Ladd & Profilet, 1996; Pakaslahti & Keltikangas-Jarvinen, 2000). Research by Bolstad and Johnson (1977) found that teacher ratings of children's classroom behaviour closely matched actual behaviour recorded by trained observers. Teacher views of pupils' classroom behaviour were



also found to correlate highly with pupil views (Hartley, 1979). However, the accuracy of teacher reports has been questioned. Bolstad and Johnson (1977) noted several individual differences in ratings across teachers – with some not matching the observed behaviour in the children. When Hudley (1993) compared pupil and teacher reports of aggression, there was more congruence for boys than for girls and there were significant differences related to ethnicity of pupils. Furthermore, Abikoff *et al.* (1993) found a bias in teacher ratings of attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) when they observed a video of children actors portraying a variety of behaviour disorders in a classroom environment.

Connolly and Doyle (1981) found teacher reports to be a highly reliable (inter-rater agreement between two teachers = 0.93) measure of popularity in preschool children, although when teacher reports have been compared to pupil questionnaire responses about bullying, Smith and Thompson (1991) report that correlations were higher for victims of bullying than for bullies. Evidence is inconsistent however with Nabuzoka (2003) finding significant correlations between pupil and teacher reports for a variety of behaviours, including being a bully, but not for being a victim of bullying. In other studies, correlations between peer reports and teacher reports of pupil behaviour have been found (e.g. Cassidy & Asher, 1992; Hartley, 1979; Ledingham *et al.*, 1982; Leff *et al.*, 1999; O'Moore & Hillery, 1992; Salmivalli & Nieminen, 2002), particularly for young and middle-aged pupils (Pakaslahti & Keltikagas-Jarvinen, 2000) suggesting that teachers can provide similar information to peers. However, Salmivalli and Nieminen (2002) found higher agreement between pupil and teacher reports for reactive ( $r = 0.6$ ) than proactive aggression ( $r = 0.41$ ) – supporting the findings from Smith and Thompson (1991) that teachers are better at identifying victims than bullies. Reactive aggression is likely to be more visible to teachers (such as a child losing their temper – Salmivalli & Nieminen, 2002) whereas children using proactive aggression (such as bullying others) may occur in very specific circumstances aside from interactions that teachers typically oversee. According to Ledingham *et al.* (1982), any discrepancies between teacher ratings and peer ratings may reflect the fact that children have different interactions

with their peers than with their teachers. Therefore, teachers could be useful for ratings of certain types of behaviour compared to others. However, the validity of reports rely on teachers' perception of the problem (Smith & Sharp, 1994). Leff *et al.* (1999) suggests that as children get older, and bullying becomes more covert, it is more difficult for teachers to identify – possibly distorting their impressions. Also, as with peer nomination, this method does not allow investigation of how respondents define bullying; how often bullying occurs or the types of behaviour that take place. In fact, Ladd and Profilet (1996) argue that teachers are less accurate at judging frequency or rates of children's behaviour, and better at identifying children who meet particular descriptions of behaviour. If teachers are used for identification of bullies or victims, Leff *et al.* (1999) and Perry *et al.* (1988) indicate that multiple teachers should be involved in the rating procedure. An important issue with teacher nomination is that there is the assumption that teachers are 'in tune' with their pupils. The evidence reviewed in the Introduction, and the rationale for this research is based on the idea that teachers are unlikely to be aware of much bullying in the school, and may interpret it differently. Therefore it would not seem sensible to use teacher nomination as a method for data collection in this study.

### **2.1.3 Interviews**

Another method researchers have used to investigate bullying is through conducting interviews – usually with pupils (Cranham & Carroll, 2003; Smith, 2001; Smith & Sharp, 1994; Guerin & Hennessy, 2002). A high degree of trust is required and the issue of confidentiality may result in pupils being reluctant to discuss their experiences (Sharp & Smith, 1994). The process of talking to pupils can also be time consuming (Sharp & Smith, 1994). However, rich and detailed information on a variety of issues surrounding bullying can be generated (Smith & Sharp, 1994). Sutton and Smith (1999) compare the use of interviews and questionnaires and claim that questionnaires are useful with older children. They are more able to read and complete longer questionnaires without difficulty and the lack of anonymity with

interviews could be an issue. With younger children, they suggest interviews can yield more detailed and reliable results.

#### **2.1.4 Observation**

Some researchers have tried using naturalistic observation to collect information about bullying by either attaching recording equipment to children and observing them during playtimes (e.g. Pepler & Craig, 1995); observing them playing in an unobtrusive manner (e.g. Boulton, 1992, 1995, 1999; Pellegrini & Long, 2002) or observing videotapes of interactions (e.g. Coie & Dodge, 1988; O'Connell *et al.*, 1999). Pepler and Craig (1995) note considerable success with this method and in particular explain how it can be useful for detailed investigation of indirect bullying which can often be neglected because of the difficulties with measuring it using other methods. However, it would be difficult to compare perceptions (such as definitions and seriousness of bullying behaviours) using this method. It is highly time consuming and limited information about perceptions would be generated. Also, there are many ethical problems to consider. Pepler and Craig (1995) described several problems pertaining to issues of consent because so many children can come in and out of interactions. Also, children may behave differently due to equipment that may be used. O'Connell *et al.* (1999) reported that older children in particular were self-conscious wearing microphones. The increase in the use of security cameras in and around schools may increase the potential of using observational methods to study pupil behaviour in the future. If pupils become used to being observed, they are likely to be less self-conscious.

#### **2.1.5 Self-report measures**

Many researchers have suggested that the most suitable way to find out about bullying is to ask pupils in an anonymous questionnaire (e.g. Arora, 1994; Austin & Joseph, 1996; Crick & Grotpeter, 1996; Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1997; Sharp & Smith, 1996; Smith, 1991; Smith & Thompson, 1991; Whitney & Smith, 1993) –

especially where large scale data collection is required (Smith & Sharp, 1994). Slee and Rigby (1992) believe children to be very reliable sources of information and Smith and Thompson (1991) report that children give consistent responses in questionnaires about bullying, and take the process of completing them very seriously. Piaget (1954, as cited in Birleson, 1981) suggests that children above 7 years of age are capable of judging their own feelings and behaviour, although Birleson (1981) raises the point that children may not describe things in the same way as adults. Furthermore, Crick and Grotpeter (1996) describe how self-report measures are useful for examining perceptions of bullying - especially when children outside the immediate class group are involved. Numerous questionnaires have been devised to measure bullying through self-report. The most widely used self-report questionnaire is the *Bully/Victim Questionnaire* used by Olweus (1978, 1993) in Norway and adapted for use in the UK Sheffield Project (Whitney & Smith, 1993). This questionnaire is designed to be administered on a classroom basis and teachers are instructed to read a definition of bullying to the pupils beforehand. Austin and Joseph (1996) are critical of this measure because the obvious focus on bullying could lead pupils to respond in a socially desirable way. In response, they designed two six-item measures known as the *Peer-Victimisation Scale* and the *Bullying-Behaviour Scale* that could be immersed within the *Self-Perception Profile for Children* (Harter, 1985) – a scale designed to measure children’s global self-worth; scholastic competence; athletic competence; social acceptance; physical appearance and behaviour conduct – to move attention away from bullying. The scale has been used to measure levels of bullying (e.g. Andreou, 2001; Callaghan & Joseph, 1995; Mynard & Joseph, 1997), but the authors do acknowledge that the scale lacks focus on indirect bullying (Austin & Joseph, 1996).

Arora (1994) devised the *Life in School* checklist where pupils indicate how often particular incidents from a pre-set list have happened to them in the previous week. Pupils are not asked directly if they are being bullied because, as Arora (1994) outlines, there are many types of bullying and people have different definitions of what it involves making responses to question like that difficult to interpret. Arora

(1994) suggests that enquiring about observable actions yields more precise and meaningful results. However, as with many scales, indirect bullying is neglected with the focus being on more direct bullying behaviours.

Of course, there are criticisms associated with the use of self-report measures of bullying (e.g. Besag, 1989; Neary & Joseph, 1994; Perry *et al.*, 1988). They discriminate against pupils who have reading difficulties (Sharp, Arora, Smith & Whitney, 1994). Also, pupils may not want to admit to being bullied (Callaghan & Joseph, 1995; Graham & Juvonen, 1998; Rigby & Slee, 1990; Smith, 1991; Tatum, 1989), give socially desirable answers (Seibert & Ramanaiah, 1978); or remember events incorrectly (Rivers, 2001). However, Rivers (2001) found that participants were able to provide reasonably accurate and consistent information in structured questionnaires about bullying (test re-test coefficients for individual questions on bullying ranged from  $r = 0.21, p > 0.05$  to  $r = 0.58, p < 0.001$ ). Furthermore, Arora (1994) and Smith and Sharp (1994) argue that making a self-report questionnaire anonymous will result in a higher response rate, with pupils more willing to admit their experiences. It is possible that anonymity could also deal with the other potential problem of social desirability because children will not need to worry about portraying a bad impression. In order to measure perceptions of bullying, self-report questionnaires seem the most appropriate method to use, providing the potential problems are acknowledged and dealt with where possible.

## **2.2 Details of research approach**

Much previous work on comparing pupil-teacher perceptions has tended to focus on primary schools (e.g. Borg & Falzon, 1989) – highlighting the need for research in secondary schools. In addition, with self-report questionnaires being identified as the most suitable method to measure perceptions, Smith and Levan (1995) note that many survey instruments are only suitable for pupils over 8 years of age. Also, Boulton (1997) said it was important to use the same wording in questionnaires when comparing pupil and staff perceptions. Therefore, making the questions

appropriate for a younger primary school audience would make them unsuitable for adults to complete. It was therefore decided that the most appropriate target population would be secondary schools. Using nomination methods in a secondary school environment would not have been suitable considering that pupils move around to different classes during the day and are taught by several different teachers. As Leff *et al.* (1999) note, in this situation teachers may only see individual pupils for short periods of time each day meaning they have less opportunity to observe pupil's behaviour in a variety of settings. Unlike in primary school, secondary school pupils typically are not members of one constant class group with one teacher who spends a considerable amount of time with them. In support of this, Leff *et al.* (1999) found that secondary school teachers were less accurate at rating bullies and victims than primary school teachers. Therefore, self-report questionnaires were deemed to be most suitable for this investigation.

In order to compare the perceptions of bullying in schools, responses needed to be collected from a sample of pupils, a sample of teachers and a sample of lunchtime supervisors – as these groups form the backbone of the school community. Based on the research evidence that bullying differs depending on the age of the pupils (Borg, 1999; Boulton & Underwood, 1992; Cartwright *et al.*, 1997; Smith, 2001; Whitney & Smith, 1993), it seemed sensible to sample pupils from two different year groups to compare responses. Selecting two year groups to focus on has been used elsewhere (e.g. Kyriacou & Roe, 1988; Stanley & Arora, 1998). For this study, it was decided to design questionnaires for use with Year 8 (aged 12-13 years) and Year 11 (aged 15-16 years) pupils. Using Year 7 pupils (aged 11-12 years) could cause problems because they would have just begun secondary school and therefore some of their responses may have been based from their experiences in primary school (Cullingford, 1993). In addition, the transition phase between primary and secondary school has been reported to be very stressful for pupils (Cullingford, 1993; Elliot, 1992; Fenzel, 1989, as cited in Branwhite, 1994; Jones, 1994; Zeedyk, Gallacher, Henderson, Hope, Husband & Lindsay, 2003), possibly distorting their perceptions about a variety of issues. Focusing on Year 8 pupils would also make

sure that school staff had got to know them and could base their responses on actual experience and knowledge of the group. Year 11 pupils were chosen as the other group to focus on because the apparent decline in reported bullying with age has been shown to be particularly evident after Year 10 (Cartwright *et al.*, 1997; Smith, Madsen & Moody, 1999) – creating a clear comparison group. In addition, Rigby (1997) reported that negative attitudes towards victims, and positive attitudes towards bullying peaked in children aged 15/16 years (Year 11). This suggests that they might have different ideas about the seriousness of different bullying behaviours. Based on this, four questionnaires were designed: one for Year 8 pupils; one for Year 11 pupils, one for teachers and one for lunchtime supervisors.

### **2.3 Construction of the questionnaires**

The questionnaires were constructed around a series of scenarios - reflecting numerous studies that have found this method a useful way to examine perceptions of bullying (e.g. Birkinshaw & Eslea, 1998; Borg & Falzon, 1989, 1990; Craig *et al.*, 2000; Hazler *et al.*, 2001; Sharp & Thompson, 1994a).

Using the classification of direct and indirect bullying behaviours (Björkqvist *et al.*, 1992; Rivers & Smith, 1994) and the types of behaviours described by Jerome and Segal (2003) and Sharp and Smith (1994), a list of bullying behaviours was constructed:

- **Direct bullying:**
  - Stealing belongings
  - Hitting, kicking, punching
  - Threats
  - Calling nasty names
  - Damaging belongings deliberately

**- Indirect bullying:**

Being left out/ignored (social exclusion)

Spreading rumours

Sending nasty e-mail or text messages

The current study was the first of its kind to use exactly the same form of measurement for pupils and staff, therefore it was decided not to focus on subsets of bullying (such as racial or sexual harassment) until a more thorough understanding of pupil and staff perceptions had been achieved. The complexities involved with studying topics like race (such as difficulties with definition and ethics) were beyond the scope of this investigation. Such a study would be more appropriate to conduct as further research where specific subgroups of bullying could be investigated in detail. Furthermore, the issue of racial identity was under review at the time the questionnaires were being designed (Parekh, 1999; Singh, 2000) making it sensible to postpone research on this topic until matters were more stable.

Because of the previously identified differences in perceptions of behaviour based on the gender of the child involved (Borg, 1998a; Borg & Falzon, 1989, 1990, 1993; Condry & Ross, 1985; Merrett & Wheldall, 1984), the behaviours identified above were translated into two identical scenarios – one with a male victim and one with a female victim (as in Hazler *et al.*, 2001):

e.g. When Caroline is in school, her belongings keep getting stolen

Andy's belongings keep getting stolen when he is in school

Slightly different wording was used for each version of the scenario pairings to disguise the fact that they were identical situations. In addition, the questionnaires referred to several situations that did not meet the definition of bullying, or were unclear:



- Arguing with friends
- Choosing to spend lunch time alone
- Copying homework
- Making fun of friends playfully

e.g. Michael chooses to be on his own at lunchtimes when he is at school

Julie prefers to be on her own in school at lunchtime

The reason for including these ambiguous/non-bullying scenarios was to examine whether certain groups had a broader definition of bullying than others. In particular, *arguing with friends* was chosen because of the importance that friends and the peer group are believed to play in bullying situations (Boulton, 1995; Boulton *et al.*, 1999; O'Connell *et al.*, 1999; Salmivalli, 1999; Sharp & Smith, 1994). Also, research has suggested that adults find it difficult to distinguish between normal peer conflict and bullying (Garner, 2003). The *choosing to be alone* scenario was included because Boulton (1999); Slee (1995b) and Whitney and Smith (1993) report that many victimized children spend break times alone, but the element of *choice* in the scenario makes it ambiguous. *Copying homework* was included because it is something that may occur between friends as a favour, or could be bullying if there were threats involved. Because the circumstances are unclear, the scenario is ambiguous. *Making fun of friends playfully* was included because of the evidence the children often dismiss incidents of bullying as being a game (Besag, 1992) and also because of the debate about whether intent of the perpetrator is important in the definition of bullying (Madsen, 1996; O'Moore, 1995).

On a practical level, including the ambiguous scenarios meant that hopefully the respondents would have to think more carefully about each question because they could not just assume that all the scenarios were meant to infer bullying. Arora (1999) used a similar approach in the *Life in School* checklist that contained a variety of actions that may occur to pupils during a weekly period. Not all of the items were bullying actions to draw the pupils' attention away from the fact that the

questionnaire was about bullying. It was hoped that the same effect would occur through the inclusion of the ambiguous items in the questionnaire.

In total, the questionnaire contained 24 scenarios presented in the following order:

- When Caroline is in school, her belongings keep getting stolen
- Each time Dave walks past a group of his classmates, they call him nasty names and make fun of him
- Susie keeps getting hit, kicked and punched on purpose by some of her classmates
- Simon keeps arguing with his friends at school
- Michelle's classmates deliberately leave her out of things and won't hang around with her
- Michael chooses to be on his own at lunchtimes when he is at school
- People in Rosie's class sometimes ask if they can copy her homework
- Daniel's belongings keep getting damaged deliberately by other young people in school
- When they are at school, sometimes Naomi and her friends playfully make fun of each other
- Paul keeps receiving nasty e-mail and text messages from other people in school
- Lucy gets called nasty names and made fun of each time she walks past a group of her classmates
- Nick's classmates keep spreading rumours about him that aren't true
- Pippa keeps arguing with her friends at school
- Some young people in school keep making threats to Matthew
- Other young people in school keep damaging Clare's belongings deliberately
- Gary's classmates won't hang around with him and deliberately leave him out of things

- Julie prefers to be on her own in school at lunchtime
- Some of Ben's classmates keep hitting, kicking and punching him on purpose
- Other people in school keep sending Helen nasty e-mail and text messages
- Sometimes people in Will's class ask him if they can copy his homework
- Beth's classmates keep spreading rumours about her that aren't true
- Andy's belongings keep getting stolen when he is at school
- Rachel keeps getting threatened in school by some young people
- Carl and his friends sometimes make fun of each other playfully at school

A complete version of the questionnaires for pupils, teachers and non-teaching staff can be found in Appendices 1 – 6 (p.342-424).

Throughout the pupil questionnaires, pupils were referred to as a *young person* (Menesini *et al.*, 1997; Smith & Sharp, 1994).

All of the scenarios and corresponding questions were written with the same wording for both pupils and staff (as recommended by Boulton, 1997) to ensure that any differences in responses could be attributed purely to different perceptions about the issues involved.

For each scenario, respondents were asked whether they thought the child involved was being bullied. They were asked to respond on the following scale:

No	Unsure	Yes
----	--------	-----

These questions were designed to measure respondents' definitions of bullying and reflects work by Boulton (1997); Boulton *et al.* (2002) and Siann *et al.* (1993, 1994) where participants were given a list of behaviours and asked to indicate whether they regarded them as bullying or not. Also, a working definition of *bullying* was not specifically mentioned (building on recommendations by Arora, 1994, 1999;

Boulton *et al.*, 2002; Cartwright *et al.*, 1997; McDougall, 1999). Instead, participants were asked whether a particular behaviour could be regarded as bullying. Participants were therefore being asked to formulate their own definitions of what bullying is. This is because, as outlined in the Introduction, many researchers (e.g. Arora, 1994; Besag, 1989; Boulton, 1997; Boulton & Smith, 1994; Madsen, 1996; Siann *et al.*, 1993; Smith, 1999) have emphasized the fact that people have different perceptions of bullying – and an individual’s definition of what bullying involves will affect the way they interpret and deal with a situation.

Respondents were also asked how serious they thought the child’s situation in the scenario was. They were asked to respond on the following scale (taken from Borg, 1998; Borg & Falzon, 1989).

Not serious	Fairly serious	Serious	Very serious	Extremely serious
-------------	----------------	---------	--------------	-------------------

These questions were designed to measure respondents’ perceptions of seriousness for different bullying behaviours.

For each scenario, respondents were asked how many male or female (depending on whether the scenarios featured a male or female pupil) pupils in their year (members of staff were asked this question for Year 8 and 11 pupils separately) they thought were in the same situation as the character in the scenario. Responses were recorded on the following scale:

None	1 or 2	3 to 5	6 to 10	More than 10
------	--------	--------	---------	--------------

These questions were designed to measure respondents’ perceived frequencies of particular behaviours.

Respondents were also asked how often they witnessed a male or female pupil (depending on whether the scenarios featured a male or female pupil) in their year

(members of staff were asked this question for Year 8 and 11 pupils separately) in the same situation as the character in the scenario. Responses were recorded on the following scale (adapted from Whitney & Smith, 1993):

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
-------	----------------------	-------------	----------------------	-----------

These questions were designed to measure respondents' exposure to particular bullying behaviours by investigating how often they actually witnessed incidents occurring.

Pupils only (i.e. not teachers or lunchtime supervisors) were asked how often they put another pupil in the same situation as the character in the scenario. Responses were measured on the following scale (adapted from Whitney & Smith, 1993):

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
-------	----------------------	-------------	----------------------	-----------

These questions were designed to measure pupils' self-reported experience of bullying others.

Also, pupils only (i.e. not teachers or lunchtime supervisors) were asked how often they themselves were put in the same situation as the character in the scenario. Responses were measured on the following scale (adapted from Whitney & Smith, 1993):

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
-------	----------------------	-------------	----------------------	-----------

These questions were designed to measure pupils' self-reported experience of being bullied by others. The two self-report questions measuring pupils' experience of being either a *bully* or a *victim* of the particular behaviours build on the comment by Arora (1994) that asking about observable actions provides more meaningful results.

Stockdale, Hangaduambo, Duys, Larson and Sarvela (2002) describe this method of measuring bullying as being behaviourally based as opposed to asking the global question of “are you being bullied?” which relies on individual interpretation of the term ‘bullying’. The questions allow a benchmark of the incidence of bullying (Arora, 1999) in a school because responses will be based on self-reported incidents of particular behaviours, rather than subjective interpretations of whether a particular incident is bullying or not.

One of the scenarios focused on being sent nasty e-mails or text messages. Therefore, in order to make sure that experiences of being a *victim* or *bully* of this behaviour were as accurate as possible, it was necessary to identify whether individual pupil respondents had a mobile phone or access to a computer. These questions were included on the front of the questionnaire, along with asking pupils for their gender, age and year group. Teachers were asked for their gender, length of time they had worked as a teacher and the year groups they were involved in teaching. Lunchtime staff were asked for their gender and the length of time they had been a lunchtime supervisor. They were also asked about their main duties.

An important consideration when designing the questionnaires was the fact that, for some pupils, answering the questions may bring back distressing memories or involve confronting their current experiences of bullying. Therefore, it was decided to include a short acknowledgement at the end of the questionnaire giving contact details for *ChildLine* to encourage pupils to talk about any upsetting issues that the questionnaire might have raised for them. Further ethical issues were addressed on the front of staff and pupil questionnaires focusing on the fact that any information provided would be confidential and that their names were not required (as recommended by Sharp, Arora, Smith & Whitney, 1994).

See Appendices 1-6 (p.342-424) for copies of the questionnaires.

## **2.4 Pilot Study**

### **2.4.1 Informal feedback**

Once the first draft of the questionnaires had been constructed, they were shown informally to a small sample of secondary school teachers and head teachers in order to assess their suitability. This sample was obtained through a combination of informal networking, and also through an advertisement posted around the university requesting volunteers. The sample consisted of two current secondary school teachers, a head teacher and a retired head teacher. Communication was made through a face-to-face meeting, a telephone conversation and postal mailings. Each person was given copies of the questionnaires and asked to make general comments about the topic area and also the questionnaires themselves. In particular, they were asked about the suitability of the questions; clarity of instructions; whether there were any ambiguous items; suitability of response choices, ideas for practical ways of collecting the data and any other comments they may have.

Through examining notes made from the conversations, and also notes made by the participants themselves, some key themes emerged from their feedback:

- General issues

Overall, all respondents thought that the topic of research would be interesting and useful to schools. One of the head teachers suggested another bullying behaviour that could be included in the questionnaire - *pupils getting each other into trouble*.

- Length

All of the respondents felt that the questionnaires were too long in their current format. They liked the scenario-based approach but commented that the time it would take for pupils to complete would be impractical.

- Wording

An issue emerged about the questions asking people how often they witnessed particular behaviours occurring. One of the head teachers said that people tend to hear about incidents rather than actually seeing them.

- Response choices

One of the head teachers raised concerns about the scale measuring perceived seriousness. There was some confusion about what the difference was between *very serious* and *extremely serious*.

- Sample

There was some confusion about why the questionnaire was focused only on Year 8 and Year 11 pupils. In particular, it was pointed out that not all teachers will teach these pupils so may find it difficult to answer questions specific to those year groups. Also, it was mentioned that lunchtime staff would not necessarily know which year particular pupils are in – again making answering some of the questions difficult.

- Data collection

All respondents suggested that a practical way of collecting data from pupils would be to ask them to complete the questionnaires during PSHE (Personal and Social Education) lessons or tutorial time. It was felt that pupils should be given clear guidance about why they were being asked to complete the questionnaires. The two current teachers queried when the staff would complete the questionnaires as they pointed out that this would have to be done in their own time which may reduce the response rate. In addition, one of the head teachers thought that staff politics could affect responses. He also thought that it might be a good idea to conduct some face-to-face interviews in addition to the questionnaires. There was concern expressed about getting interest in the study. The respondents felt that with schools and teachers being under such pressure, they may be reluctant to participate. Schools get bombarded with such requests, and there was a general feeling that in order to



encourage them to participate, there would need to be a clear benefit to them for taking part.

#### **2.4.2 Response to informal feedback**

The informal feedback suggested that the questionnaires needed amending before they would be suitable for the main stage of data collection. However, with feedback from such a small number of people, it was decided that piloting the questionnaires in a school using the intended sample of pupils, teachers and lunchtime staff would be beneficial. In order to get some feedback from them about the nature of the questionnaires, a series of open-ended questions were included at the end of the questionnaires to allow respondents to comment on what they thought of the questionnaires. The questions were as follows:

- Are there any other behaviours not mentioned in this questionnaire that you think are bullying?
- Were there any questions that were unclear?
- Were there any questions that you felt you couldn't answer?
- Were the instructions for how to answer the questions clear?
- Were the options from which you could choose your answers suitable?
- Please make any other comments you have about the questionnaire

Reversing the order of scenarios presented to respondents counterbalanced the questionnaires. There were therefore two versions of each questionnaire in order to check whether the order of the scenarios presented to participants affected responses. The two versions of the questionnaires were mixed up so that equal numbers of respondents would receive each version.

Another important point that was raised through the informal feedback was the importance of schools benefiting from participating in the study. As a result of this, it was decided that schools would receive a detailed Feedback Report of their

findings tailored individually to them based on their existing behaviour policies. This approach reflected strongly the 'survey service' procedure conducted by Ahmad, Whitney and Smith (1991) whereby schools received a pack containing detailed instructions and questionnaires. When results had been analysed by the researchers, schools received a portfolio of the results and reported to find it very useful. It provided an important base of knowledge about the individual school's situation and stimulated intervention strategies (Smith & Sharp, 1994). In addition, Stevens *et al.* (2000) reported that when schools receive help from external sources to deal with bullying, there is more success if the support is tailored to individual schools' structure and needs.

### **2.4.3 Procedure**

The head teacher of a mixed comprehensive secondary school was approached to ask if they would be willing to pilot the procedure. This school was selected from a Local Education Authority that was outside the intended target population for the main study – so as not to affect the sample. The deputy head of the school (responsible for pastoral issues) agreed to take part in the pilot study. When he viewed the questionnaires, he requested that an additional one should be designed for use with support staff (such as classroom assistants, administration and technical staff). In fact, Cartwright *et al.* (1997) mentioned this group of non-teaching staff as being important to include in work on bullying alongside lunchtime supervisors. So, this request was granted and a questionnaire for support staff was constructed that following exactly the same format as the questionnaire for lunchtime staff – but with a different cover (see Appendix 5, p.398). During the initial meeting with the deputy head, detailed information about the school was collected. Documentation about pupil numbers, behaviour policies and staff and student handbooks were received. This information gave insight into how the school ran on a day-to-day basis. Once formal written consent had been obtained, the questionnaires were delivered to the school. Each staff questionnaire came with its own envelope and instruction sheet detailing the study (see Appendix 9, p.429). The instructions included specific

reference to the questionnaires being voluntary and anonymous. Pupils completed the questionnaires during one of their PSHE lessons, supervised by a teacher (minimising researcher influence – Branwhite, 1994). Class teachers were instructed to read an information sheet to pupils before distributing the pupil questionnaires (see Appendix 8, p.427). This sheet introduced the study and explained why pupils were being asked to complete the questionnaires – a suggestion made in the informal feedback. The instructions emphasised that questionnaires were anonymous (Arora, 1994, suggests anonymous self-report questionnaires will yield a higher response) and completing them was entirely voluntary. A large envelope was provided for each class so that all the completed pupil questionnaires could be sealed inside in front of the pupils to maintain confidentiality (following the approach of Ahmad *et al.*, 1991). Staff supervising completion of the pupil questionnaires were also given a short questionnaire to complete enquiring about how long the questionnaires took to answer and whether any pupils needed assistance answering particular questions (see Appendix 7, p.425). A collection box was placed in the main Reception area of the school where completed questionnaires could be posted (Eslea & Smith, 2000).

*Table 1. Response rate for pilot study*

GENDER	GROUP			
	Year 8	Year 11	Teachers	Support Staff*
Male	88	99	3	0
Female	105	65	19	7
Unreported	0	0	1	0
Total	193	164	23	7
Total on record	267	262	90	30
Response rate	72.3%	63%	20.7%	23.3%

\*No questionnaires were received from lunchtime supervisors

Once all completed questionnaires had been collected, data was inputted and analysed. A Feedback Report was prepared, which was tailored to the school concerned based on their existing bullying policy (see Appendix 10, p.431).

#### **2.4.4 Feedback Report**

The Feedback Report was a long and detailed document containing various sections. The first part of the report focused on describing the project and the questionnaires. There was then a description of the school's current bullying policy, mapped against the educational definition provided by the Department of Education and Social Skills (DfES, 2000), and the behaviours included in the questionnaires. Details of the respondents were then provided for each group (Year 8 pupils, Year 11 pupils, teachers, lunchtime supervisors and support staff) and response rates calculated. At this stage there were some methodological factors raised. In particular, it was emphasised that this was a pilot study meaning that the questionnaires were still in development. Some of the negative feedback about the questionnaires was described to demonstrate that the problems had been acknowledged and amendments would be made where necessary. Issues of response rate were discussed particularly with reference to staff questionnaires (for example, no questionnaires were received from lunchtime supervisors) and the effect this could have on the results. Finally, it was pointed out that statistics on self-reported experience of bullying were likely to be an underestimation because many pupils may not admit to being involved either as a bully or a victim. The report then focused on describing the findings based on the perceptions measured in the questionnaires. For each section, data was presented in graphical and tabular form with the key findings outlined. This was to make the results as accessible to the school as possible (Ahmad *et al.*, 1991). Results were described in terms of the individual behaviours in the scenarios rather than combining behaviours together into *direct* and *indirect* bullying - again to make the results more accessible (as recommended by Borg, 1998). At the end of the report the overall findings were summarised with some recommended action points. A full copy of this report can be found in Appendix 10 (p.431).

### **2.4.5 Internal consistency**

Owing to the design of the questionnaire being based around identical scenarios featuring either a male or female victim, respondents were asked the same question more than once – allowing for measures of internal consistency. This was only the case for the questions in the pupil questionnaires about self-reported experiences of being bullied or bullying others because all other questions could logically have generated different responses due to the gender of the person in the scenario being different (i.e. perceptions of seriousness or definitions are predicted to be affected by the gender of the victim). Therefore, internal consistency on pupil's responses to whether they were a bully or a victim could be calculated. Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated for pupils' responses of being a victim of the particular behaviour and also for their responses of being a bully of the particular behaviour (where relevant). Overall, results suggested that pupils were consistent in their responses. Coefficients ranged from  $r = 0.37$  to  $r = 0.66$  and all correlations were significant at  $p < 0.01$  (see Appendix 11, p.515 for full analysis).

### **2.4.6 Order effects**

As previously outlined, the questionnaires were presented in two different orders – allowing investigation of whether there were any order effects. Data was analysed with the order of the questionnaire as an independent variable and the individual question responses as the dependent variable. Independent t tests were conducted to examine whether there were any significant differences in how participants responded based on the order in which scenarios were presented. Some significant differences were found in responses based on the order of the scenarios, but it was noted that a high proportion of these differences occurred in scenarios positioned towards the beginning or end of the questionnaire - depending on the order presented (see Appendix 12, p.517 for full analysis). This could be explained by the questionnaires being too long – with participants rushing the last questions resulting in significantly different responses. There were some differences found in other

sections of the questionnaire, but too few to raise concerns. The high number of tests conducted on the data will have inflated the Type I error rate so it could be expected that some significant differences would have been found through chance alone. There was also some confusion expressed in the pilot study as to why some questionnaires appeared different to others. Smith *et al.* (2002) identified similar confusion in their pilot study leading them to decide to only use one order in their measures. This further suggested that using one version of the questionnaire would be preferable. Overall, it was decided that shortening the length of the questionnaires would reduce any order effects meaning the questionnaires could be presented in one order only for the main study.

#### **2.4.7 Open-ended comments**

The questions at the end of the questionnaire were designed to allow participants to make open-ended comments - expressing their feelings about the questions. In order to analyse these comments, each questionnaire was checked and comments transcribed. The transcribed comments were organised into groups based on the question where the comment had been made. Individual comments were then coded with a label corresponding to the content. It was then possible to identify the key themes in the answers respondents had made to each question. These themes are outlined below with example comments.

- Are there any other behaviours not mentioned in this questionnaire that you think are bullying?

Respondents provided a variety of suggestions – some of which were already included in the questionnaires. For example, there were numerous suggestions falling under the category of threats.

*“Blackmail is when someone has done something wrong and they don’t want anyone to know and someone finds out and threatens to tell unless they do something for them and give them money” (Female, Year 8)*

There were numerous suggestions about peer pressure.

*“Forcing people to smoke/take drugs. I think this is bullying because they are forcing people to do things they don’t want” (Female, Year 8)*

In addition, several respondents described situations where pupils got others into trouble.

*“Doing something bad and saying it was someone else” (Male, Year 8)*

*“If somebody did something and then blamed it on somebody else and they got into trouble for it. It’s not right and it’s not fair because it’s not their fault and haven’t done anything wrong” (Female, Year 11)*

- Were there any questions that were unclear?

Considering the number of questionnaires received, not many respondents made negative comments about the clarity of questions. From the comments that were made, two main themes emerged. These focused on the repetitive nature of the questions and the lack of contextual detail provided in the scenarios.

*“Unclear as to why they were repeated” (Female Teacher)*

*“Yes, you can’t know the whole situation from one sentence” (Female, Year 11)*

*“All of those questions where I have put ‘unsure’ for the “Is the person being bullied” question. It is impossible to say yes or no without witnessing the situation” (Male Teacher)*

- Were there any questions that you felt you couldn't answer?

There were three main strands of response here. Some staff members commented that they didn't have contact with certain year groups making some questions difficult to answer.

*"Don't teach Year 11 so difficult to answer that one" (Female Teacher)*

Several respondents also mentioned that they might not actually see behaviours occurring but they still hear about them.

*"When asked if I'd witnessed things, I had to say never although I am aware they happen" (Female Teacher)*

Also, respondents felt that the repetitive nature of the questions made answering them difficult.

*"Some questions I didn't answer because there were too many and some were the same" (Male, Year 11)*

- Were the instructions for how to answer the questions clear?

There were very few comments about the clarity of instructions indicating that there were no real problems here.

- Were the options from which you could choose your answers suitable?

The scale measuring perceived frequency raised some concerns.

*"No, because it goes 'never' to 'once or twice a term'. Sometimes it is once a year" (Female, Year 11)*



There were also problems raised about the scale measuring perceived seriousness.

*“They were all serious or just plain not serious. Needs more non-serious options” (Female, Year 11)*

Other comments focused on more general features of the questionnaire.

*“I didn’t think there was much choice and the whole thing seemed to repeat itself” (Female Support Staff)*

*“Too blunt, yes and no (what about maybe?)” (Female, Year 8)*

- Please make any other comments you have about the questionnaire

The majority of comments made here focused again on the length and repetitive nature of the questions.

*“Too many similar situations – too repetitive” (Female Teacher)*

*“The names just changed half way through but kept the same questions – they just changed it from girl to boy. I don’t see the point” (Female, Year 8)*

*“I think it would’ve been more exciting if the questions were not repeated but the questions were clear” (Female, Year 8)*

There were some positive comments made about the issues addressed.

*“It made sense and made me think how similar my life is to some of these people” (Male, Year 8)*

*“The questionnaire was very clear and well laid out. I understood all the questions very well. I liked answering the questions” (Female, Year 8)*

*“I think it is a good question because teachers can find out what is going on” (Female, Year 8)*

#### **2.4.8 Questionnaire for staff supervising pupil completion of questionnaires**

The staff who supervised pupils completing the questionnaires filled in a short questionnaire about the procedure (see Appendix 7, p.425). The number of pupils in a class completing the questionnaires ranged from 15 to 28. In three classes, there were some pupils who chose not to fill in the questionnaire - but this was only one or two pupils. The time taken for pupils to complete the questionnaires ranged from 10 minutes to 45 minutes. It is predicted that these times are a result of the class time allocated to the procedure rather than the actual time taken for all questionnaires to be completed. Only one member of staff reported needing to give pupils assistance in answering the questions.

#### **2.4.9 Feedback on pilot project**

In the term following delivery of the Feedback Report, the deputy head was contacted to discuss the overall experience of taking part in the project. It was not possible to meet in person so the project was discussed informally on the telephone. Overall, the deputy head of the school was very enthusiastic about the project and found the experience extremely positive. He said that the detail provided in the Feedback Report was very useful for presenting at meetings and also for highlighting areas where further work in the school was needed.

The findings from the pilot study raised several issues that needed to be addressed in preparation for the main study. In particular, the questionnaires were found to be too long and too repetitive. Some teachers found it difficult to answer specific questions about Year 8 and Year 11 pupils because they may not have direct involvement with that year group. Also, there needed to be a questionnaire suitable for staff other than teachers and lunchtime supervisors in the school to complete (i.e. support staff). Finally, although the feedback received from the deputy head was useful, it was

collected in a rather unstructured format and it seemed important that more structured feedback about the project was collected from participating schools in order to identify whether the procedure had practical value to them.

## **2.5 Main Study**

### **2.5.1 Changes to questionnaires**

As a result of the problems highlighted during the pilot study, the questionnaires were re-designed.

Generic scenarios were introduced (i.e. not focusing on a boy or girl in particular) with the questions relating to the scenarios being gender-specific. E.g.

A pupil in school gets hit, kicked and punched by their classmates

If this happens to a GIRL in your school, how serious do you think it is?

If this happens to a BOY in your school, how serious do you think it is?

This follows the approach adopted by Borg and Falzon (1989) and Langfeldt (1992), allowing investigation of whether behaviours are perceived differently depending on the gender of the pupil involved. It also reduced the length and repetitive nature of the questionnaires because only one scenario for each behaviour was included (rather than one boy and one girl).

To further reduce the length of the questionnaires, one of the ambiguous scenarios (playfully making fun) was removed. The others (arguing with friends; copying homework and spending lunchtime alone) remained in the final questionnaires.

Rather than having a separate questionnaire for Year 8 and 11 pupils, a generic questionnaire for pupils was constructed with no specific year-related questions.

This dealt with the fact that many staff members in the pilot study commented that they don't have contact with certain year groups.

The questionnaire originally intended for lunchtime supervisors was re-designed to also be suitable for support staff (such as administrative and technical staff). This meant that there was a questionnaire suitable for all staff in the school community to complete.

Rather than asking "how many pupils do you think are in the same situation as..." or "how often do you witness a boy/girl in the same situation as...", respondents were asked "how often do you hear about this happening to a boy/girl in your school?". Responses were measured on the following scale:

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
-------	----------------------	-------------	----------------------	-----------

This allowed investigation of how often incidents are discussed or known about and dealt with the comments raised in the pilot study that behaviours tended to be heard about rather than witnessed. Therefore, a direct comparison could be made between pupils and staff to see if there are certain behaviours that pupils seem to hear about more than staff

In the pilot questionnaire, pupils were asked how often they were a victim of a particular behaviour and also how often they *bullied* other pupils. In the final questionnaire, it was decided to remove the question about bullying others because very few pupils admitted to bullying others and it was more appropriate to compare the responses of perceived frequencies of behaviour to the self-reported experiences of being a victim. Sutton and Smith (1999) propose that bullies may only admit their behaviour if they are in an environment where their behaviour would be accepted or rewarded and Solberg and Olweus (2003) suggest that bullies may not respond honestly about their behaviour towards others in self-report questionnaires. In addition, for two of the ambiguous scenarios (*choosing to be alone* and *arguing with*

*friends*) it was not possible to ask pupils how often they put somebody else in that situation (by *bullying* them) meaning it was more obvious to respondents that these were not bullying situations. The ambiguous items were deliberately included to encourage respondents to think more carefully about the scenarios, so it was important that there was nothing different about them that could give away the intended answer.

The results of the pilot study suggested that the order of the questionnaire did not largely affect the responses. Therefore, the questionnaires were designed and presented in one order only.

Based on the question in the pilot questionnaire about whether there were any other behaviours that the respondents thought were bullying that had not been included, the scenario of 'pupils getting other pupils into trouble for things they haven't done' was added to the questionnaire. This behaviour was suggested in the open-ended comments and also by one of the head teachers in the informal feedback. Interestingly, in a study by Smith, Madsen and Moody (1999) where children were asked what bullying involved, *when people try and get you in trouble* was mentioned in addition to the behaviours more commonly referred to as bullying. Therefore, it was felt that it would be appropriate to add this behaviour to the questionnaire.

The scale of responses for the questions about how serious respondents perceived the different behaviours to be was altered to accommodate some of the negative comments that were made about it:

0 Not serious	1	2	3	4 Extremely serious
------------------	---	---	---	------------------------

All of these changes meant that the length of the questionnaire was significantly reduced and the questions were less repetitive.

A final amendment that was made to the questionnaires was the facility to include open-ended comments. Some respondents in the pilot study said they found it difficult to answer the questions based on the limited detail provided in the scenarios. Therefore, a comments box would allow more detailed information to be collected regarding participants' decision-making process when answering the questions. Siann *et al.* (1994) argue that when using questionnaires to investigate bullying, other techniques should be used alongside. Boulton (1997) recommends qualitative data to investigate perceptions of bullying, and Owens *et al.* (2000) and Smith and Brain (2000) suggest qualitative research can add insight in to the field of bullying.

The final versions of the pupil, teacher and support staff questionnaires can be found in Appendices 13-16 (p.521-564).

### **2.5.2 Sampling**

Schools were selected for taking part in the main project using statistics generated by the Local Education Authorities. Letters were sent to all publicly funded mixed comprehensive schools with more than 1000 pupils from a specified target area in North West England in October 2002. A reminder letter was also sent in November 2002. One school responded to the request letters and they participated in the project in November 2002. Through word of mouth, a further three schools responded and participated between February and May 2003.

### **2.5.3 Procedure**

When initial contact had been established with a school, the researcher arranged to meet with the head or deputy head. At this meeting, the project was explained in detail and the head or deputy head was shown a copy of the questionnaires. In all cases, schools gave written consent at this stage to participate. During the initial meeting, detailed information about each school was collected. This included

documentation about pupil numbers, behaviour policies and staff and student handbooks. Once formal written consent had been obtained, the questionnaires were delivered to each school. Each staff questionnaire came with its own envelope and instruction sheet detailing the study (Appendix 9, p.429). The instructions included specific reference to the questionnaires being voluntary and anonymous.

The data collection process was co-ordinated by schools themselves and the researcher had no involvement other than to give detailed instructions (see section 5.7, p.185 for further discussion). In all schools, pupils had a form teacher and were part of a form group that remained consistent during their time at secondary school. Form teachers were responsible for morning registration and teaching PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) to their form group, and were therefore separate from the pupils' subject teachers. In all schools, pupils completed the questionnaires during these scheduled PSHE lessons. Class teachers were instructed to read an information sheet to pupils before distributing the pupil questionnaires (Appendix 8, p.427). This sheet introduced the study and explained why pupils were being asked to complete the questionnaires. The instructions emphasised that questionnaires were anonymous and completing them was entirely voluntary. A large envelope was provided for each class so that all the completed pupil questionnaires could be sealed inside to maintain confidentiality.

Staff questionnaires were distributed to teachers and support staff by the head or deputy head in each school. The method of distribution was organised by individual schools, but reports suggested that memos were circulated alerting staff to the project and/or questionnaires were placed in pigeonholes. See section 5.7 p.185 for a further discussion of the process.

A collection box was placed in the main Reception area of the school where completed questionnaires could be posted. The researcher visited the school to collect the questionnaires after an agreed period.

Once all completed questionnaires had been collected, data was inputted and analysed. A Feedback Report was prepared for each school following the same format as the report prepared in the pilot study (see Appendix 17, p.431, for an example of the Feedback Report produced).

School 1 collected their data in November 2002, School 2 collected their data in February 2003, School 4 in March 2003 and School 3 in April 2003. See page 187 for further discussion of this issue and the potential impact on results.

#### **2.5.4 Feedback about the Project**

In the term following delivery of the Feedback Reports, individual schools were contacted to arrange a final visit with the head or deputy head. This meeting was to discuss the project, gather any feedback and investigate whether the information provided had had any impact on the school. The discussion focused on the following topics:

- Overall feedback about the contents of the report (including the information provided, the clarity of the information and any other findings that would have been useful)
- Comments on the findings (including whether there were any surprising results or any results that caused concern)
- Details of who in the school had seen the report and who else was likely to see it
- Details of any action taken since the report was received, and any work/progress that was planned for the future
- Overall feedback about the project



### **2.5.5 The participating schools**

All four schools came from the same Local Education Authority in a targeted area of North West England. This area has one of the highest degrees of deprivation in the country, with eligibility for free school meals in the district being over twice the national average. The proportion of ethnic minority pupils is in accordance with national averages, as is the proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The percentage of pupils with a special needs statement who are taught in special schools is above the national average. The participating schools were all mixed, publicly funded secondary schools. The statistical details collected in the first meetings with the schools allowed comparison based on a variety of characteristics. These details were complemented with statistics generated by Ofsted and the Department of Education and Social Skills (DfES) and are shown on the following page. The statistics are relevant to the 2001-2002 school year.

In addition to statistical information, details were collected about individual schools' bullying policies and relevant organisational issues. This helped to achieve an impression about how each school functioned on a day-to-day basis.

#### **School 1**

School 1 was reviewing its bullying policy hence senior staff were very keen to participate in the project. The school's current policy defined bullying as involving both mental and physical abuse of an individual. The document included some examples of bullying which are claimed to hurt and threaten (continued on page 83).

Table 2: Details of participating schools in comparison to national averages

	SCHOOL 1	SCHOOL 2	SCHOOL 3	SCHOOL 4	NATIONAL AVERAGE
Total pupils on register (11-18 years)	1432	1279	1734	778	993
Number in Year 7	246	259	302	144	
Number in Year 8	254	231	317	127	
Number in Year 9	247	241	320	150	
Number in Year 10	260	221	307	165	
Number in Year 11	250	212	308	152	
Existence of sixth form	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
% Ethnic minority pupils	+ Nat avg*	6.1%	3.1%	2.4%	
Proportion of male:female pupils	1.22:1	1.25:1	1.2:1	1.1:1	
% Statemented special needs	1.2%	5.3%	2.5%	4.8%	2.4%
% Unstatemented special needs	9.8%	31%	21.6%	62.8%	18.1% (inc. statements)
Attendance	90.8%	81%	88.7%	82.2%	91%
Unauthorized absence	2.3%	2.3%	2.8%	5.4%	1.2%
% Pupils achieving 5+ A* - C GCSE grades	47%	19%	32%	14%	52% (LEA - 39%)
% Eligible for free school meals	+Nat avg*	52%	31.6%	54.8%	16.1%
Part of Education Action Zone	No	Yes	No	Yes	
Number of feeder primary schools	Unknown	8	8	3	
Number full time teachers	94	90	113	55	
Number part time teachers	8	3	4	3	
Number of support staff	11	44	54	19	
Number of lunchtime staff	35 (teachers on rota)	2	8	8	

\*above national average -- actual figure unknown

- Calling names (teasing/taunting)
- Leaving someone out
- Making him/her the butt of jokes/comments
- Extorting money
- Any form of unwarranted physical contact, i.e. pinching, pushing, punching, kicking etc
- Fighting
- Organising the intimidation, physical or mental, of an individual, even if not directly involved
- Being a member of a group of pupils known to intimidate other pupils

The school instructed pupils to tell somebody (form tutor, teacher, parent or friend) if they are being bullied or know someone who is. The school also outlined the action that is taken when an incident is reported. Warning signs that a pupil may be experiencing bullying were also outlined.

The existing bullying policy was formulated 12 years ago through a small working party of parents, governors and staff using material produced by Kidscape.

## **School 2**

School 2 was involved in several local initiatives including being part of an Education Action Zone. School 2's anti-bullying policy defined bullying as behaviour involving both mental and physical abuse of an individual. Several examples of bullying were included in the policy document:

- Calling names (teasing/taunting)
- Leaving people out, isolating them and making them the butt of jokes/comments
- Taking money or possessions
- Any form of unnecessary physical contact e.g. pushing, punching, kicking
- Picking a fight

- Being a member of a group of pupils known to go around intimidating others

The school encouraged parents to talk to their children about bullying and look out for warning signs indicating that their child may be experiencing bullying. In addition, pupils were encouraged to tell their friends, teacher or parents if they are being bullied or to complete a *help card*. Help cards were placed in a help box placed inside the school building. The school promised to take incidents seriously when they are reported and to take the appropriate action.

### **School 3**

School 3 was larger than the other schools. They developed their anti-bullying policy in 1993 and it was revised in 1994 and 1996. The document outlined the definition of bullying adopted by the school. It stated that:

**Bullying can be physical and/or verbal**

**i.e., Physical assault to varying degrees of severity**

**Verbal abuse including name-calling, teasing and taunting**

Staff were encouraged to be available for students and treat reported bullying incidents very seriously. The policy document included detailed information for staff to follow should an incident be reported, and general monitoring on a day-to-day basis. The policy also included information to parents such as warning signs that their child may be being bullied and guidelines for reporting bullying to the school.

### **School 4**

School 4 was situated in an area with particularly high levels of deprivation and was smaller than the other schools. The school was part of the local Education Action Zone and had strong community links. The school had conducted an internal survey of bullying in 1995 and used the results to shape its policy that was reviewed in 1996

and 1999 when it was updated. In the policy document, the school defined bullying as:

- Deliberately hurtful behaviour
- Repeated often over a period of time
- Difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves

The school outlined that bullying can take many forms, highlighting three main forms:

- Physical (hitting, kicking, taking belongings)
- Verbal (name-calling, insulting, racist remarks)
- Indirect (spreading nasty stories about someone, excluding someone from social groups)

The school's definition of bullying was in close conjunction with the guidelines provided by the Department for Education and Social Skills (DfES, 2000). The aims and scope of School 4's Anti-Bullying Policy also closely built on the recommendations made by the DfES (2000). The school aimed to raise awareness of bullying behaviour through assemblies, PSHE sessions, pupil project work and logs in a 'bullying book'. Parents were kept updated on work in the school and encouraged to report incidents they may hear about. Staff had clear details on how to respond to particular incidents if they occurred, and the school was keen to provide staff training where necessary. The school was already actively involved in many other community-based projects focusing on issues such as inclusion and safety in school and they were very keen to participate in this project.

# **Chapter 3**

## **Statistical Findings**

### 3. Statistical findings

#### 3.1 Response Rate

The tables below outline the number of participants who took part in the study in each school. The figures represent the number of questionnaires received suitable for inclusion in the dataset. Any questionnaires received empty or completed incorrectly (e.g. more than one answer selected, offensive comments, illegible responses etc.) were excluded from the figures and not inputted in to the dataset. Some questionnaires had not been finished, but the responses that had been made were included and the incomplete questions were coded as missing data.

#### School 1

*Table 3. Response rate for School 1*

GENDER	GROUP			
	Year 8	Year 11	Teachers	Support Staff
Male	81	101	22	5
Female	89	76	20	11
Unreported	8	6	1	2
Total	178	183	43	18
Total on record	254	250	102	46
Response rate	70.10%	73.20%	43.86%	39.13%

#### School 2

*Table 4. Response rate for School 2*

GENDER	GROUP			
	Year 8	Year 11	Teachers	Support Staff
Male	88	27	16	5
Female	79	33	22	9
Unreported	0	0	0	0
Total	167	60	38	14
Total on record	231	212	93	46
Response rate	72.30%	28.30%	40.90%	30.43%

### School 3

*Table 5. Response rate for School 3*

GENDER	GROUP			
	Year 8	Year 11	Teachers	Support Staff
Male	132	31	13	2
Female	114	35	25	7
Unreported	5	2	1	1
Total	251	68	39	10
Total on record	371	308	117	62
Response rate	67.70%	22.10%	33.33%	16.13%

### School 4

*Table 6. Response rate for School 4*

GENDER	GROUP			
	Year 8	Year 11	Teachers	Support Staff
Male	40	53	8	2
Female	42	43	1	10
Unreported	1	6	0	1
Total	83	102	22	13
Total on record	127	152	58	27
Response rate	65.35%	67.10%	37.93%	48.15%

### Total

*Table 7. Total number of respondents*

GENDER	GROUP			
	Year 8	Year 11	Teachers	Support Staff
Male	341	212	59	14
Female	324	187	81	37
Total	665	399	140	51
Target sample	983	922	370	181
Response rate	67.65%	43.28%	37.84%	28.18%

Please refer to section 5.7 p.185 for further discussion of response rates.



## **3.2 Data Preparation and Screening**

### **3.2.1 Item totals**

The questions in each section of the questionnaire could be classified into six main themes:

Whether the behaviour was defined as bullying or not  
Frequency of hearing about the behaviour happening to girls  
Frequency of hearing about the behaviour happening to boys  
Perceived seriousness of behaviour if it happens to girls  
Perceived seriousness of behaviour if it happens to boys  
Self-reported experience of the behaviours (pupils only)

In addition, the behaviours described in the questionnaires could be split into three main groups:

Direct Bullying (Hitting, kicking and punching; Stealing; Damaging belongings; Nasty name-calling; Threats)  
Indirect Bullying (Social exclusion; Nasty e-mails/text messages; Spreading rumours; Getting others into trouble)  
Ambiguous Behaviours (Arguing; Choosing to be alone; Copying homework)

To calculate total scores for items, new variables were computed within SPSS and reliability coefficients were calculated. In all cases, the alpha coefficient for the combination of item totals was higher than if individual items were deleted. Kline (1993) argues for reliability coefficients of 0.8 and above. However, Loewenthal (2001) suggests that reliability coefficients of 0.6 and above are acceptable if there are a small number of items and there is a strong theoretical rationale for combining those items together. In this case, all of the alpha coefficients were above 0.6 except for those within the 'Ambiguous Behaviour' categories. These ambiguous

behaviours were included to balance the questionnaire and also examine how respondents defined bullying. Therefore, the Ambiguous Behaviours categories were not crucial to the analysis. In addition, there was no strong theoretical basis to combine them together because including such behaviours in a bullying questionnaire of this kind was a relatively new idea in the literature. Also, they shared little in common except for the fact that they were ambiguous or 'non-bullying' behaviours. Due to these facts, the low alpha coefficients on these scales were no cause for concern as they were not going to form the basis for analysis. Overall therefore, alpha coefficients for the combined item totals were regarded as acceptable. Full details of the alpha coefficients can be found in Table A (Appendix 18, p.624).

### **3.2.2. Missing value analysis**

There was, not surprisingly, some missing data so preliminary analysis was performed to investigate how much missing data there was and how it was distributed in the data set. The missing data analysis revealed that for each of the item totals between 4.2% and 5.1% of data was missing. Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) suggest that 5% and under of missing data points is not problematic providing that it is spread randomly throughout the data set. Because 5.1% was the maximum amount of missing data on an item total, and each item total had very similar amounts of missing data, the analysis was found to be satisfactory. No transformations were made and missing data was excluded by default in statistical analysis.

### **3.2.3 Normality tests**

The questions about defining bullying generated nominal data and therefore were non-parametric. However, the remaining questions were measured on 5-point Likert-style scales. There has been debate about whether such scales can be regarded as interval data, but Loewenthal (2001) suggests that using Likert scaling does equate

to an interval scale. Therefore, it was necessary to perform analysis to investigate whether the data met the other assumptions required for performing parametric tests by checking for normality. Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) argue that certain normality tests examining the significance of skewness and kurtosis levels can be overly sensitive even with small deviations from normality when the data set is large. With large data sets, they recommend studying the actual values of skewness and kurtosis and examining the shape of frequency distributions and normality plots. Therefore, skewness and kurtosis scores were calculated and frequency distributions, estimated and detrended normality plots were generated. This analysis was performed on the item totals individually as a whole and also by dividing these totals based on group (i.e. Year 8 Pupil, Year 11 Pupil, Teacher and Support Staff). In virtually all cases, skewness and kurtosis scores were small (under 1 or -1) and graphs did not indicate large deviations from normality. For larger skewness and kurtosis scores, the visual interpretation of the frequency distributions and normality plots did not indicate large deviations from normality compared to items where skewness and kurtosis scores were low (see Table B, Appendix 18, p.625 details of item totals with skewness or kurtosis scores falling above 1 or -1). In addition, the study has a large data set and therefore it has been suggested that there are no strict criteria that can be applied when deciding about acceptable values of skewness and kurtosis (Field, 2000). However, Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) recommend transforming data that is not normally distributed unless there is a good strong reason not to. Therefore, it was decided to try transforming the self-report item totals as these categories had notably higher values of skewness and kurtosis when calculated alone and by group. According to Johnson and Wichern (1998), data based on counts are made near-normal through square root transformations. The item totals were calculated by counting and summing the scores for individual questions, so square root transformations seemed most appropriate in this case. Square-root transformations were computed in SPSS and normality investigations performed on the transformed data. It was found that the skewness and kurtosis values all fell under 1 or -1. In addition, normality plots suggested a closer approximation of normality than before transformation.

### **3.2.4 Multicollinearity**

A correlation matrix was calculated to identify any multicollinearity between the item totals. Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) suggest that coefficients of 0.90 and above suggest variables are too highly correlated to be regarded as separate measures. One pairwise correlation in the matrix was calculated as 0.91 – above the acceptable level. However, this correlation was the relationship between the item totals for “Ambiguous Behaviours: How serious it is when it happens to a girl” and “Ambiguous Behaviours: How serious it is when it happens to a boy”. It has already been noted that the computed item totals for the ambiguous behaviours had very low alpha levels therefore could not acceptably be treated as a subscale. As a result, it was decided to exclude the item totals for the ambiguous behaviours from further inferential analysis.

### **3.3 Defining bullying**

The following section reports the responses from the questions about whether behaviours in the scenarios were regarded as bullying or not.

For each scenario respondents were asked to indicate whether they felt the particular person was being bullied or not. Responses were recorded on the following scale:

No	Unsure	Yes
----	--------	-----

The scenarios were categorised as representing direct bullying behaviours, indirect bullying behaviours or ambiguous behaviours.

The first stage of analysis involved examining the percentage of participants who responded in particular ways to the questions. Tables of descriptive statistics were generated for responses based on group (Year 8, Year 11, Teacher and Support

Staff), group and gender (where gender was held constant and participants were partitioned based on their group) and the school participants belonged to.

### 3.3.1 Direct bullying scenarios

#### Relationship with group participants belonged to

*Table 8. Percentage of respondents defining direct behaviours as bullying, partitioned by group*

GROUP	DO YOU THINK THIS PUPIL IS BEING BULLIED? (% WITHIN GROUP)		
	NO	UNSURE	YES
<b>Hitting, kicking and punching</b>			
Year 8	3.9%	23.0%	73.1%
Year 11	3.6%	16.0%	80.3%
Teachers	4.9%	18.2%	76.9%
Support Staff	5.2%	20.7%	74.1%
Total %	4.0%	20.1%	75.9%
<b>Stealing</b>			
Year 8	9.8%	29.5%	60.7%
Year 11	6.3%	19.1%	74.6%
Teachers	2.8%	11.8%	85.4%
Support Staff	1.7%	20.7%	77.6%
Total %	7.5%	23.8%	68.6%
<b>Nasty name-calling</b>			
Year 8	5.1%	19.5%	75.3%
Year 11	6.8%	16.9%	76.3%
Teachers	0.0%	4.2%	95.8%
Support Staff	0.0%	8.8%	91.2%
Total %	4.9%	16.5%	78.6%
<b>Damaging belongings</b>			
Year 8	7.2%	21.7%	71.0%
Year 11	4.4%	16.0%	79.5%
Teachers	0.0%	2.8%	97.2%
Support Staff	0.0%	10.3%	89.7%
Total %	5.2%	17.3%	77.5%
<b>Threats</b>			
Year 8	3.3%	7.7%	89.0%
Year 11	1.7%	7.7%	90.5%
Teachers	0.0%	2.8%	97.2%
Support Staff	0.0%	5.2%	94.8%
Total %	2.3%	7.1%	90.7%

For the direct bullying scenarios, descriptive statistics indicated that a high proportion of respondents in all groups did define the behaviours as bullying. This result was particularly notable for threats, where over 90% of respondents claimed the behaviour was bullying. Investigating the differences between groups revealed that teachers and support staff appeared more certain that the behaviours were bullying. In all cases (with the exception of hitting, kicking and punching), a higher proportion of staff answered 'yes' compared to pupils. Further to this, Year 11 pupils were more likely to define most behaviours as bullying than Year 8 pupils.

### Relationship with gender of participants and the group they belonged to

*Table 9. Percentage of respondents defining direct behaviours as bullying, partitioned by group and gender*

GROUP*	DO YOU THINK THIS PUPIL IS BEING BULLIED? (% WITHIN GROUP)					
	NO		UNSURE		YES	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
<b>Hitting, kicking and punching</b>						
Year 8	6.2%	0.9%	26.7%	19.8%	67.2%	79.3%
Year 11	6.2%	0.5%	16.7%	14.5%	77.1%	84.9%
Staff*	1.4%	6.8%	16.4%	18.8%	82.2%	74.4%
Total %	5.6%	1.9%	22.1%	18.1%	72.3%	80.0%
<b>Stealing</b>						
Year 8	10.0%	9.0%	26.1%	34.0%	63.9%	57.1%
Year 11	6.7%	5.3%	17.6%	20.3%	75.7%	74.3%
Staff	1.4%	3.4%	20.5%	10.2%	78.1%	86.4%
Total %	7.9%	6.8%	22.6%	25.4%	69.6%	67.7%
<b>Nasty name-calling</b>						
Year 8	6.8%	2.8%	21.8%	17.4%	71.4%	79.8%
Year 11	9.5%	3.2%	18.0%	15.0%	72.5%	81.8%
Staff	0.0%	0.0%	5.6%	5.9%	94.4%	94.1%
Total %	6.9%	2.4%	18.6%	14.5%	74.4%	83.1%
<b>Damaging belongings</b>						
Year 8	9.8%	4.7%	17.6%	25.2%	72.6%	70.1%
Year 11	5.4%	1.6%	13.7%	19.0%	81.0%	79.3%
Staff	0.0%	0.0%	8.3%	3.4%	91.7%	96.6%
Total %	7.2%	2.9%	15.2%	19.3%	77.7%	77.8%
<b>Threats</b>						
Year 8	4.8%	1.6%	9.6%	6.0%	85.6%	92.5%
Year 11	3.5%	0.0%	9.4%	4.4%	87.1%	95.6%
Staff	0.0%	0.0%	4.2%	3.4%	95.8%	96.6%
Total %	3.8%	0.8%	8.9%	5.0%	87.3%	94.2%

**\*Teachers and Support Staff were combined to form a group called 'Staff'. This was to increase the expected counts for the subsequent chi-square analysis**

For many of the behaviours, females were more likely to define them as bullying than males were – although differences often appeared small. This result was still evident when responses were partitioned based on group. Female staff were the group who were most likely to define behaviours as bullying.

## Relationship with school participants belonged to

Table 10. Percentage of respondents defining direct behaviours as bullying, partitioned by school

SCHOOL	DO YOU THINK THIS PUPIL IS BEING BULLIED (% WITHIN SCHOOL)		
	NO	UNSURE	YES
<b>Hitting, kicking and punching</b>			
School 1	6.7%	27.1%	66.3%
School 2	5.2%	21.5%	73.4%
School 3	2.2%	17.4%	80.4%
School 4	0.5%	9.6%	90.0%
Total	4.0%	20.1%	75.9%
<b>Stealing</b>			
School 1	8.8%	27.8%	63.4%
School 2	11.3%	19.9%	68.7%
School 3	6.0%	29.9%	64.1%
School 4	2.7%	11.4%	85.9%
Total	7.5%	23.8%	68.6%
<b>Nasty name-calling</b>			
School 1	5.9%	21.6%	72.4%
School 2	5.2%	17.0%	77.9%
School 3	4.6%	16.6%	78.7%
School 4	2.7%	5.9%	91.3%
Total	4.9%	16.5%	78.6%
<b>Damaging belongings</b>			
School 1	6.5%	23.5%	70.0%
School 2	7.3%	19.2%	73.4%
School 3	3.6%	14.2%	82.2%
School 4	2.7%	8.2%	89.0%
Total	5.2%	17.3%	77.5%
<b>Threats</b>			
School 1	3.4%	8.0%	88.6%
School 2	2.8%	7.1%	90.1%
School 3	1.4%	6.9%	91.7%
School 4	0.9%	5.5%	93.6%
Total	2.3%	7.1%	90.7%

The results show how the majority of respondents defined the behaviours as bullying. The threats scenario had the highest proportion of respondents who regarded it as bullying. For all behaviours, respondents from School 4 were more likely to claim the scenarios constituted bullying than respondents from other schools. School 1 had the lowest percentage of respondents who defined the



behaviours as bullying. The proportions of respondents who did not think the scenarios were bullying varied slightly between schools.

### **3.3.2 Indirect bullying scenarios**

#### **Relationship with group participants belonged to**

*Table 11. Percentage of respondents defining indirect behaviours as bullying, partitioned by group*

GROUP	DO YOU THINK THIS PUPIL IS BEING BULLIED? (% WITHIN GROUP)		
	NO	UNSURE	YES
<b>Social exclusion</b>			
Year 8	28.4%	39.0%	32.6%
Year 11	23.5%	34.0%	42.5%
Teachers	9.8%	27.3%	62.9%
Support Staff	8.6%	37.9%	53.4%
Total %	23.9%	36.0%	40.1%
<b>Sending nasty e-mails/text messages</b>			
Year 8	9.5%	22.8%	67.7%
Year 11	11.0%	21.4%	67.6%
Teachers	0.0%	8.5%	91.5%
Support Staff	0.0%	12.1%	87.9%
Total %	8.5%	20.3%	71.2%
<b>Spreading rumours</b>			
Year 8	11.3%	35.6%	53.1%
Year 11	14.0%	25.9%	60.1%
Teachers	0.7%	9.9%	89.4%
Support Staff	1.7%	19%	79.3%
Total %	10.5%	28.9%	60.5%
<b>Getting others into trouble</b>			
Year 8	15.5%	39.6%	44.9%
Year 11	15.0%	34.3%	50.6%
Teachers	4.3%	21.4%	74.3%
Support Staff	7.0%	22.8%	70.2%
Total %	13.7%	35.2%	51.1%

There was more uncertainty expressed about whether the indirect scenarios constituted bullying or not. This is illustrated with the higher proportions of respondents claiming to be 'unsure' compared to what was found in the direct bullying scenarios. Interestingly, a very similar proportion of respondents were

unsure about whether social exclusion could be regarded as bullying as actually did define it as bullying. Staff were more certain that the scenarios could be defined as bullying than pupils. Also, in most cases, a higher proportion of Year 11 pupils thought the scenarios were bullying compared to Year 8 pupils.

### Relationship with gender of participants and group they belonged to

*Table 12. Percentage of respondents defining indirect behaviours as bullying, partitioned by group and gender*

GROUP*	DO YOU THINK THIS PUPIL IS BEING BULLIED? (% WITHIN GROUP)					
	NO		UNSURE		YES	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
<b>Social exclusion</b>						
Year 8	32.9%	22.9%	35.0%	42.1%	32.0%	35.0%
Year 11	30.5%	16.1%	33.3%	33.9%	36.2%	50.0%
Staff	12.3%	6.8%	31.5%	29.1%	56.2%	64.1%
Total %	29.7%	17.9%	34.0%	37.2%	36.3%	44.9%
<b>Sending nasty e-mails/text messages</b>						
Year 8	13.3%	5.3%	23.8%	21.9%	63.0%	72.8%
Year 11	14.8%	6.0%	24.6%	18.7%	60.6%	75.3%
Staff	0.0%	0.0%	14.1%	6.8%	85.9%	93.2%
Total %	12.2%	4.5%	22.9%	18.1%	64.9%	77.4%
<b>Spreading rumours</b>						
Year 8	14.3%	7.8%	31.6%	38.6%	54.0%	53.6%
Year 11	15.8%	10.4%	25.2%	26.8%	58.9%	62.8%
Staff	1.4%	0.0%	11.3%	14.4%	87.3%	85.6%
Total %	13.3%	7.1%	27.1%	30.5%	59.5%	62.4%
<b>Getting others into trouble</b>						
Year 8	17.1%	14.2%	36.3%	42.1%	46.5%	43.7%
Year 11	16.5%	13.7%	30.5%	39.9%	53.0%	46.4%
Staff	2.9%	5.2%	25.7%	19.0%	71.4%	75.9%
Total %	15.3%	12.3%	33.2%	37.1%	51.6%	50.6%

\*Teachers and Support Staff were combined to form a group called 'Staff'. This was to increase the expected counts for the subsequent chi-square analysis

Females were, in general, more likely to define the behaviours as bullying, although the actual percentages were notably lower than for the direct bullying scenarios. When respondents were partitioned based on group, similar findings emerged. Female staff were the group most likely to define the behaviours as bullying (with the exception of spreading rumours where male staff had the highest percentage).

## Relationship with school participants belonged to

*Table 13. Percentage of respondents defining indirect behaviours as bullying, partitioned by school*

SCHOOL	DO YOU THINK THIS PUPIL IS BEING BULLIED (% WITHIN SCHOOL)		
	NO	UNSURE	YES
<b>Social exclusion</b>			
School 1	25.4%	36.4%	38.3%
School 2	29.2%	37.2%	33.7%
School 3	22.1%	39.2%	38.7%
School 4	17.3%	28.6%	54.1%
Total	23.9%	36.0%	40.1%
<b>Sending nasty e-mails/text messages</b>			
School 1	8.7%	20.1%	71.2%
School 2	10.1%	23.8%	66.1%
School 3	7.2%	16.9%	75.8%
School 4	7.9%	21.5%	70.6%
Total	8.5%	20.3%	71.2%
<b>Spreading rumours</b>			
School 1	12.7%	32.6%	54.7%
School 2	10.5%	29.0%	60.5%
School 3	8.1%	34.7%	57.2%
School 4	10.6%	12.4%	77.1%
Total	10.5%	28.9%	60.5%
<b>Getting others into trouble</b>			
School 1	16.9%	37.9%	45.2%
School 2	14.1%	37.5%	48.4%
School 3	13.6%	35.9%	50.4%
School 4	7.4%	25.9%	66.7%
Total	13.7%	35.2%	51.1%

Irrespective of school, the highest percentage of respondents defined the behaviours as bullying, but the proportions were notably lower than for the direct bullying scenarios. When respondents were partitioned based on school, School 4 emerged as the school most likely to define the behaviours as bullying (with the exception of sending nasty e-mails or text messages where School 3 had the highest percentage). School 1 had the lowest percentage of respondents who defined the behaviours as bullying (with the exception of social exclusion).

### 3.3.3 Ambiguous scenarios

#### Relationship with group participants belonged to

*Table 14. Percentage of respondents defining ambiguous behaviours as bullying, partitioned by group*

GROUP	DO YOU THINK THIS PUPIL IS BEING BULLIED? (% WITHIN GROUP)		
	NO	UNSURE	YES
<b>Arguing with friends</b>			
Year 8	62.6%	30.1%	7.3%
Year 11	71.2%	24.1%	4.6%
Teachers	31.5%	64.3%	4.2%
Support Staff	52.6%	45.6%	1.8%
Total %	61.4%	32.7%	5.9%
<b>Choosing to be alone</b>			
Year 8	63.4%	27.3%	9.3%
Year 11	68.9%	24.0%	7.1%
Teachers	19.1%	68.8%	12.1%
Support Staff	17.2%	72.4%	10.3%
Total %	58.2%	32.8%	8.9%
<b>Copying homework</b>			
Year 8	64.5%	27.5%	8.1%
Year 11	67.1%	24.4%	8.5%
Teachers	18.6%	58.6%	22.9%
Support Staff	42.9%	44.6%	12.5%
Total %	59.3%	30.7%	10.0%

A high proportion of respondents did not regard the ambiguous scenarios as bullying. Pupils were more certain of this than staff - who tended to be more uncertain. Some respondents did think that the scenarios could be defined as bullying suggesting that they may have overly broad definitions of what constitutes bullying.

**Relationship with gender of participants and group they belonged to**

*Table 15. Percentage of respondents defining ambiguous behaviours as bullying, partitioned by group and gender*

GROUP*	DO YOU THINK THIS PUPIL IS BEING BULLIED? (% WITHIN GROUP)					
	NO		UNSURE		YES	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
<b>Arguing with friends</b>						
Year 8	63%	61.3%	30.5%	30.3%	6.5%	8.4%
Year 11	68.4%	73.0%	24.4%	24.9%	7.2%	2.2%
Staff	29.6%	40.7%	67.6%	55.9%	2.8%	3.4%
Total %	61.0%	60.9%	32.7%	33.5%	6.3%	5.6%
<b>Choosing to be alone</b>						
Year 8	66.6%	59.0%	23.6%	32.6%	9.9%	8.4%
Year 11	65.9%	70.3%	24.5%	24.9%	9.6%	4.9%
Staff	19.7%	17.1%	73.2%	68.4%	7.0%	14.5%
Total %	60.9%	54.5%	29.6%	37.0%	9.4%	8.5%
<b>Copying homework</b>						
Year 8	63.7%	64.0%	27.6%	28.4%	8.7%	7.6%
Year 11	65.3%	69.4%	23.8%	24.6%	10.9%	6.0%
Staff	21.7%	23.3%	66.7%	50%	11.6%	26.7%
Total %	59.4%	58.0%	30.8%	31.3%	9.8%	10.7%

\*Teachers and Support Staff were combined to form a group called 'Staff'. This was to increase the expected counts for the subsequent chi-square analysis

There did not appear to be as many differences between the responses of males and females as were found for the bullying scenarios. Males were slightly more likely to claim the behaviours were not bullying compared to females. Females were also slightly more likely than males to report they were uncertain about whether the scenarios constituted bullying.

**Relationship with school participants belonged to**

*Table 16. Percentage of respondents defining ambiguous behaviours as bullying, partitioned by school*

SCHOOL	DO YOU THINK THIS PUPIL IS BEING BULLIED (% WITHIN SCHOOL)		
	NO	UNSURE	YES
<b>Arguing with friends</b>			
School 1	66.5%	29.4%	4.1%
School 2	62.7%	28.6%	8.7%
School 3	60.3%	35.3%	4.3%
School 4	51.8%	39.9%	8.3%
Total	61.4%	32.7%	5.9%
<b>Choosing to be alone</b>			
School 1	56.9%	35.7%	7.5%
School 2	58.5%	32.1%	9.4%
School 3	57.1%	33.8%	9.1%
School 4	62.1%	26.9%	11.0%
Total	58.2%	32.8%	8.9%
<b>Copying homework</b>			
School 1	60.6%	29.6%	9.8%
School 2	56.0%	31.9%	12.1%
School 3	63.3%	30.3%	6.4%
School 4	54.2%	31.9%	13.9%
Total	59.3%	30.7%	10.0%

Overall, most respondents did not define the behaviours as bullying. There was more uncertainty than for the bullying scenarios. Respondents from School 4 were more likely to define the behaviours as bullying than other schools. There were fewer obvious differences between schools compared to the responses for the bullying scenarios.

### **3.3.4 Inferential analysis for group, gender and school**

For each behaviour, data was analysed by comparing responses between groups, groups by gender and school. Due to the data being of nominal status and falling into categories, chi-square analysis was conducted in all cases. When examining the association with gender within groups, initially this analysis was performed using all groups (i.e. Year 8, Year 11, Teachers and Support Staff). However, because the analysis involved partitioning cells on both group and gender, on some occasions expected counts fell below sufficient levels. Field (2000) outlines that in chi-square contingency tables larger than 2 x 2, up to 20% of the expected frequencies can fall below 5, but none can fall below 1. Statistical power is lost if these criteria are not met. These low expected counts could be attributed to the unequal numbers of male and female teachers and support staff. Therefore, it was decided to combine these groups together to form a group called 'staff'. This improved the expected counts and allowed the analysis to be performed. There were still several occasions where expected frequencies fell below required levels, and these are indicated.

To examine the relationship between the group participants belonged to (Year 8, Year 11, Teacher or Support Staff) and whether they thought each scenario was bullying or not, a 4 x 3 Chi-square Contingency Table test with Group on rows and response (Yes, Unsure or No) on columns was performed for each scenario. To examine the overall association between gender and responses, a 2 x 3 Chi-square Contingency Table test was performed. Any association found between gender and responses could have impacted on any relationship between group and responses. Therefore analysis was also conducted on the association between group (Year 8, Year 11 and Staff) and response when gender was held constant. For the association between school and responses, a 4 x 3 Chi-square Contingency Table test was performed.

Table 17. Chi-square analysis for questions about defining bullying

SCENARIO	GROUP	GENDER	MALES ONLY BASED ON GROUP	FEMALES ONLY BASED ON GROUP	SCHOOL
<b>Direct bullying:</b>					
Hit/kick/punch	$\chi^2=8.89, df=6$	$\chi^2=16.37^{***}, df=2$	$\chi^2=12.67^*, df=4$	$\chi^2=21.21^{***}, df=4^a$	$\chi^2=54.23^{***}, df=6$
Stealing	$\chi^2=49.30^{***}, df=6$	$\chi^2=1.65, df=2$	$\chi^2=13.98^{**}, df=4$	$\chi^2=39.46^{***}, df=4$	$\chi^2=51.35^{***}, df=6$
Nasty name-calling	$\chi^2=39.91^{***}, df=6$	$\chi^2=19.94^{***}, df=2$	$\chi^2=19.90^{***}, df=4$	$\chi^2=13.58^{**}, df=4^a$	$\chi^2=31.21^{***}, df=6$
Damaging belongings	$\chi^2=55.34^{***}, df=6$	$\chi^2=14.33^{***}, df=2$	$\chi^2=16.38^{**}, df=4$	$\chi^2=37.20^{***}, df=4$	$\chi^2=38.93^{***}, df=6$
Threats	$\chi^2=13.53^*, df=6$	$\chi^2=20.28^{***}, df=2$	$\chi^2=6.30, df=4$	$\chi^2=6.27, df=4$	$\chi^2=7.42, df=6$
<b>Indirect bullying:</b>					
Social exclusion	$\chi^2=59.73^{***}, df=6$	$\chi^2=24.77^{***}, df=2$	$\chi^2=18.54^{***}, df=4$	$\chi^2=35.35^{***}, df=4$	$\chi^2=27.01^{***}, df=6$
Nasty e-mails/texts	$\chi^2=47.23^{***}, df=6$	$\chi^2=32.16^{***}, df=2$	$\chi^2=18.46^{***}, df=4$	$\chi^2=22.44^{***}, df=4$	$\chi^2=7.71, df=6$
Spreading rumours	$\chi^2=82.75^{***}, df=6$	$\chi^2=13.30^{***}, df=2$	$\chi^2=29.07^{***}, df=4$	$\chi^2=43.19^{***}, df=4$	$\chi^2=43.33^{***}, df=6$
Getting into trouble	$\chi^2=50.80^{***}, df=6$	$\chi^2=3.33, df=2$	$\chi^2=17.68^{***}, df=4$	$\chi^2=37.03^{***}, df=4$	$\chi^2=29.29^{***}, df=6$
<b>Ambiguous behaviours:</b>					
Arguing with friends	$\chi^2=91.32^{***}, df=6$	$\chi^2=0.34, df=2$	$\chi^2=46.63^{***}, df=4$	$\chi^2=44.48^{***}, df=4$	$\chi^2=22.08^{***}, df=6$
Choosing to be alone	$\chi^2=167.45^{***}, df=6$	$\chi^2=7.58^*, df=2$	$\chi^2=74.40^{***}, df=4$	$\chi^2=87.73^{***}, df=4$	$\chi^2=6.33, df=6$
Copying homework	$\chi^2=122.12^{***}, df=6$	$\chi^2=0.41, df=2$	$\chi^2=52.28^{***}, df=4$	$\chi^2=81.12^{***}, df=4$	$\chi^2=12.16, df=6$

\* $p<0.05$ , \*\* $p<0.01$ , \*\*\* $p<0.001$

<sup>a</sup>some cells have expected count less than 5, but none below 1



### **3.3.5 Defining bullying: Summary of findings**

For the direct bullying behaviours, the group participants belonged to was associated with their responses to whether the behaviour was bullying or not, with the exception of threats where group was not a factor when gender was held constant. For hitting, kicking and punching, the relationship with group was only revealed when gender was held constant. Gender was associated with participants' responses for direct bullying behaviours in all cases except stealing. The school participants belonged to was associated with their responses in all cases except for threats.

For the indirect bullying behaviours, there was a higher degree of uncertainty about whether the behaviours were bullying or not, especially for social exclusion. For spreading rumours and getting others into trouble, pupils were more certain that the behaviours were not bullying whereas staff tended to be unsure. In all cases, the group participants belonged to was associated with whether indirect behaviours were defined as bullying or not. Gender was also associated with responses in all cases except for getting others into trouble. The school participants belonged to was associated with responses for all indirect behaviours except for nasty e-mails/text messages.

The ambiguous behaviours showed that most pupils did not define them as bullying, where as staff tended to be unsure. The group participants belonged to was associated to responses for all ambiguous behaviours. Gender was only associated with responses to whether choosing to be alone could be defined as bullying or not. The school participants belonged to was only associated with responses to whether arguing could be defined as bullying.

### **3.4 Perceived seriousness of behaviours**

This section reports the findings about how serious respondents thought each scenario was. In each scenario presented in the questionnaire, respondents were asked how serious they thought the person's situation was, depending on the gender of the pupil involved:

If this happens to a GIRL in your school, how serious do you think it is?

If this happens to a BOY in your school, how serious do you think it is?

Responses were recorded on the following scale and scored according to the numerical values shown:

0 Not serious	1	2	3	4 Extremely serious
------------------	---	---	---	------------------------

It was then possible to calculate the behaviours reported with the highest ratings of seriousness, and compare them directly to others.

Initial analysis involved calculating the mean seriousness rating for each behaviour (for the behaviour when it happens to a girl and boy separately) and ranking them in order of magnitude for each group (Year 8, 11, Teachers and Support Staff) based on gender. It could then be seen which behaviours were rated as more serious than others. For each group, the four behaviours rated the most serious and the four behaviours rated the least serious are highlighted.

### 3.4.1 Pupils

Table 18. Perceived seriousness ratings of pupils for individual scenarios

BEHAVIOUR	YEAR 8 BOYS		YEAR 8 GIRLS		YEAR 11 BOYS		YEAR 11 GIRLS	
	Rank Order	Mean Score	Rank Order	Mean Score	Rank Order	Mean Score	Rank Order	Mean Score
Threats (boys)	1	2.96	2	3.20	1.5	2.98	2	3.20
Threats (girls)	2	2.95	1	3.33	1.5	2.98	1	3.40
Hit/kick/punch (boys)	3	2.73	7	2.69	7	2.49	5	2.81
Hit/kick/punch (girls)	4	2.59	4	2.91	5.5	2.50	3	2.94
Stealing (boys)	5	2.52	12	2.46	4	2.60	7	2.72
Stealing (girls)	6	2.50	9	2.61	3	2.70	4	2.91
Nasty name-calling (girls)	7	2.37	5	2.79	13	2.13	6	2.80
Nasty name-calling (boys)	8	2.36	10.5	2.54	11	2.19	10	2.62
E-mail/text messages (girls)	9	2.32	3	2.93	9	2.26	9	2.64
E-mail/text messages (boys)	10	2.28	6	2.70	12	2.17	13	2.44
Damaging property (girls)	11.5	2.25	8	2.65	5.5	2.50	8	2.65
Damaging property (boys)	11.5	2.25	13	2.44	8	2.45	11	2.56
Spreading rumours (girls)	13	2.22	10.5	2.54	10	2.22	12	2.50
Spreading rumours (boys)	14	2.19	15	2.32	14	2.10	14	2.22
Getting into trouble (boys)	15	2.11	16	2.29	15	1.93	17	2.12
Getting into trouble (girls)	16	2.02	14	2.36	16	1.83	16	2.14
Social exclusion (girls)	17.5	1.66	17	2.27	17	1.69	15	2.15
Social exclusion (boys)	17.5	1.66	18	2.01	18	1.62	18	1.94
Arguing (boys)	19	1.50	20	1.52	19	1.29	19	1.28
Arguing (girls)	20	1.34	19	1.61	20	1.26	20	1.27
Copying homework (boys)	21	1.16	24	1.12	22.5	0.95	24	0.77
Copying homework (girls)	22	1.10	23	1.15	24	0.87	23	0.86
Choosing to be alone (boys)	23	0.99	22	1.31	22.5	0.95	22	0.90
Choosing to be alone (girls)	24	0.97	21	1.36	21	1.03	21	0.99

### 3.4.2 Staff

Table 19. Perceived seriousness ratings of staff for individual scenarios

BEHAVIOUR	MALE TEACHERS		FEMALE TEACHERS		MALE SUPPORT STAFF		FEMALE SUPPORT STAFF	
	Rank Order	Mean Score	Rank Order	Mean Score	Rank Order	Mean Score	Rank Order	Mean Score
Threats (boys)	1.5	3.82	2	3.75	5	3.71	1	3.69
Threats (girls)	1.5	3.82	1	3.78	5	3.71	2	3.67
Hit/kick/punch (boys)	6	3.67	9	3.52	5	3.71	8.5	3.38
Hit/kick/punch (girls)	3	3.72	6	3.56	2.5	3.79	8.5	3.38
Stealing (boys)	4.5	3.70	11.5	3.46	2.5	3.79	4.5	3.46
Stealing (girls)	4.5	3.70	11.5	3.46	1	3.86	4.5	3.46
Nasty name-calling (girls)	9	3.59	5	3.58	7	3.54	8.5	3.38
Nasty name-calling (boys)	10	3.57	8	3.54	10	3.46	6	3.41
E-mail/text messages (girls)	7	3.61	3	3.64	11.5	3.21	3	3.49
E-mail/text messages (boys)	8	3.60	4	3.63	11.5	3.21	12	3.32
Damaging property (girls)	13	3.34	7	3.55	8.5	3.50	8.5	3.38
Damaging property (boys)	14	3.30	10	3.50	8.5	3.50	11	3.35
Spreading rumours (girls)	11	3.43	13	3.34	13.5	2.93	13.5	3.19
Spreading rumours (boys)	12	3.36	14	3.31	13.5	2.93	13.5	3.19
Getting into trouble (boys)	15.5	3.05	15.5	3.09	16	2.77	15.5	3.16
Getting into trouble (girls)	15.5	3.05	15.5	3.09	15	2.85	15.5	3.16
Social exclusion (girls)	17	2.82	17	3.00	17.5	2.69	18	3.00
Social exclusion (boys)	18	2.79	18	2.99	17.5	2.69	17	3.03
Arguing (boys)	23	1.96	22.5	2.25	21.5	2.25	23.5	1.95
Arguing (girls)	24	1.95	24	2.22	21.5	2.25	23.5	1.95
Copying homework (boys)	19	2.05	22.5	2.25	23.5	1.92	20	2.11
Copying homework (girls)	20	2.02	21	2.26	23.5	1.92	19	2.14
Choosing to be alone (boys)	22	2.00	20	2.32	19.5	2.54	22	1.97
Choosing to be alone (girls)	21	2.04	19	2.36	19.5	2.54	21	2.03

### **3.4.3 Comparing the mean ratings**

Overall mean ratings were higher for staff members than for pupils suggesting that they regarded the behaviours as being more serious.

For pupils, mean seriousness ratings were higher for girls than boys.

For pupils, direct bullying (i.e. threats, hitting/kicking/punching, nasty name-calling, stealing) were rated as more serious than other behaviours. This result was evident for staff members also, except sending nasty-emails/text messages was higher up the mean ratings than it was for pupils.

In all cases, the ambiguous behaviours were regarded as the least serious.

In the majority of cases, the scenarios were rated as equally serious irrespective of whether the victim was male or female.

### **3.4.4 Using item totals**

At the beginning of the analysis section it was outlined how numerous individual questions on the questionnaire were combined to form item totals. For the questions relating to perceived seriousness of behaviours, four item totals were computed:

- Direct Bullying: How serious it is when it happens to a girl (5 items)
- Direct Bullying: How serious it is when it happens to a boy (5 items)
- Indirect Bullying: How serious it is when it happens to a girl (4 items)
- Indirect Bullying: How serious it is when it happens to a boy (4 items)

(NB: the item totals for Ambiguous Behaviours are not included because the reliability coefficients were not acceptable)

In order to examine whether the gender of the victim in the scenario affected perceptions of seriousness, related t tests were performed between the mean seriousness ratings for the behaviour if the victim was female and mean seriousness ratings for the behaviour if the victim was male. These tests were performed for

direct and indirect bullying on the entire data set, and also for each individual group, gender and school.

### 3.4.5 Direct bullying

Direct Bullying: How serious it is when it happens to a girl – combined scores of five items. Each item rated 0-4. Maximum possible score = 20, minimum possible score = 0

Direct Bullying: How serious it is when it happens to a boy – combined scores of five items. Each item rated 0-4. Maximum possible score = 20, minimum possible score = 0

*Table 20. Perceived seriousness for direct bullying based on the gender of the victim*

	MEAN FEMALE VICTIM	SD	MEAN MALE VICTIM	SD	T RESULT
Overall	14.20	4.14	13.84	4.19	t = 6.03***, df = 1237
Year 8	13.47	3.88	13.09	3.92	t = 4.22***, df = 652
Year 11	13.57	4.19	13.14	4.10	t = 4.10***, df = 391
Teachers	18.01	2.49	17.89	2.66	t = 2.47*, df = 136
Support staff	17.68	3.13	17.63	3.17	t = 0.77, df = 55
Males	13.40	4.53	13.46	4.26	t = -0.61, df = 587
Females	15.02	3.56	14.28	4.05	t = 10.26***, df = 603
School 1	13.52	4.22	13.21	4.25	t = 3.08**, df = 400
School 2	14.21	4.26	14.04	4.37	t = 1.56, df = 277
School 3	14.17	3.99	13.85	3.96	t = 2.855**, df = 348
School 4	15.50	3.81	14.78	4.02	t = 4.61***, df = 209

\*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001

There were significant differences in the ratings of seriousness in all cases with the exceptions of support staff, males overall and School 2 overall. Where significant differences were evident, the scenario with the female victim had higher mean ratings than the same scenario with a male victim. This suggested that direct bullying was perceived as being more serious when girls were the victims than when boys were the victims. Males perceived direct bullying as slightly more serious when boys were the victim compared to when girls were the victim but this difference did not reach statistical significance. It should be noted that the size of experimental effect calculated for each of the significant results indicated only tiny

effects. Using the formula for Cohen's  $d$  for repeated measures  $t$  (as cited in Cortina & Nouri, 2000, p.49-50), effect sizes ranged from a minimum 0.05 for teachers to a maximum of 0.17 for females overall – very small effects. The distinction between statistical significance and practical significance is an important one, and the low experimental effects calculated could be interpreted as meaning the difference in seriousness ratings between male and female victims was negligible. However, Kirk (1999) expresses concern about using calculations of effect size in a ritualistic format. Instead, he argues that researchers themselves are in the best position to judge which results are of practical significance. In addition, Howell (2002) warns against using “arbitrary conventions for  $d$ ” (2002, p.385) when deciding how large calculated differences are. With this in mind, it seems inappropriate to dismiss the statistically significant results purely on the basis of calculations of experimental effect. Furthermore, the statistically significant results obtained were significant at  $p < 0.01$  (with the exception of one result for teachers that was significant at  $p < 0.05$ ) which is recommended as a more conservative cut-off point for  $p$  where there are concerns about inflated Type I error rates (Howell, 2002). Therefore, the significant results are unlikely to be a result of chance effects. As a result, it would seem sensible to suggest that the gender of the victim appeared to have some effect on ratings of seriousness. Even though the effect may be small, the finding should not be dismissed at this stage without further investigation.

### **3.4.6 Indirect bullying**

**Indirect Bullying:** How serious it is when it happens to a girl – combined scores of four items. Each item rated 0-4. Maximum possible score = 16, minimum possible score = 0

**Indirect Bullying:** How serious it is when it happens to a boy – combined scores of four items. Each item rated 0-4. Maximum possible score = 16, minimum possible score = 0

*Table 21. Perceived seriousness for indirect bullying based on the gender of the victim*

	MEAN FEMALE VICTIM	SD	MEAN MALE VICTIM	SD	T RESULT
Overall	9.56	3.81	9.20	3.86	t = 7.50***, df = 1238
Year 8	9.17	3.59	8.78	3.59	t = 5.61***, df = 657
Year 11	8.66	3.76	8.23	3.76	t = 4.67***, df = 395
Teachers	12.94	2.75	12.87	2.78	t = 1.75, df = 129
Support staff	12.65	3.04	12.53	3.15	t = 0.77, df = 55
Males	8.68	3.84	8.60	3.82	t = 1.20, df = 590
Females	10.44	3.57	9.82	3.81	t = 8.99***, df = 601
School 1	9.10	3.69	8.73	3.73	t = 4.01**, df = 398
School 2	9.38	4.02	9.28	4.03	t = 1.25, df = 280
School 3	9.75	3.72	9.29	3.81	t = 5.37***, df = 348
School 4	10.36	3.77	9.83	3.85	t = 4.09***, df = 209

\*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001

Teachers, males, support staff and School 2 overall did not rate perceived seriousness significantly differently based on the gender of the victim. Where significant differences were evident, the scenario with the female victim had higher mean ratings than the same scenario with a male victim. This suggested that indirect bullying was perceived as being more serious when girls were the victims than when boys were the victims. Calculations of experimental effect using Cohen's *d* indicated very small effects ranging from 0.08 for participants overall to 0.15 for females overall. However, all statistically significant results were significant at  $p < 0.01$  – lowering the possibility of a Type I error. These findings reflected those of direct bullying and suggest that, although some caution should be taken due to low experimental effects, bullying in general was perceived as more serious when girls were the victims.

### 3.4.7 Using combined item totals

Although the gender of the victim had some effect on ratings of perceived seriousness, the correlation between “Direct Bullying: How serious it is when it happens to a girl” and “Direct Bullying: How serious it is when it happens to a boy” ( $r = 0.877$ ,  $n = 1238$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) was highly significant. Also, the correlation between “Indirect Bullying: How serious it is when it happens to a girl” and “Indirect Bullying: How serious it is when it happens to a boy” ( $r = 0.903$ ,  $n = 1239$ ,  $p < 0.001$ )



was highly significant. This suggested that if respondents perceived the scenarios with female victims as serious, they also perceived the scenarios with male victims as serious (even if the overall mean scores differed). The next stage of analysis therefore involved combining the two item totals for direct bullying and the two item totals for indirect bullying to form two combined item totals:

Direct Bullying: perceived seriousness (10 items)

Indirect Bullying: perceived seriousness (8 items)

This allowed investigation of general trends in perceived seriousness. Alpha coefficients for the combined item totals were calculated and found to be sufficiently high (direct bullying = 0.91; indirect bullying = 0.89). Both combined scales had skewness and kurtosis scores below 1 or -1 and normality plots indicated they were both normally distributed.

### 3.4.8 Effect of group, gender and school

#### **Direct Bullying Scenarios**

Direct Bullying: Perceived Seriousness – combined scores of 10 items. Each item rated 0-4. Maximum possible score = 40, minimum possible score = 0.

*Table 22. Descriptive statistics for perceived seriousness of direct bullying based on group*

GROUP	N	MEAN	S.D	S.E
Year 8	653	26.56	7.44	0.29
Year 11	392	26.71	8.04	0.41
Teacher	137	35.91	5.12	0.44
Support Staff	56	35.30	6.28	0.84
Total	1238	28.04	8.07	0.23

The mean ratings for perceived seriousness of direct bullying were highest for teachers and lowest for Year 8 pupils. There seemed to be a general tendency for staff (Teachers and Support Staff) to rate direct bullying as being more serious than pupils (Year 8 and 11).

*Table 23. Descriptive statistics for perceived seriousness of direct bullying based on gender*

GROUP	N	MEAN	S.D	S.E
Male	588	26.86	8.51	0.35
Female	604	29.31	7.42	0.30
Total	1192	28.10	8.07	0.23

It can be seen from the above table that females had a higher mean rating of seriousness for the direct bullying behaviours compared to males.

*Table 24. Descriptive statistics for perceived seriousness of direct bullying based on school*

GROUP	N	MEAN	S.D	S.E
School 1	401	26.73	8.21	0.41
School 2	278	28.25	8.45	0.51
School 3	349	28.03	7.66	0.41
School 4	210	30.27	7.49	0.52
Total	1238	28.04	8.07	0.23

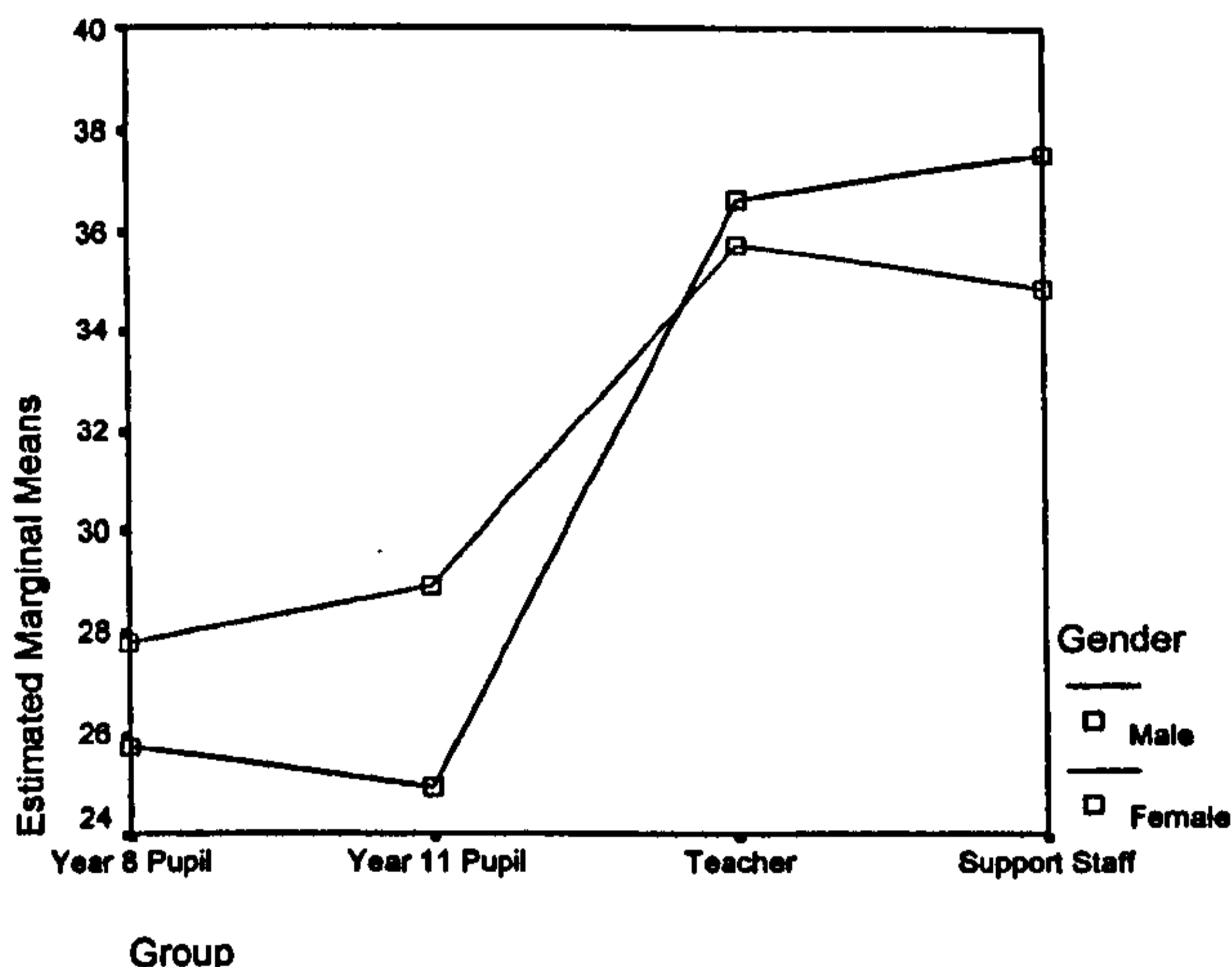
Perceived seriousness ratings for direct bullying were higher in School 4 than in the other three schools. School 1 had the lowest mean ratings for perceived seriousness.

A 3-way ANOVA was conducted with group, gender and school as independent variables and perceived seriousness for direct bullying behaviours as the dependent variable. Main effects were found for group ( $F(3, 1160) = 70.92, p < 0.001$ ) and school ( $F(3, 1160) = 3.79, p < 0.01$ ) but not for gender ( $F(1, 1160) = 0.66, p > 0.05$ ). Post hoc analysis on the group data using Games-Howell procedure (Field, 2000, recommends this test when there are unequal sample sizes and unequal population variances) revealed that there were significant differences in the means of Year 8 pupils and Teachers (mean difference = -9.60,  $p < 0.001$ ), Year 8 pupils and Support Staff (mean difference = -8.60,  $p < 0.001$ ), Year 11 pupils and Teachers (mean difference = -9.32,  $p < 0.001$ ) and Year 11 pupils and Support Staff (mean difference = -8.32,  $p < 0.001$ ). No significant differences were found between Year 8 and Year 11 pupils, or Teachers and Support Staff – suggesting that overall the significant main effect could be explained by the difference in seriousness ratings of pupils and staff.

Post hoc analysis on the school data using Games-Howell revealed significant differences in the means of School 1 and School 4 (mean difference = -3.50,  $p < 0.001$ ), School 2 and School 4 (mean difference = -2.28,  $p < 0.05$ ) and School 3 and School 4 (mean difference = -2.40,  $p < 0.01$ ). No significant between the means of the other schools were found suggesting that the overall significant main effect could be explained by the influence of School 4.

For the interaction between group and gender ( $F(3, 1160) = 4.58, p < 0.01$ ) a highly significant result was found. Fig.1 shows that male pupils (for Year 8 and 11) had lower mean seriousness ratings than female pupils but male staff (Teachers and Support Staff) had higher mean seriousness ratings than female staff.

*Fig 1. Means plot describing the interaction between group and gender for perceived seriousness of direct bullying*



There were no significant interactions found between school and group ( $F(9, 1160) = 1.06, p > 0.05$ ), school and gender ( $F(3, 1160) = 0.52, p > 0.05$ ) or school, group and gender combined ( $F(9, 1160) = 0.82, p > 0.05$ ).

### Indirect Bullying Scenarios

Indirect Bullying: Perceived Seriousness – combined scores of eight items. Each item rated 0-4. Maximum possible score = 32, minimum possible score = 0.

*Table 25. Descriptive statistics for perceived seriousness of indirect bullying based on group*

GROUP	N	MEAN	S.D	S.E
Year 8	658	17.95	6.95	0.27
Year 11	396	16.89	7.29	0.37
Teacher	130	25.81	5.52	0.48
Support Staff	55	25.18	6.16	0.83
Total	1239	18.76	7.48	0.21

The mean ratings for perceived seriousness of indirect bullying were highest for Teachers and lowest for Year 11 pupils. There seemed to be a general tendency for staff (Teachers and Support Staff) to rate indirect bullying as being more serious than pupils (Year 8 and 11).

*Table 26. Descriptive statistics for perceived seriousness of indirect bullying based on gender*

GROUP	N	MEAN	S.D	S.E
Male	591	17.28	7.48	0.31
Female	602	20.26	7.19	0.29
Total	1193	18.78	7.48	0.22

It can be seen from the above table that females had a higher mean rating of seriousness for the indirect bullying behaviours compared to males. This difference between males and females appeared greater than for direct bullying.

*Table 27. Descriptive statistics for perceived seriousness of indirect bullying based on school*

GROUP	N	MEAN	S.D	S.E
School 1	399	17.82	7.19	0.36
School 2	281	18.66	7.92	0.47
School 3	349	19.04	7.36	0.39
School 4	210	20.19	7.39	0.51
Total	1239	18.76	7.48	0.21

Perceived seriousness ratings for indirect bullying were higher in School 4 than in the other three schools. School 1 had the lowest mean ratings for perceived seriousness. These results again mirrored those found with direct bullying.

A 3-way ANOVA was conducted with group, gender and school as independent variables and perceived seriousness for indirect bullying behaviours as the

dependent variable. Main effects were evident for group ( $F(3, 1161) = 60.25, p < 0.001$ ), gender ( $F(1, 1161) = 4.72, p < 0.05$ ) and school ( $F(3, 1161) = 2.80, p < 0.05$ ). Post hoc analysis on the group data using Games-Howell procedure revealed that there were significant differences in the means of Year 8 pupils and Teachers (mean difference =  $-8.02, p < 0.001$ ), Year 8 pupils and Support Staff (mean difference =  $-7.39, p < 0.001$ ), Year 11 pupils and Teachers (mean difference =  $-9.18, p < 0.001$ ) and Year 11 pupils and Support Staff (mean difference =  $-8.54, p < 0.001$ ). No significant differences were found between Year 8 and Year 11 pupils, or Teachers and Support Staff – suggesting that overall the significant main effect could be explained by the difference in seriousness ratings of pupils and staff. This reflected the findings from direct bullying.

Post hoc analysis on the school data using Games-Howell procedure revealed a sole significant difference in the means of School 1 and School 4 (mean difference =  $-2.28, p < 0.001$ ), suggesting that the overall significant main effect could be explained by the difference between School 1 and School 4.

No significant interactions were found between gender and group ( $F(3, 1161) = 1.17, p > 0.05$ ), group and school ( $F(9, 1161) = 0.75, p > 0.05$ ) or school and gender ( $F(3, 1161) = 0.07, p > 0.05$ ). There was also no significant 3-way interaction between school, group and gender ( $F(9, 1161) = 0.19, p > 0.05$ ).

#### **3.4.9 Relationship with experience (staff)**

In order to investigate whether the length of time staff had worked in the school environment (as a teacher or member of support staff) was related to how serious they thought bullying behaviours were, Pearson's correlation coefficient was calculated and found to be non-significant for both direct bullying ( $r = 0.08, n = 171, p > 0.05$ ) and indirect bullying ( $r = 0.09, n = 163, p > 0.05$ ).

### 3.4.10 Effect of definition of bullying

It is possible that participants who thought a particular behaviour could be defined as bullying, may therefore rate it as being more serious. In order to investigate this, questions about defining bullying were compared to overall ratings of seriousness for the direct bullying and indirect bullying behaviours. Firstly, the groups were partitioned based on their responses to questions about defining bullying. Next, the responses to the questions about defining bullying were used as independent variables in a 2-way ANOVA, with perceived seriousness ratings for direct or indirect bullying as the dependent variable and group (Year 8, Year 11, Teachers and Support Staff) as the other independent variable. This was performed for each behaviour that fell under the category of direct or indirect bullying.

*Table 28. Effect of definition of bullying on ratings of perceived seriousness*

BEHAVIOUR	MAIN EFFECT OF RESPONSE	INTERACTION WITH GROUP
<b>Direct bullying</b>		
Hit/kick/punch	F (2, 1225) = 17.72***	F (6, 1225) = 0.209
Stealing	F (2, 1226) = 8.01***	F (6, 1226) = 0.92
Nasty name-calling	F (2, 1226) = 28.99***	F (4, 1226) = 0.87
Damaging belongings	F (2, 1226) = 31.22***	F (4, 1226) = 0.33
Threats	F (2, 1227) = 13.36***	F (4, 1227) = 2.70*
<b>Indirect bullying</b>		
Social exclusion	F (2, 1227) = 35.10***	F (6, 1227) = 0.63
Nasty e-mails/texts	F (2, 1226) = 47.48***	F (4, 1226) = 2.66*
Spreading rumours	F (2, 1226) = 27.37***	F (6, 1226) = 0.50
Getting others into trouble	F (2, 1226) = 36.73***	F (6, 1226) = 1.24

\*p<0.05; \*\*p<0.01; \*\*\*p<0.001

Significant main effects were revealed for all behaviours. Examining the descriptive statistics and post-hoc analysis (see Tables C – K, Appendix 18, p.626) revealed that perceptions of seriousness were higher for respondents who defined the particular behaviours as bullying. Interactions with group were revealed for threats and nasty e-mails/text messages, where graphs illustrated that ‘pupils’ (Year 8 and 11) and ‘staff’ (Teacher and Support Staff) formed distinct groups in their ratings of seriousness when they defined the behaviours as bullying (see Fig A and Fig B, Appendix 18, p.631).

### **3.4.11 Link between direct and indirect seriousness ratings**

Although direct and indirect behaviours are different, the term bullying encompasses them both. Therefore, it could be predicted that if respondents regarded direct bullying behaviours as serious, they would also be likely to regard indirect bullying as serious. The correlation between seriousness ratings for direct and indirect bullying was found to be highly significant ( $r = 0.72$ ,  $n = 1215$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) – supporting this prediction. However, although seriousness for direct and indirect behaviours were correlated, the overall mean ratings may have been very different. The item total for perceived seriousness of indirect bullying was created from four individual items, whereas direct bullying was created from five items. Therefore, the maximum and minimum ratings were different and could not be meaningfully compared in their current format. The item total for indirect bullying was 80% of the item total for direct bullying (maximum rating for indirect bullying = 32, maximum for direct bullying = 40), so individual ratings for direct bullying were multiplied by 0.8 to convert scores to the same format as indirect ratings. A related t test was performed between perceived seriousness for indirect bullying and the newly calculated variable of perceived seriousness for direct bullying ( $t = -24.41$ ,  $df = 1214$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and revealed that there was a significant difference between ratings. Examination of the mean scores illustrated that indirect bullying behaviours were rated as less serious than direct bullying behaviours (perceived seriousness for indirect bullying: mean = 18.74,  $sd = 7.47$ ; perceived seriousness for direct bullying: mean = 22.44,  $sd = 6.47$ ).

### **3.4.12 Summary of findings for perceived seriousness**

The gender of the victim portrayed in the scenarios seemed to have a small effect on ratings of seriousness in the majority of cases with behaviours being rated more seriously if the victim was a girl.

For the direct bullying behaviours, the group participants belonged to affected their seriousness ratings. Post-hoc analysis revealed that pupils (Year 8 and 11) had lower mean seriousness ratings than staff (Teachers and Support Staff). Gender also appeared to be important with females rating direct bullying as more serious compared to males – although this result did not reach statistical significance. A

significant interaction was revealed between group and gender. School differences were also evident with post-hoc analysis indicating that respondents in School 4 rated direct bullying more seriously than respondents in the other schools. Significant differences on seriousness ratings were found for all direct bullying behaviours, based on whether respondents defined particular direct behaviours as bullying or not. Post-hoc analysis suggested that mean seriousness ratings for direct bullying were higher for respondents who defined the behaviour as bullying. There was no interaction with the group participants belonged to except for threats where an interaction with group was revealed.

For indirect bullying behaviours, the group participants belonged to affected their seriousness ratings. Post-hoc analysis revealed that pupils (Year 8 and 11) had lower mean seriousness ratings than staff (Teachers and Support Staff). Gender was also a factor with females rating indirect bullying as more serious compared to males. School differences were also evident with post-hoc analysis indicating that respondents in School 1 rated indirect bullying as less serious compared to respondents in School 4. Significant differences on seriousness ratings were found for all indirect bullying behaviours, based on whether respondents defined particular indirect behaviours as bullying or not. Post-hoc analysis suggested that mean seriousness ratings for indirect bullying were higher for respondents who defined the behaviour as bullying. There was no interaction with the group participants belonged to except for nasty e-mails/text messages where an interaction with group was revealed.

The relationship between ratings of seriousness for direct and indirect behaviours showed that high seriousness ratings on direct behaviours tended to mean high seriousness ratings on indirect behaviours – and vice versa. For staff, there was no relationship between experience and seriousness ratings for either direct or indirect bullying behaviours. Overall, indirect bullying behaviours were rated as less serious than direct bullying behaviours.



### **3.5 Reported frequency of hearing about bullying behaviours**

The reported frequency that pupils and staff heard about particular behaviours occurring in the school were measured by two questions in each scenario – one for boys and one for girls:

How often do you hear about this happening to a GIRL in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
-------	----------------------	-------------	----------------------	-----------

How often do you hear about this happening to a BOY in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
-------	----------------------	-------------	----------------------	-----------

In order to provide a succinct summary of the perceived frequencies of different bullying behaviours in the school, the responses on the following scale were scored accordingly:

(How often do you hear about this happening to a BOY/GIRL in your school?)

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
0	1	2	3	4

It was then possible to calculate the bullying behaviours believed to occur in the highest frequency, and compare them directly to others.

Initial analysis involved calculating the mean rating for frequency of hearing about each behaviour (for the behaviour when it happens to a girl and boy separately) and rank them in order of magnitude for each group (Year 8, 11, Teachers and Support Staff) based on gender. It could then be seen which behaviours were heard about more often than others. For each group, the four behaviours heard about the most and the four behaviours heard about the least are highlighted.

Table 29. Reported frequencies of hearing about individual behaviours for pupils and staff

BEHAVIOUR	YEAR 8 BOYS		YEAR 8 GIRLS		YEAR 11 BOYS		YEAR 11 GIRLS		MALE TEACHERS		FEMALE TEACHERS		MALE SUPPORT STAFF		FEMALE SUPPORT STAFF	
	Rank order	Mean score	Rank order	Mean score	Rank order	Mean score	Rank order	Mean score	Rank order	Mean score	Rank order	Mean score	Rank order	Mean score	Rank order	Mean score
Nasty Names (boys)	1	2.32	3	1.95	1	2.64	3	2.30	2	2.32	2	2.23	1	2.38	4	1.83
Hit/kick/punch (boys)	2	2.29	5	1.89	5	2.15	8	1.69	5	1.80	5	1.91	6.5	1.79	5	1.72
Arguing (girls)	3	2.15	1	2.47	2	2.35	2	2.48	1	2.40	1	2.32	2.5	2.33	1	2.17
Nasty names (girls)	4	2.09	2	2.30	3	2.32	1	2.54	4	2.18	3	2.14	4	2.08	2	2.00
Arguing (boys)	5	2.04	8	1.79	4	2.28	7	1.78	3	2.21	4	2.07	2.5	2.33	3	1.92
Spreading rumours (girls)	6	1.85	4	1.92	7	1.96	4	2.15	6	1.51	9	1.31	15.5	1.36	8	1.33
Spreading rumours (boys)	7	1.72	13	1.48	8	1.90	11	1.46	14	1.24	18	0.93	15.5	1.36	15.5	1.03
Copying homework (boys)	8	1.70	9	1.69	6	2.00	6	1.94	21	0.68	21.5	0.67	20.5	1.08	21	0.71
Threats (boys)	9	1.64	15	1.44	10	1.88	9.5	1.47	7	1.40	8	1.42	5	1.86	12	1.23
Copying homework (girls)	10	1.58	6	1.85	9	1.89	5	2.10	22	0.66	21.5	0.67	20.5	1.08	22	0.68
Getting in trouble (boys)	11	1.57	14	1.47	11	1.82	13	1.41	15	1.20	17	1.00	10	1.46	19	0.91
Social exclusion (boys)	12	1.43	18	1.31	14	1.58	18	1.10	10	1.29	10	1.29	12.5	1.38	10	1.28
Threats (girls)	13	1.41	10	1.61	13	1.62	9.5	1.47	11	1.27	12	1.22	6.5	1.79	11	1.26
Getting in trouble (girls)	14	1.40	12	1.53	15	1.53	15	1.28	18	1.11	20	0.88	10	1.46	20	0.83
Social exclusion (girls)	15	1.34	7	1.81	16	1.38	14	1.37	8	1.35	7	1.52	8	1.54	7	1.44
Damaging property (boys)	16	1.33	22	1.14	15	1.45	21	1.02	13	1.25	13.5	1.16	19	1.13	9	1.29
Stealing (boys)	17	1.32	20	1.20	20	1.23	22	0.91	16	1.18	11	1.27	15.5	1.36	15.5	1.03
Damaging property (girls)	18	1.21	17	1.32	17	1.37	16	1.14	19	1.02	19	0.90	18	1.29	18	0.94
Hit/kick/punch (girls)	19	1.19	11	1.60	21	1.09	12	1.42	9	1.32	6	1.55	15.5	1.36	6	1.61
Choosing to be alone (boys)	20	1.15	21	1.16	18	1.31	19	1.09	12	1.26	15	1.14	10	1.46	13.5	1.08
Choosing to be alone (girls)	21	1.09	16	1.42	19	1.26	17	1.11	17	1.17	13.5	1.16	12.5	1.38	13.5	1.08
Stealing (girls)	22	0.95	19	1.30	23	0.87	20	1.06	20	0.98	16	1.08	22	1.00	17	1.00
E-mails/texts (boys)	24	0.64	24	0.58	24	0.83	24	0.49	24	0.36	24	0.27	23	0.50	24	0.40
E-mails/texts (girls)	23	0.68	23	0.76	22	0.88	23	0.70	23	0.42	23	0.42	24	0.43	23	0.49

### **3.5.1 Describing the mean ratings**

The behaviours reported to be heard about most often were boys being called nasty names, girls arguing, girls being called nasty names and boys arguing. Boys being hit, kicked or punched and girls having rumours spread about them were also common. Behaviours heard about the least often were boys and girls being sent nasty e-mails or text messages and girls having belongings stolen. It was noted that there was a lack of consistency across groups about the behaviours heard about the most and least often. There were also some differences based on the gender of the victim. For example, girls spreading rumours was heard about more often than boys spreading rumours. However, in most cases the gender of the victim did not have a large affect on reported frequencies of hearing about behaviours occurring. Overall, the actual mean ratings for hearing about behaviours were quite similar across groups. There were perhaps slightly lower mean scores for staff members, suggesting they heard about behaviours less often, but this difference was not substantial.

### **3.5.2 Using item totals**

At the beginning of the analysis section it was outlined how numerous individual questions on the questionnaire were combined to form item totals. For the questions relating to reported frequencies of hearing about behaviours, four item totals were computed:

Direct Bullying: How often they hear about it happening to a girl (5 items)

Direct Bullying: How often they hear about it happening to a boy (5 items)

Indirect Bullying: How often they hear about it happening to a girl (4 items)

Indirect Bullying: How often they hear about it happening to a boy (4 items)

(NB: the item totals for Ambiguous Behaviours are not included because the reliability coefficients were not acceptable)

In order to examine whether the gender of the victim in the scenario affected the reported frequency of hearing about incidents, related t tests were performed between the mean frequency ratings for the behaviour if the victim was female and mean frequency ratings for the behaviour if the victim was male. These tests were performed for direct and indirect bullying on the entire data set, and also for each individual group, gender and school.

### 3.5.3 Direct bullying

Direct Bullying: How often they hear about it happening to a girl – combined scores of five items. Each item rated 0-4. Maximum possible score = 20, minimum possible score = 0

Direct Bullying: How often they hear about it happening to a boy – combined scores of five items. Each item rated 0-4. Maximum possible score = 20, minimum possible score = 0

*Table 30. Reported frequencies for hearing about direct bullying based on the gender of the victim*

	MEAN FEMALE VICTIM	SD	MEAN MALE VICTIM	SD	T RESULT
Overall	7.38	3.80	8.26	3.94	t = -10.50***, df = 1237
Year 8	7.47	3.92	8.28	4.04	t = -6.44***, df = 654
Year 11	7.44	3.78	8.42	3.88	t = -6.82***, df = 392
Teachers	6.94	3.18	7.98	3.41	t = -6.98***, df = 135
Support staff	7.04	3.88	7.44	4.42	t = -1.69, df = 53
Males	7.01	3.64	8.98	3.97	t = -18.37***, df = 591
Females	7.75	3.93	7.56	3.79	t = 1.64, df = 600
School 1	6.68	3.87	7.61	4.01	t = -6.87***, df = 400
School 2	7.41	3.45	8.50	4.02	t = -6.74***, df = 279
School 3	7.47	3.60	8.48	3.64	t = -6.37***, df = 347
School 4	8.55	4.14	8.79	4.08	t = -1.02, df = 208

\*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001

With the exception of Support Staff, School 4 and females overall, the gender of the victim affected reported frequencies of hearing about direct bullying behaviours.

Where significant differences occurred, respondents claimed to hear about the behaviours happening to boys more often than girls. Calculations of experimental effect using Cohen's *d* revealed effect sizes ranging from a minimum of 0.14 for Year 8 overall to a maximum of 0.4 for males overall indicating a small to moderate effect.

### **3.5.4 Indirect bullying**

Indirect Bullying: How often they hear about it happening to a girl – combined scores of four items. Each item rated 0-4. Maximum possible score = 16, minimum possible score = 0

Indirect Bullying: How often they hear about it happening to a boy – combined scores of four items. Each item rated 0-4. Maximum possible score = 16, minimum possible score = 0

*Table 31. Reported frequencies for hearing about indirect bullying based on the gender of the victim*

	MEAN FEMALE VICTIM	SD	MEAN MALE VICTIM	SD	T RESULT
Overall	5.45	3.26	5.01	3.26	t = 8.07***, df = 1237
Year 8	5.62	3.36	5.12	3.27	t = 6.16***, df = 658
Year 11	5.70	3.26	5.38	3.42	t = 3.28***, df = 393
Teachers	4.30	2.43	3.78	2.28	t = 5.19***, df = 130
Support staff	4.41	3.11	4.02	3.14	t = 3.11**, df = 53
Males	5.35	3.30	5.51	3.37	t = -2.25*, df = 589
Females	5.53	3.22	4.51	3.05	t = 12.60***, df = 600
School 1	4.95	3.20	4.57	3.16	t = 4.09***, df = 398
School 2	5.42	3.14	5.12	3.18	t = 3.11**, df = 274
School 3	5.67	3.28	5.20	3.29	t = 4.31***, df = 352
School 4	6.09	3.38	5.38	3.43	t = 4.59***, df = 210

\*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001

In all cases, the gender of the victim affected reported frequencies of hearing about indirect bullying. Respondents claimed to hear about indirect bullying happening to girls more often than boys. Cohen's *d* revealed effect sizes ranging from a minimum

of 0.04 for males overall to a maximum of 0.26 for females overall. Cohen (1969, as cited in Plutchik, 1983) would regard this as a small effect size. However, as discussed in section 3.4.5, Kirk (1999) warns against an over-reliance on such measures and therefore practical significance for these and the above results for direct bullying should not be dismissed without further investigation.

### **3.5.5 Using combined item totals**

Although the gender of the victim had a small effect on reported frequencies of hearing about behaviours, the correlation between “Direct Bullying: How often they hear about it happening to a girl” and “Direct Bullying: How often they hear about it happening to a boy” ( $r = 0.714$ ,  $n = 1238$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) was highly significant. Also, the correlation between “Indirect Bullying: How often they hear about it happening to a girl” and “Indirect Bullying: How often they hear about it happening to a boy” ( $r = 0.825$ ,  $n = 1238$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) was highly significant. This suggested that if respondents heard about the behaviours happening to females, they also heard about the behaviours happening to males (even if the overall mean scores differed). The next stage of analysis therefore involved combining the two item totals for direct bullying and the two item totals for indirect bullying to form two combined item totals:

Direct Bullying: How often they hear about it happening (10 items)

Indirect Bullying: How often they hear about it happening (8 items)

This allowed investigation of general trends in reported rates of hearing about incidents. Alpha coefficients for the combined item totals were calculated and found to be sufficiently high (direct bullying = 0.85; indirect bullying = 0.85). Both combined scales had skewness and kurtosis scores below 1 or -1 and normality plots indicated they were both normally distributed.

### 3.5.6 Effect of group, gender and school

#### **Direct bullying behaviours**

Direct Bullying: Frequency of hearing about it – combined scores of 10 items. Each item rated 0-4. Maximum possible score = 40, minimum possible score = 0.

*Table 32. Descriptive statistics for reported frequencies of hearing about direct bullying based on group*

GROUP	N	MEAN	S.D	S.E
Year 8	655	15.75	7.28	0.28
Year 11	393	15.86	7.10	0.36
Teacher	136	14.92	6.37	0.55
Support Staff	54	14.48	8.12	1.11
Total	1238	15.67	7.17	0.20

The reported frequency of hearing about direct bullying was higher for pupils than for staff. Year 11 pupils had the highest mean rating suggesting they heard about direct bullying occurring more often than the other groups.

*Table 33. Descriptive statistics for reported frequencies of hearing about direct bullying based on gender*

GROUP	N	MEAN	S.D	S.E
Male	592	15.99	7.15	0.29
Female	601	15.30	7.18	0.29
Total	1193	15.64	7.17	0.21

Males had a higher reported frequency of hearing about direct bullying but this difference was not substantial.

*Table 34. Descriptive statistics for reported frequencies of hearing about direct bullying based on school*

GROUP	N	MEAN	S.D	S.E
School 1	401	14.29	7.40	0.37
School 2	280	15.91	6.99	0.42
School 3	348	15.95	6.60	0.35
School 4	209	17.33	7.46	0.52
Total	1238	15.64	7.17	0.20

School 4 had the highest mean rating suggesting that respondents from this school heard about direct bullying occurring more often than in the other schools. School 1 had the lowest reported rated of hearing about direct bullying.

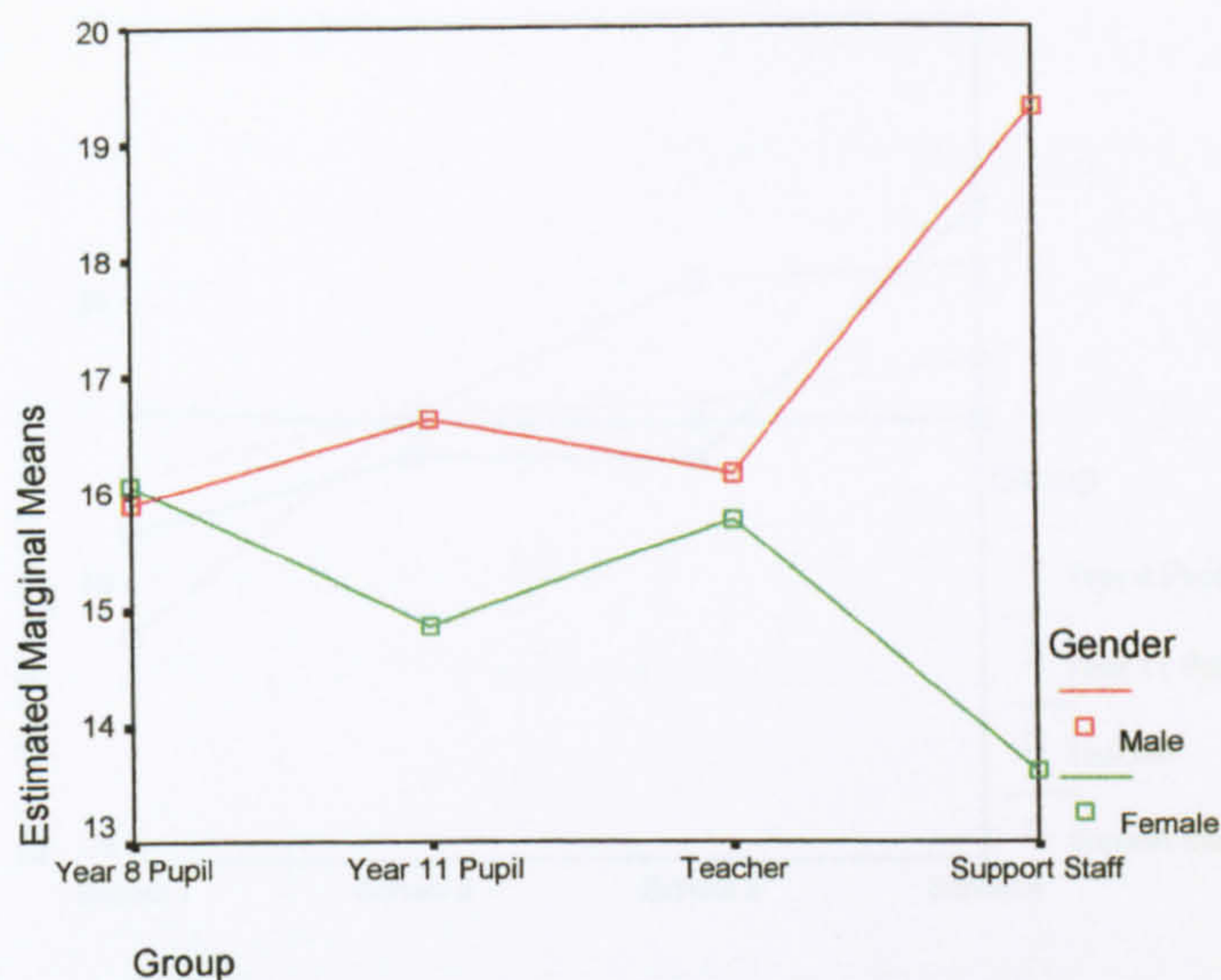
A 3-way ANOVA was conducted with group, gender and school as independent variables and frequency of hearing about direct bullying behaviours as the dependent variable. Main effects were evident for gender ( $F(1, 1160) = 6.87, p < 0.01$ ) and school ( $F(3, 1160) = 16.42, p < 0.001$ ). No significant main effect was found for group ( $F(3, 1161) = 0.15, p > 0.05$ ).

Post hoc analysis on the school data using Games-Howell procedure revealed that there were significant differences in the means of School 1 and School 3 (mean difference = -1.55,  $p < 0.05$ ) and School 1 and School 4 (mean difference = -2.99,  $p < 0.001$ ). No other significant differences were found between the schools so it seemed to be the influence of School 1 that contributed to the significant main effect.

For the interaction between group and gender ( $F(3, 1161) = 2.73, p < 0.05$ ) a significant result was found. Fig.2 shows that in Year 8, female pupils heard about direct bullying behaviours slightly more often than male pupils did. However, in all other groups, males heard about direct bullying behaviours more often than females. This was especially true for support staff where there is a highly notable difference between the reported frequencies of hearing about direct bullying behaviours of males and females.

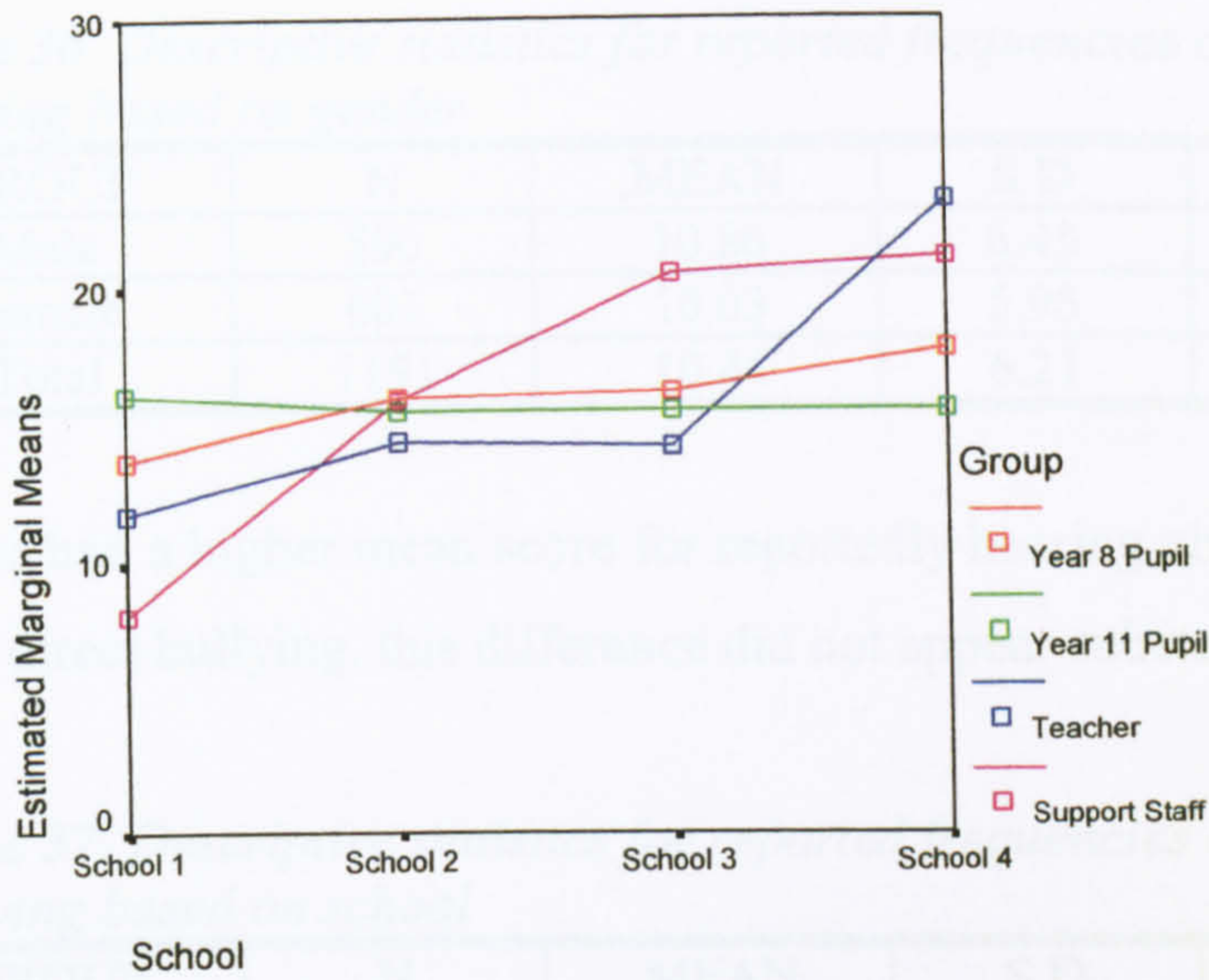


Fig 2. Means plot describing the interaction between group and gender for reported frequency of hearing about direct bullying



A significant interaction was found between school and group ( $F(9, 1161) = 5.804, p < 0.001$ ). Fig.3 illustrates the complex interaction between the variables. It appeared that the differences in reported frequencies of hearing about direct bullying behaviours based on group varied in each school. In School 1, staff (Teachers and Support Staff) reported to hear about these behaviours less often than pupils in Year 8 or Year 11. In School 2, the mean ratings of reported frequencies are very similar between groups. In School 3, Support Staff reported to hear about direct bullying behaviours occurring more often than any other group. Teachers reportedly heard about it the least often. In School 4 however, Teachers seemed to hear about direct bullying more often than other groups. It is interesting that the actual mean ratings for pupils based on school seemed to remain reasonably constant. It is the ratings for staff that appeared to vary so much between schools.

Fig 3. Means plot describing the interaction between school and group for reported frequency of hearing about direct bullying



No significant interaction was found between school and gender ( $F(3, 1161) = 0.98, p > 0.05$ ), but there was a significant 3-way interaction between school, group and gender ( $F(9, 1161) = 1.91, p < 0.05$ ). This interaction only just reached significance and the  $F$  value is relatively small. It is likely that this interaction is a result of the significant 2-way interaction between school and group.

### Indirect bullying behaviours

Indirect Bullying: Frequency of hearing about it – combined scores of eight items. Each item rated 0-4. Maximum possible score = 32, minimum possible score = 0.

Table 35. Descriptive statistics for reported frequencies of hearing about indirect bullying based on group

GROUP	N	MEAN	S.D	S.E
Year 8	659	10.74	6.29	0.24
Year 11	394	11.08	6.41	0.32
Teacher	131	8.08	4.58	0.40
Support Staff	54	8.43	6.18	0.84
Total	1238	10.47	6.23	0.18

Year 11 pupils reported to hear about indirect bullying occurring more often than the other groups. Teachers reported to hear about indirect bullying the least often.

*Table 36. Descriptive statistics for reported frequencies of hearing about indirect bullying based on gender*

GROUP	N	MEAN	S.D	S.E
Male	590	10.86	6.45	0.27
Female	601	10.03	5.95	0.24
Total	1191	10.44	6.21	0.18

Males had a higher mean score for reportedly hearing about indirect bullying, but as with direct bullying, this difference did not appear substantial.

*Table 37. Descriptive statistics for reported frequencies of hearing about indirect bullying based on school*

GROUP	N	MEAN	S.D	S.E
School 1	399	9.52	6.10	0.31
School 2	275	10.54	6.10	0.37
School 3	353	10.88	6.24	0.33
School 4	211	11.47	6.44	0.44
Total	1238	10.47	6.23	0.18

As was found for direct bullying, participants from School 4 reported to hear about indirect bullying occurring more often than the other schools and participants from School 1 reported to hear about it the least often.

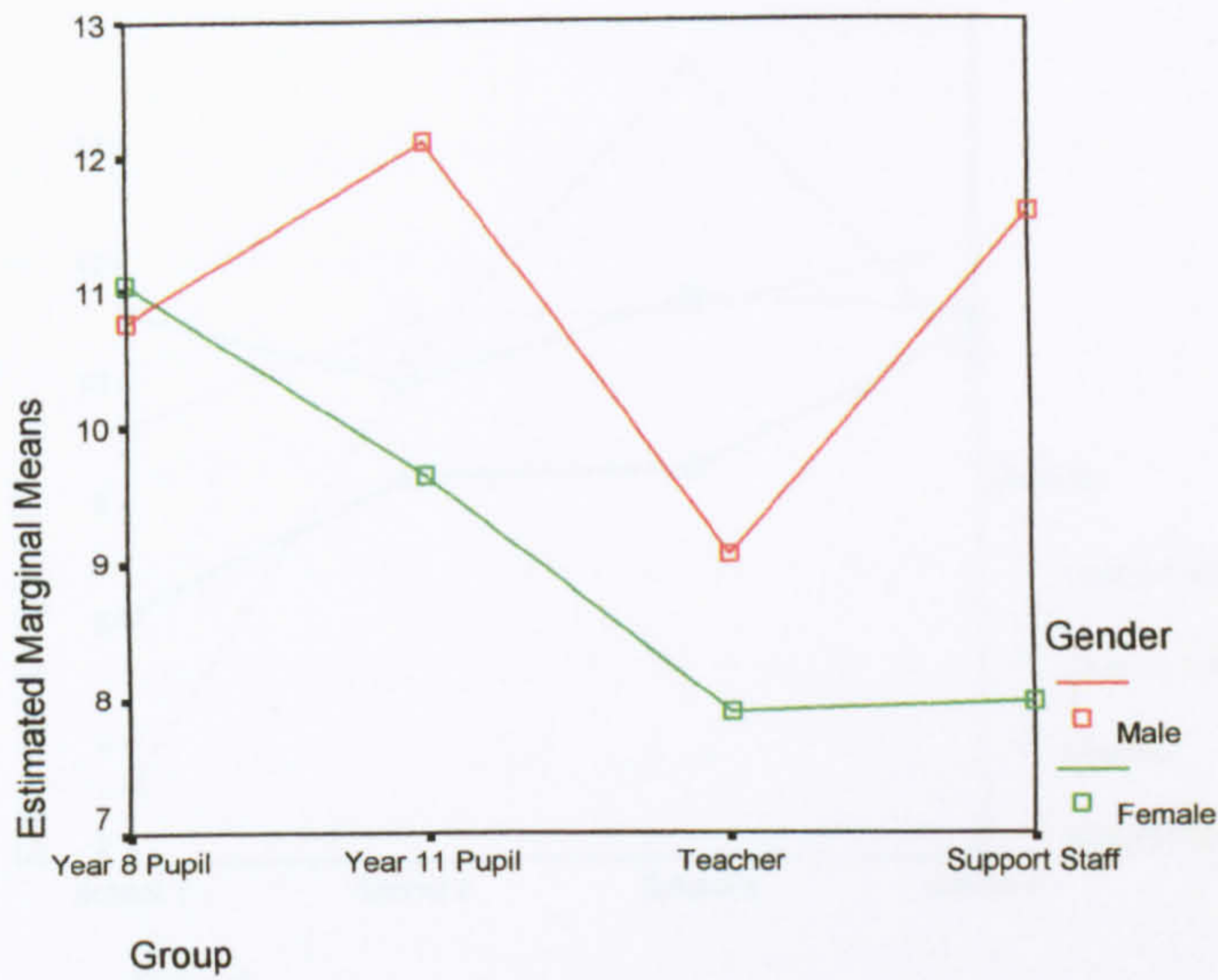
A 3-way ANOVA was conducted with group, gender and school as independent variables and frequency of hearing about indirect bullying behaviours as the dependent variable. Main effects were evident for group ( $F(3, 1159) = 5.44, p < 0.001$ ), gender ( $F(1, 1159) = 7.14, p < 0.01$ ) and school ( $F(3, 1159) = 9.17, p < 0.001$ ). Post hoc analysis on the group data using Games-Howell procedure revealed that there were significant differences in the means of Year 8 pupils and Teachers (mean difference = 2.66,  $p < 0.001$ ), Year 8 pupils and Support Staff (mean difference = 2.58,  $p < 0.05$ ), Year 11 pupils and Teachers (mean difference = 2.85,  $p < 0.001$ ) and Year 11 pupils and Support Staff (mean difference = 2.76,  $p < 0.05$ ). No significant differences were found between Year 8 and Year 11 pupils, or Teachers

and Support Staff – suggesting that overall the significant main effect could be explained by the difference in reported rates of hearing about indirect bullying of pupils and staff.

Post hoc analysis on the school data using Games-Howell procedure revealed that there were significant differences in the means of School 1 and School 3 (mean difference = -1.28,  $p < 0.05$ ) and School 1 and School 4 (mean difference = -1.77,  $p < 0.01$ ). No other significant differences were found between the schools so it seemed to be the influence of School 1 that contributed to the significant main effect – reflecting the findings from direct bullying.

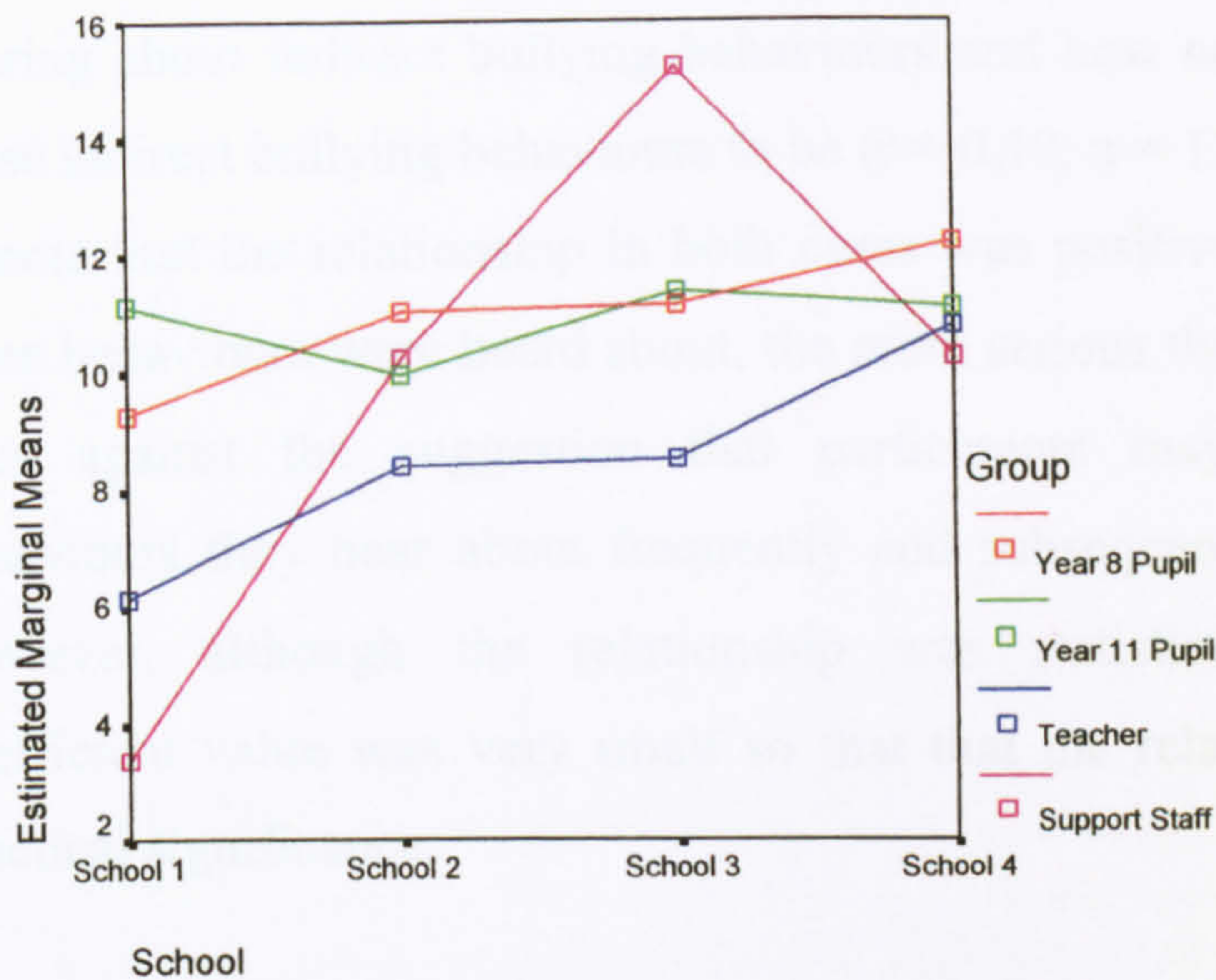
A significant interaction was found between gender and group ( $F(3, 1159) = 3.97$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Fig.4 illustrates that for Year 8 pupils, females reported to hear about indirect bullying slightly more often than male pupils – but the means were quite similar. In the other groups, males reported to hear about these behaviours more often than females. This was especially notable in Year 11 and with Support Staff, where means ratings for males differed largely from mean ratings for females. Interestingly, teachers overall had lower mean ratings than other groups suggesting they heard about indirect bullying behaviours the least often.

Fig 4. Means plot describing the interaction between gender and group for reported frequency of hearing about indirect bullying



A significant interaction was also found between school and group ( $F(9, 1159) = 2.90, p < 0.01$ ). Fig.5 shows that in School 1 pupils in Year 8 and 11 had higher mean ratings than staff (especially Support Staff) suggesting that they heard about indirect bullying behaviours occurring more often. This difference was less noticeable in Schools 2 and 4, and, in fact, in School 2 Support Staff had slightly higher mean ratings than Year 11 pupils. However, School 3 showed a notable peak in support staff responses with their mean rating being much higher than for the other groups. This suggests that, in School 3, support staff heard about indirect bullying occurring more often than pupils or teachers. With the slight exception of School 4, Teachers had lower mean ratings than pupils indicating that they heard about these behaviours occurring less frequently than pupils.

Fig 5. Means plot describing the interaction between school and group for reported frequency of hearing about indirect bullying



There was no significant interaction between school and gender ( $F(3, 1159) = 1.17, p > 0.05$ ) and no significant 3-way interaction between school, group and gender ( $F(9, 1159) = 1.39, p > 0.05$ ) for reported frequencies of hearing about indirect bullying behaviours occurring.

### 3.5.7 Relationship with experience (staff)

In order to investigate whether the length of time staff had worked in the school environment (as a teacher or member of support staff) was related to how often they heard about bullying behaviours occurring, Pearson's correlation coefficient was calculated and found to be non-significant for direct bullying ( $r = -0.02, n = 168, p > 0.05$ ) and indirect bullying ( $r = -0.01, n = 163, p > 0.05$ ).

### 3.5.8 Relationship with perceived seriousness

It is possible that how often respondents heard about particular bullying incidents could be related to how serious they perceived those behaviours to be. Pearson's correlation coefficient was calculated and revealed a significant correlation between

reported frequencies of hearing about direct bullying behaviours and how serious respondents perceived those direct bullying behaviours to be ( $r = 0.07$ ,  $n = 1224$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). A significant correlation was also found between reported frequencies of hearing about indirect bullying behaviours and how serious respondents perceived those indirect bullying behaviours to be ( $r = 0.10$ ,  $n = 1226$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). It is interesting to note that the relationship in both cases was positive – suggesting that the more often behaviours were heard about, the more serious they were perceived to be. This goes against the suggestion that participants may become ‘desensitised’ to behaviours they hear about frequently and subsequently take them less seriously. However, although the relationship was statistically significant, the actual coefficient value was very small so that the relationship is unlikely to be of practical significance.

When correlation coefficients were calculated for the relationship between reported frequencies of hearing about bullying behaviours and perceived seriousness ratings for those behaviours based on the gender of the victim involved, significant relationships were also found (Direct bullying for a female victim:  $r = 0.11$ ,  $n = 1239$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ; for a male victim:  $r = 0.07$ ,  $n = 1230$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ; Indirect bullying for a female victim:  $r = 0.14$ ,  $n = 1231$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ; for a male victim:  $r = 0.09$ ,  $n = 1230$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). So, this again suggests that the more behaviours are heard about, the more serious they are perceived to be irrespective of the gender of the victim involved. However, as outlined, the actual coefficient value was small so that although statistically significant, that relationship is unlikely to be of practical significance.

### **3.5.9 Effect on definition of bullying**

It is possible that participants who heard about behaviours happening in school more often may be more likely to define them as bullying. In order to investigate this, questions about defining bullying were compared to reported frequencies for hearing about direct and indirect bullying behaviours. Firstly, the groups were partitioned based on their responses to questions about whether the particular behaviour was

bullying or not (yes, unsure or no). The mean reported frequencies could then be examined. Next, the responses to the questions about defining bullying were used as independent variables in a 2-way ANOVA, with reported frequencies of hearing about direct or indirect bullying as the dependent variable and group (Year 8, Year 11, Teachers and Support Staff) as the other independent variable. This was performed for each behaviour that fell under the category of direct and indirect bullying.

*Table 38. Effect of reported frequencies of hearing about bullying on how bullying is defined*

BEHAVIOUR	MAIN EFFECT OF RESPONSE*	INTERACTION WITH GROUP*
<b>Direct bullying</b>		
Hit/kick/punch	F (2, 1225) = 0.78	F (6, 1225) = 0.27
Stealing	F (2, 1226) = 2.64	F (6, 1226) = 1.22
Nasty name-calling	F (2, 1226) = 0.16	F (4, 1226) = 0.81
Damaging belongings	F (2, 1226) = 1.35	F (4, 1226) = 0.87
Threats	F (2, 1227) = 0.51	F (4, 1227) = 1.04
<b>Indirect bullying</b>		
Social exclusion	F (2, 1226) = 7.26	F (6, 1226) = 1.24
Nasty e-mails/texts	F (2, 1225) = 0.50	F (4, 1225) = 1.16
Spreading rumours	F (2, 1225) = 1.23	F (6, 1225) = 0.77
Getting others into trouble	F (2, 1225) = 0.65	F (6, 1225) = 1.89

\*all F values were non-significant (p>0.05)

There were no significant effects revealed suggesting that the frequency of hearing about particular behaviours did not affect whether they were defined as bullying or not.

### 3.5.10 Link between hearing about direct behaviours and indirect behaviours

The ratings for reported frequencies of hearing about bullying behaviours occurring gave an indication of how 'in tune' respondents are with what is going on in the school. It could be predicted that those respondents who heard about direct bullying occurring would also be more likely to have heard about indirect bullying occurring. Indeed, a significant correlation was found between frequency of hearing about direct bullying behaviours and frequency of hearing about indirect bullying



behaviours ( $r = 0.71$ ,  $n = 1216$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Also, when the item totals were based on gender, these relationships were still evident (correlation between reported frequencies of hearing about direct bullying happening to girls, and indirect bullying happening to girls:  $r = 0.68$ ,  $n = 1233$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ; correlation between reported frequencies of hearing about direct bullying happening to boys and indirect bullying happening to boys:  $r = 0.68$ ,  $n = 1222$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This suggests that the more often respondents heard about direct bullying occurring, the more likely they were to also hear about indirect bullying occurring. However, although hearing about direct and indirect behaviours were correlated, the overall mean ratings may have been very different. The item total for frequency of hearing about indirect bullying was created from four individual items, whereas direct bullying was created from five items. Therefore, the maximum and minimum ratings were different and could not be meaningfully compared in their current format. The item total for indirect bullying was 80% of the item total for direct bullying (maximum rating for indirect bullying = 32, maximum for direct bullying = 40), so individual ratings for direct bullying were multiplied by 0.8 to convert scores to the same format as indirect ratings. A related t test was performed between frequency of hearing about indirect bullying and the newly calculated variable of frequency of hearing about direct bullying ( $t = -15.58$ ,  $df = 1215$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and revealed that there was a significant difference between ratings. Examination of the mean scores illustrated that indirect bullying behaviours were heard about less often than direct bullying behaviours (frequency of hearing about indirect bullying: mean = 10.47,  $sd = 6.21$ ; frequency of hearing about direct bullying: mean = 12.52,  $sd = 5.75$ ).

### **3.5.11 Summary of hearing about bullying**

Participants reported to hear about direct bullying occurring more often with boys than girls and indirect bullying occurring more often in girls than boys, although effect sizes were small.

For direct bullying behaviours there were no differences in reported frequencies of hearing about behaviours based on the gender of the respondent or the group they belonged to. There was a difference in ratings based on school, and post-hoc analysis revealed that there was a lower reported frequency of hearing about direct bullying in School 1 compared to other schools. A significant interaction was found between gender and group, and also school and group. A 3-way interaction between gender, group and school just reached statistical significance. There was no effect found when reported frequencies of hearing about direct bullying behaviours were compared to whether respondents defined the behaviours as bullying or not. There was also only a small relationship found between how often direct bullying behaviours were heard about, and seriousness ratings for direct bullying. For staff, no relationship was revealed between experience and how often they heard about direct bullying occurring.

For indirect bullying behaviours there was a significant difference in reported frequencies of hearing about behaviours based on the group respondents belonged to. Post-hoc analysis suggested this difference was between pupils (Year 8 and 11) and staff (Teachers and Support Staff). There was also a difference based on the gender of the respondents with males reporting to hear about indirect bullying occurring more often than females. The school participants belonged to affected how often they heard about indirect bullying occurring. Post-hoc analysis indicated this difference was a result of lower frequencies in School 1 compared to Schools 3 and 4. A significant interaction was found between group and gender, group and school and a significant 3-way interaction was revealed between school, group and gender. There was no effect found when reported frequencies of hearing about indirect bullying behaviours were compared to whether respondents defined the behaviours as bullying or not. There was also only a small relationship found between how often indirect bullying behaviours were heard about, and seriousness ratings for indirect bullying. For staff, no relationship was revealed between experience and how often they heard about indirect bullying occurring. Overall, indirect behaviours were heard about less often than direct bullying.

### **3.6 Self-reported victims of bullying**

Experiences of being a victim of bullying were measured by one question in each scenario.

Pupils were asked to rate how often they were in a similar situation as the people in the scenarios, rating their answers on the following scale:

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
-------	----------------------	-------------	----------------------	-----------

The table below shows the percentage of pupils who reported experiencing the particular behaviours once a week, several times a week or most days.

*Table 39. The percentage of pupils who reported experiencing particular bullying behaviours once a week or more*

BEHAVIOUR	Y8 MALE	Y8 FEMALE	Y11 MALE	Y11 FEMALE
<b>Direct bullying</b>				
Hit/kick/punch	19.0%	7.8%	11.4%	8.6%
Stealing	9.2%	5.6%	5.1%	3.2%
Nasty name-calling	30.6%	27.4%	26.1%	25.9%
Damaging belongings	8.7%	4.0%	6.3%	2.1%
Threats	10.5%	7.0%	10.0%	4.0%
<b>Indirect bullying</b>				
Social exclusion	10.2%	10.3%	9.5%	3.8%
Nasty e-mails/texts*	3.0%	2.8%	6.0%	2.6%
Spreading rumours	14.4%	12.0%	11.5%	7.1%
Getting into trouble	18.0%	13%	17.1%	9.3%

\*Only 5 pupils reported to either not have access to a computer at home or school or own a mobile phone

Importantly, the data described only included reports of the behaviours occurring at least once a week, and many pupils reported experiencing them less frequently (once or twice a term). The Appendices contain detailed descriptions of responses for individual questions (Tables L to T, Appendix 18, p.637). From the table above it can be seen that nasty-name calling was the behaviour reported by the highest percentage of pupils. Being sent nasty e-mails or text messages was the behaviour

reported with the lowest frequency. The statistics indicated higher levels of reported bullying in Year 8 than Year 11. Boys in both year groups also reported higher levels of bullying than girls.

### 3.6.1 Summary of self-reported victims of bullying

In order to provide a succinct summary of the reported bullying in the school, the responses on the following scale were scored accordingly:

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
0	1	2	3	4

It was then possible to calculate the behaviours reported with the highest frequency, and compare them directly to others. The ambiguous scenarios were included at this stage.

### **Bullying in Year 8**

*Table 40. Self-reported experience of bullying behaviours by Year 8 pupils*

BEHAVIOUR	BOYS		GIRLS	
	MEAN SCORE	RANK ORDER	MEAN SCORE	RANK ORDER
Arguing with friends	1.40	1	1.35	1
Nasty name-calling	1.15	2	1.05	3
Copying homework	1.02	3	1.20	2
Getting into trouble	0.76	4	0.63	4
Hit/kick/punch	0.75	5	0.28	10
Spreading rumours	0.70	6	0.55	5
Social exclusion	0.49	7	0.45	6
Threats	0.47	8	0.30	8
Stealing	0.45	9	0.39	7
Damaging belongings	0.41	10	0.29	9
Choosing to be alone	0.27	11	0.18	11
Nasty e-mails/text	0.14	12	0.11	12

## Bullying in Year 11

Table 41. Self-reported experience of bullying behaviours by Year 11 pupils

BEHAVIOUR	BOYS		GIRLS	
	MEAN SCORE	RANK ORDER	MEAN SCORE	RANK ORDER
Arguing with friends	1.47	1	1.25	1
Copying homework	1.04	2	1.14	2
Nasty name-calling	1.02	3	1.00	3
Getting into trouble	0.69	4	0.44	5
Spreading rumours	0.63	5	0.48	4
Hit/kick/punch	0.47	6	0.33	6
Choosing to be alone	0.43	7	0.30	7
Threats	0.40	8	0.17	11
Social exclusion	0.37	9	0.26	8
Damaging belongings	0.33	10	0.21	10
Stealing	0.28	11	0.25	9
Nasty e-mails/text	0.25	12	0.13	12

### 3.6.2 Summary of mean ratings

In Year 8, the behaviours pupils reported to experience the most often were arguing with friends, nasty name-calling and others copying their homework. The behaviours reported to occur the least often were choosing to be alone and being sent nasty e-mails or text messages.

In Year 11, pupils reported that arguing with their friends, others copying their homework and being called nasty-names occurred the most often. There were more discrepancies noted based on the gender of the pupil than with Year 8 pupils. The behaviour reported to occur the least often was being sent nasty e-mails or text messages.

### 3.6.3 Using item totals

As outlined at the beginning of the analysis section, responses to the self-report questions were combined to form two item totals:

Direct bullying: how often it happens to the respondent

Indirect bullying: how often it happens to the respondent

These two item totals were transformed using square root transformations to ensure they were normally distributed. Descriptive statistics and graphs are based on untransformed values whereas the inferential calculations used the transformed data.

### 3.6.4 Effect of group, gender and school

#### **Direct bullying**

Direct Bullying: Self-reported experience of it – combined scores of five items. Each item rated 0-4. Maximum possible score = 20, minimum possible score = 0.

Descriptive statistics, plots and graphs are based on the untransformed data but inferential tests were performed with transformed data.

*Table 42. Descriptive statistics for self-reported experience of direct bullying based on group*

GROUP	N	MEAN	S.D	S.E
Year 8	657	2.78	3.45	0.13
Year 11	394	2.28	3.21	0.16
Total	1051	2.59	3.37	0.10

The mean scores for self-reported experience of direct bullying were higher in Year 8 than Year 11 indicating that Year 8 pupils reported higher levels of bullying. This difference was not substantial however.

*Table 43. Descriptive statistics for self-reported experience of direct bullying based on gender*

GROUP	N	MEAN	S.D	S.E
Male	528	2.96	3.64	0.16
Female	488	2.19	2.89	0.13
Total	1016	2.59	3.32	0.10

The mean scores for male pupils were higher than for female pupils indicating higher levels of reported bullying in boys compared to girls.

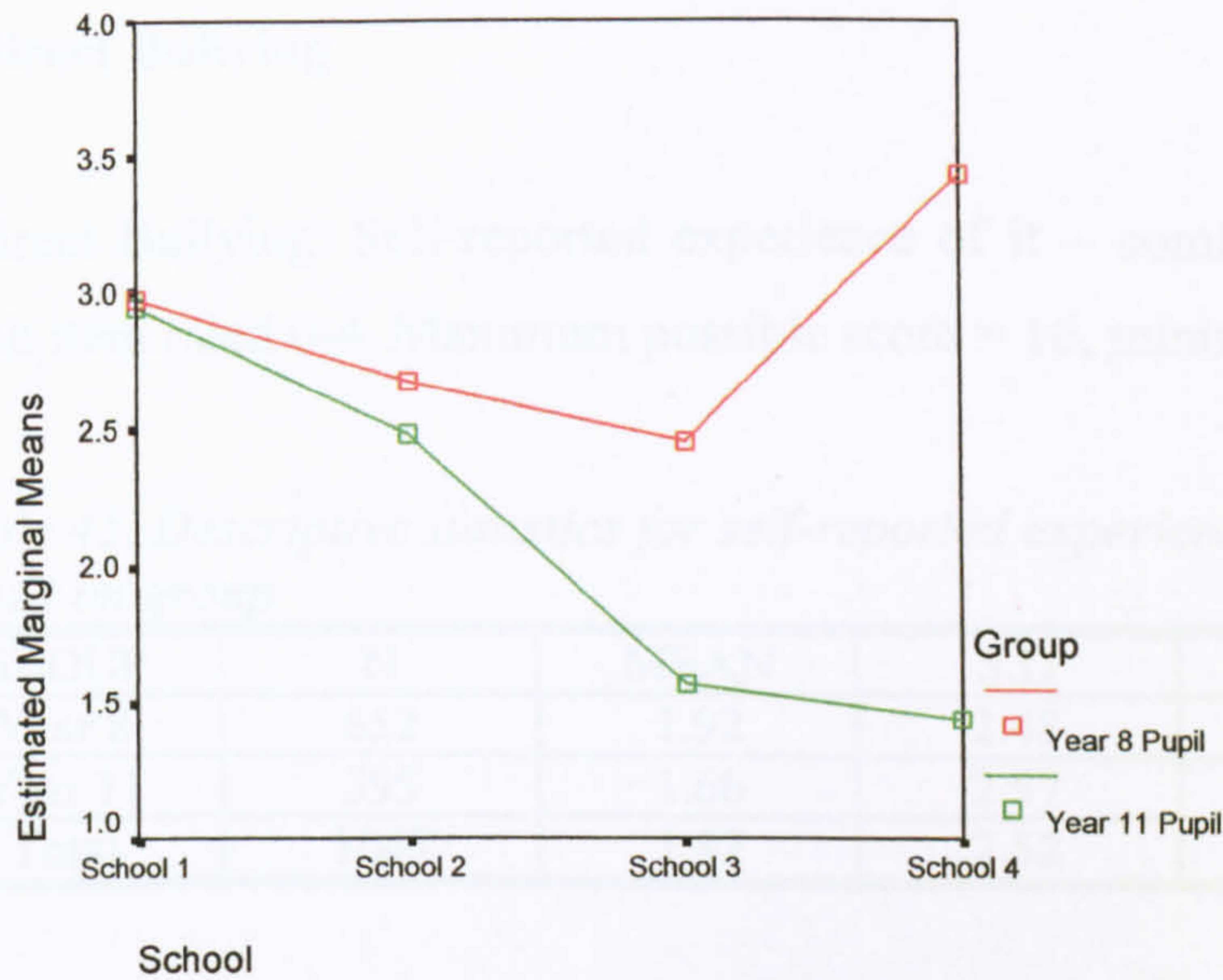
*Table 44. Descriptive statistics for self-reported experience of direct bullying based on school*

GROUP	N	MEAN	S.D	S.E
School 1	342	2.97	3.62	0.20
School 2	225	2.64	3.34	0.22
School 3	304	2.26	3.11	0.18
School 4	180	2.39	3.28	0.24
Total	1051	2.59	3.37	0.10

School 1 had the highest level of self-reported experience of direct bullying. School 3 had the lowest levels.

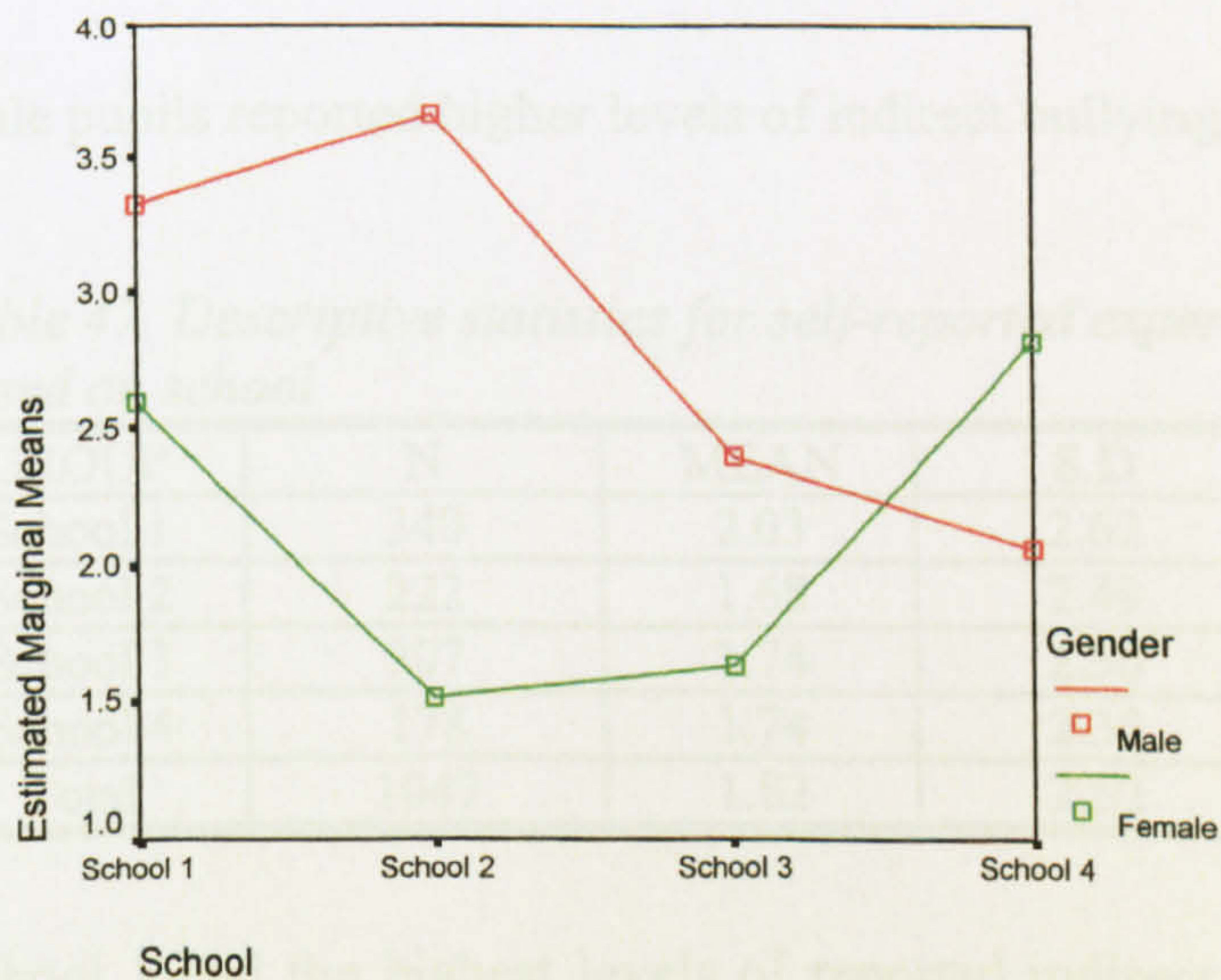
A 3-way ANOVA was conducted with group, gender and school as independent variables and self-reported experience of direct bullying behaviours as the dependent variable. Main effects were evident for group ( $F(1, 1000) = 16.18, p < 0.001$ ), gender ( $F(1, 1000) = 9.39, p < 0.01$ ) and school ( $F(3, 1000) = 4.22, p < 0.01$ ). For the school data, Games-Howell procedure revealed a significant difference between the means of School 1 and School 3 (mean difference = 0.23,  $p < 0.05$ ). For the interaction between group and gender ( $F(1, 1000) = 0.12, p > 0.05$ ) a non-significant result was found. A significant interaction was found between school and group ( $F(3, 1000) = 4.08, p < 0.01$ ). Fig.6 illustrates the interaction between the variables. It appears that reported experiences of direct bullying behaviours were very similar between Years 8 and 11 in School 1. A more notable difference occurred in School 4 where the mean score for Year 8 pupils was notably higher than for Year 11.

Fig 6. Means plot describing the interaction between school and group for self-reported experience of direct bullying



A significant interaction was found between school and gender ( $F(3, 1000) = 6.15, p < 0.001$ ). Fig.7 shows that in Schools 1, 2 and 3 males reported experiencing direct bullying more often than females. In School 4 the situation was reversed, with females reporting more direct bullying than males.

Fig 7. Means plot describing the interaction between school and gender for self-reported experience of direct bullying





There was no significant 3-way interaction found between school, group and gender ( $F(3, 1000) = 2.51, p > 0.05$ ).

### Indirect Bullying

Indirect Bullying: Self-reported experience of it – combined scores of four items. Each item rated 0-4. Maximum possible score = 16, minimum possible score = 0.

*Table 45. Descriptive statistics for self-reported experience of indirect bullying based on group*

GROUP	N	MEAN	S.D	S.E
Year 8	652	1.92	2.48	0.09
Year 11	395	1.66	2.57	0.13
Total	1047	1.82	2.52	0.08

As with direct bullying, there were higher levels of reported experience of indirect bullying in Year 8 compared to Year 11.

*Table 46. Descriptive statistics for self-reported experience of indirect bullying based on gender*

GROUP	N	MEAN	S.D	S.E
Male	525	2.04	2.76	0.12
Female	487	1.55	2.09	0.95
Total	1012	1.81	2.47	0.08

Male pupils reported higher levels of indirect bullying than female pupils.

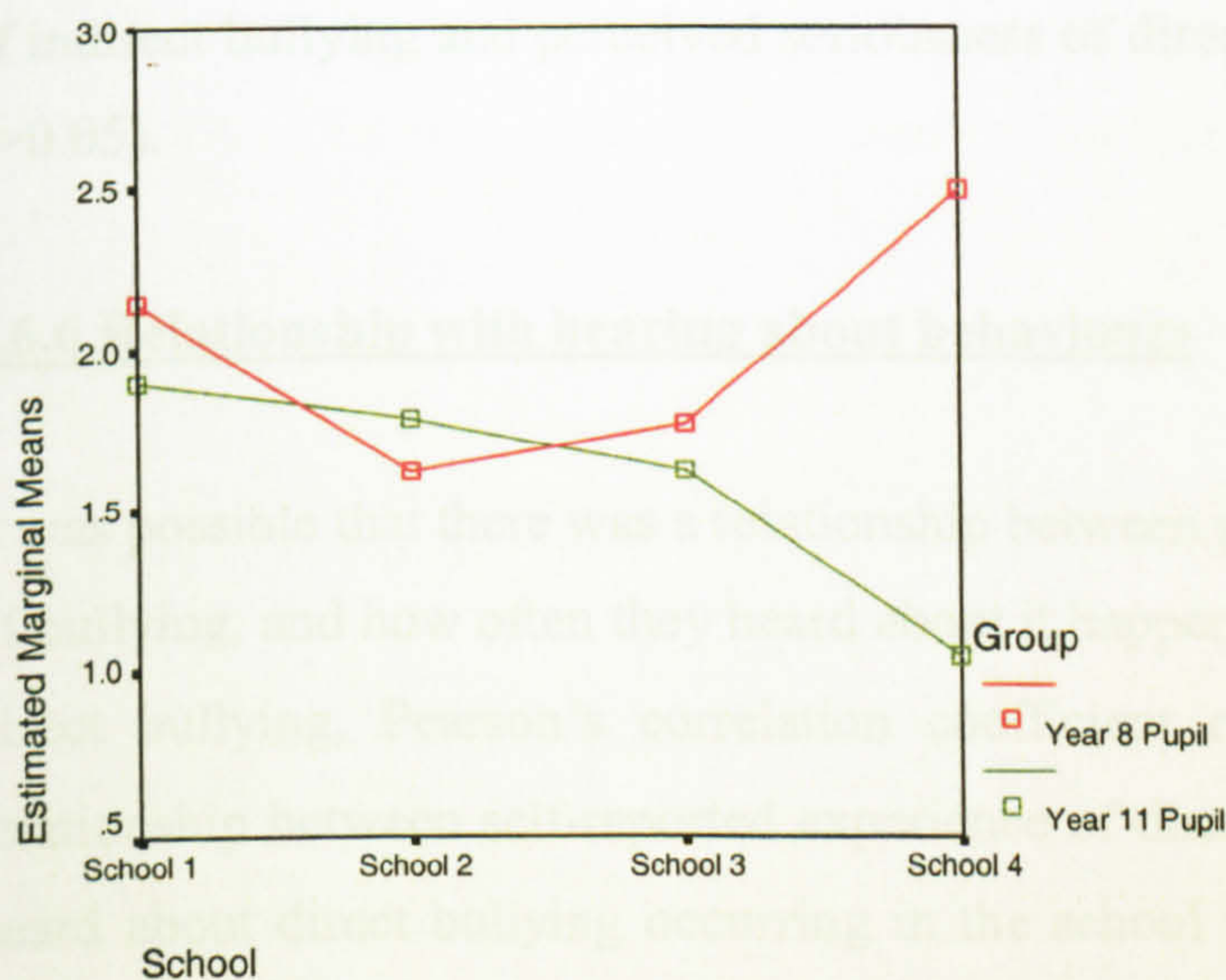
*Table 47. Descriptive statistics for self-reported experience of indirect bullying based on school*

GROUP	N	MEAN	S.D	S.E
School 1	340	2.03	2.62	0.14
School 2	222	1.68	2.49	0.17
School 3	307	1.74	2.50	0.14
School 4	178	1.74	2.38	0.18
Total	1047	1.82	2.52	0.08

School 1 had the highest levels of reported indirect bullying. The remaining three schools seemed to have very similar levels of reported indirect bullying.

A 3-way ANOVA was conducted with group, gender and school as independent variables and reported experience of indirect bullying behaviours as the dependent variable. Main effects were evident for group ( $F(1, 996) = 10.39, p < 0.001$ ), gender ( $F(1, 996) = 11.77, p < 0.001$ ) and school ( $F(3, 996) = 2.65, p < 0.05$ ). Games-Howell procedure however could not detect a significant difference between any of the schools. No significant interaction was found between gender and group ( $F(1, 996) = 0.88, p > 0.05$ ) but a significant interaction was found between school and group ( $F(3, 996) = 3.36, p < 0.05$ ). In School 2 it can be seen from Fig.8 that reported levels of experiencing indirect bullying were higher in Year 11 than they were in Year 8. This was the reverse of what was found in the other three schools where Year 8 pupils report higher levels of indirect bullying than Year 11 pupils. This was especially evident in School 4 where there was a notable difference between the mean ratings in Year 8 and Year 11.

*Fig 8. Means plot describing the interaction between school and group for self-reported experience of indirect bullying*



There was no significant interaction between school and gender ( $F(3, 996) = 2.03, p > 0.05$ ). There was no significant 3-way interaction between school, group and gender ( $F(3, 996) = 2.47, p > 0.05$ ) for reported experience of indirect bullying behaviours.

### **3.6.5 Relationship with ratings of perceived seriousness**

It was possible that pupils who experienced particular behaviours would regard them as more serious because they understood the effects. To examine whether this was the case, Pearson's correlation coefficient was calculated between self-reported experience of direct bullying, and perceived seriousness rating for direct bullying. A non-significant correlation was found ( $r = 0.01$ ,  $n = 1029$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) suggesting that there was no relationship between scores on the two item totals. A significant correlation was found between self-reported experience of direct bullying and perceived seriousness of indirect bullying ( $r = 0.09$ ,  $n = 1034$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) but the  $r$  value was so small that it was unlikely to be of practical significance. For indirect bullying, a significant correlation was found between self-reported experience of indirect bullying and perceived seriousness of indirect bullying ( $r = 0.10$ ,  $n = 1039$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) but the actual value of  $r$  was still quite small despite the statistical significance. No significant correlation was found between self-reported experience of indirect bullying and perceived seriousness of direct bullying ( $r = 0.04$ ,  $n = 1023$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ).

### **3.6.6 Relationship with hearing about behaviours**

It was possible that there was a relationship between pupils' self-reported experience of bullying, and how often they heard about it happening to others in the school. For direct bullying, Pearson's correlation coefficient revealed a significant positive relationship between self-reported experience of direct bullying and how often they heard about direct bullying occurring in the school ( $r = 0.31$ ,  $n = 1032$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). There was also a positive relationship between self-reported experience of direct bullying and how often they heard about indirect bullying occurring ( $r = 0.23$ ,  $n = 1033$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Pearson's correlation coefficient revealed a significant positive relationship between self-reported experience of indirect bullying and how often they heard about indirect bullying occurring in the school ( $r = 0.38$ ,  $n = 1038$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). There was also a positive relationship between self-reported experience of

indirect bullying and how often they heard about direct bullying occurring ( $r = 0.29$ ,  $n = 1026$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This suggested that victims of bullying were more 'in tune' with the amount of bullying that occurred in their school.

### 3.6.7 Effect on definition of bullying

Pupils who experienced particular bullying behaviours may have been more likely to define them as bullying. In contrast, it could be also argued that they may have been less likely to define behaviours they experienced as bullying because of the resulting inference that they must then be victims of bullying. To investigate this, questions about defining bullying were compared to self-reported experience of bullying behaviours. Firstly, the groups were partitioned based on their responses to questions about defining bullying. Next, the responses to the questions about defining bullying were used as independent variables in a 2-way ANOVA, with self-reported experience of direct and indirect bullying as the dependent variable and group (Year 8 or Year 11) as the other independent variable. This was performed for each behaviour that fell under the category of direct and indirect bullying.

*Table 48. Effect of self-reported experience of bullying on how bullying is defined*

BEHAVIOUR	MAIN EFFECT OF RESPONSE	INTERACTION WITH GROUP
<b>Direct bullying</b>		
Hit/kick/punch	F (2, 1045) = 4.22*	F (2, 1045) = 2.50
Stealing	F (2, 1045) = 1.37	F (2, 1045) = 0.32
Nasty name-calling	F (2, 1043) = 0.24	F (2, 1043) = 0.82
Damaging belongings	F (2, 1043) = 0.04	F (2, 1043) = 1.22
Threats	F (2, 1044) = 0.95	F (2, 1044) = 1.06
<b>Indirect bullying</b>		
Social exclusion	F (2, 1041) = 2.00	F (2, 1041) = 2.51
Nasty e-mails/texts	F (2, 1038) = 0.76	F (2, 1038) = 0.95
Spreading rumours	F (2, 1040) = 4.87**	F (2, 1040) = 0.82
Getting others into trouble	F (2, 1040) = 1.12	F (2, 1040) = 0.65

\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$

Significant effects were identified for hitting, kicking and punching and spreading rumours. The table of descriptive statistics for hitting, kicking and punching (Table

U, Appendix 18, p.640) revealed that there was a higher mean rating in Year 11 pupils for self-reported experience of direct bullying for pupils who did not regard this behaviour as bullying. There did not seem to be any notable differences in Year 8. Post-hoc analysis using Games-Howell procedure indicated that there was a significant difference on self-reported experience between respondents who did not think the behaviour was bullying and those who did think it was bullying (mean difference = 0.43,  $p < 0.01$ ). For spreading rumours, post-hoc analysis showed a significant difference for self-reported experience of indirect bullying between participants who did not think that spreading rumours was bullying and those who were unsure (mean difference = 0.24,  $p < 0.05$ ). The descriptive statistics clearly showed lower mean ratings of indirect bullying for pupils who did not define spreading rumours as bullying (see Table V, Appendix 18, p.641).

The fact that only two significant effects were found suggests that, in general, experiencing bullying did not affect how it was defined.

### **3.6.8 Combined item totals**

Up to this point, the analysis for self-reported experience of bullying had focused on direct and indirect behaviours separately. However, Pearson's correlation coefficient revealed a significant positive correlation between self-reported experience of direct and indirect bullying ( $r = 0.646$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This suggests that pupils who experienced direct bullying also tended to experience indirect bullying. Therefore, there were pupils that seemed to be overall victims. To investigate this further, the two item totals for direct and indirect bullying were combined to form one item total called 'overall experience of bullying'. The alpha coefficient for combined item total was 0.8210 – above acceptable levels.

Skewness and kurtosis scores for the combined item total indicated a distribution that deviated from normal. This was expected, as the individual item totals had also shown high levels of skewness and kurtosis and were transformed as a result.

Therefore, the combined item total for self-reported experience of bullying was transformed using a square root transformation. Skewness and kurtosis scores on the transformed data were found to fall below 1 or -1 and normality plots suggested data was closer to an approximation of normality.

Analysis was then conducted on the new item total in the same way as with the separate item totals.

### **3.6.9 Overall bullying experience**

Overall bullying experience – combined scores of nine items. Each item rated 0-4. Maximum possible score = 36, minimum possible score = 0.

Descriptive statistics and graphs used untransformed data and all inferential analysis was performed using the transformed data.

*Table 49. Descriptive statistics for overall bullying experience based on group*

GROUP	N	MEAN	S.D	S.E
Year 8	642	4.74	5.49	0.22
Year 11	389	3.90	5.26	0.27
Total	1031	4.42	5.42	0.17

Similar to findings for direct and indirect bullying, Year 8 pupils had overall higher reported rates of overall bullying compared to Year 11 pupils.

*Table 50. Descriptive statistics for overall bullying experience based on gender*

GROUP	N	MEAN	S.D	S.E
Male	518	5.03	5.87	0.26
Female	479	3.72	4.55	0.21
Total	997	4.40	5.31	0.17

Males had higher mean scores for overall bullying experience than females.

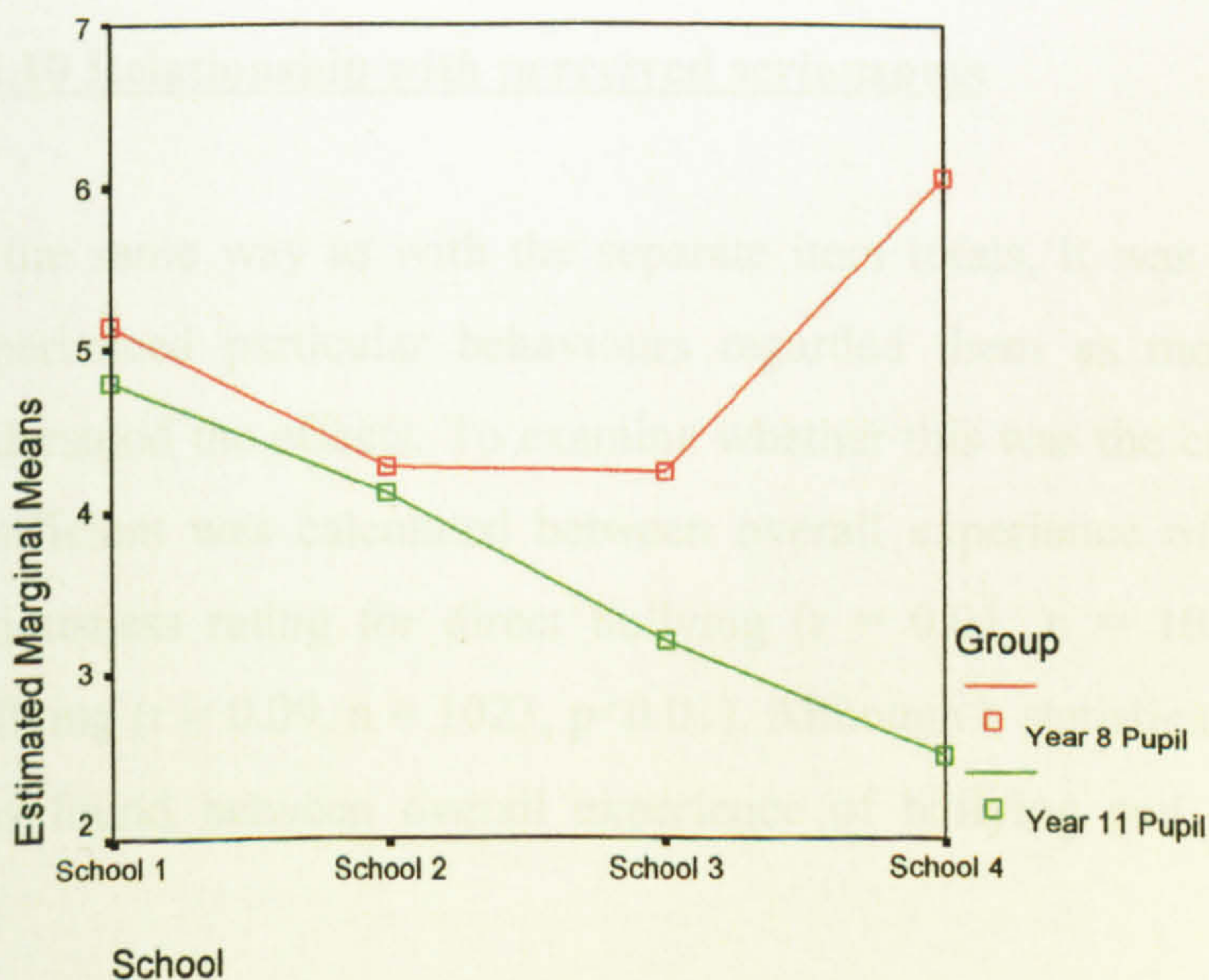
Table 51. Descriptive statistics for overall bullying experience based on school

GROUP	N	MEAN	S.D	S.E
School 1	334	4.99	5.79	0.32
School 2	220	4.29	5.12	0.35
School 3	301	4.02	5.22	0.30
School 4	176	4.18	5.31	0.40
Total	1031	4.42	5.42	0.17

School 1 had the highest rate of reported bullying and School 3 had the lowest rates.

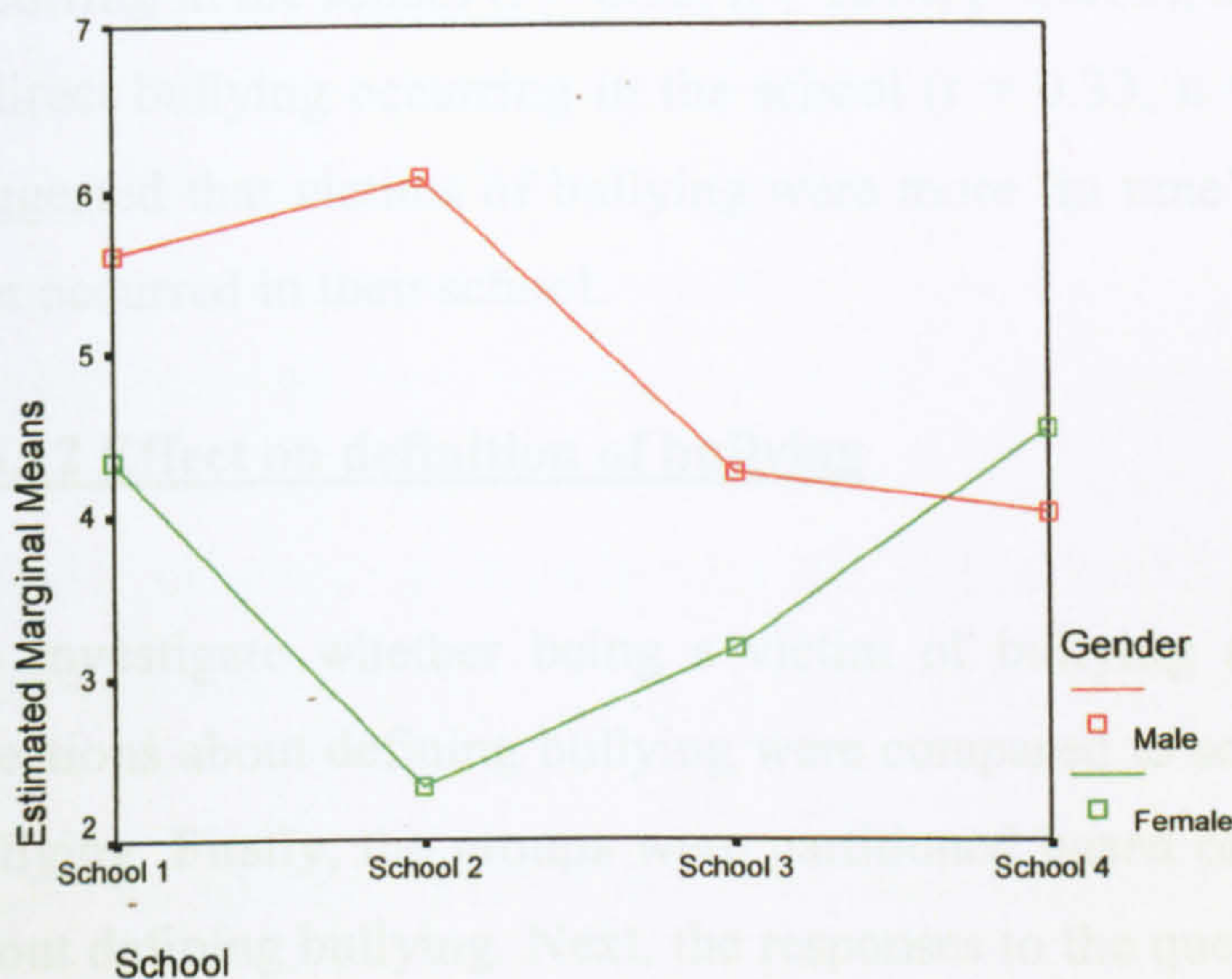
A 3-way ANOVA with group, gender and school as independent variables and overall bullying experience as the dependent variable revealed main effects for group ( $F(1, 981) = 16.88, p < 0.001$ ), gender ( $F(1, 981) = 14.74, p < 0.01$ ) and school ( $F(3, 981) = 3.43, p < 0.05$ ). Post hoc analysis on the school data did not reveal any significant differences meaning it was not possible to identify which schools differed from each other. For the interaction between group and gender ( $F(1, 981) = 0.49, p > 0.05$ ) a non-significant result was found. A significant interaction was found between school and group ( $F(3, 981) = 3.55, p < 0.05$ ). Fig.9 illustrates that overall Year 8 pupils reported higher levels of bullying compared to Year 11 pupils, but this difference was more noticeable in School 3 and 4.

Fig 9. Means plot describing the interaction between school and group for overall bullying experience



A significant interaction was found between school and gender ( $F(3, 981) = 4.90, p < 0.01$ ). Fig.10 shows that in Schools 1, 2 and 3 males reported experiencing bullying more often than females. In School 4 the situation was reversed, with females reporting more bullying than males.

Fig 10. Means plot describing the interaction between school and gender for overall bullying experience



There was a significant 3-way interaction found between school, group and gender ( $F(3, 981) = 3.42, p < 0.05$ ).

### 3.6.10 Relationship with perceived seriousness

In the same way as with the separate item totals, it was possible that pupils who experienced particular behaviours regarded them as more serious because they understood the effects. To examine whether this was the case, Pearson's correlation coefficient was calculated between overall experience of bullying, and perceived seriousness rating for direct bullying ( $r = 0.01, n = 1011, p > 0.05$ ) and indirect bullying ( $r = 0.09, n = 1023, p < 0.01$ ). Although a statistically significant association was found between overall experience of bullying and perceived seriousness of



indirect bullying, the actual r value was too small to be considered of practical significance.

### **3.6.11 Relationship with hearing about behaviours**

Pearsons correlation coefficient revealed a significant positive relationship between overall experience of bullying and how often they heard about direct bullying occurring in the school ( $r = 0.33$ ,  $n = 1014$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), and how often they hear about indirect bullying occurring in the school ( $r = 0.33$ ,  $n = 1022$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This again suggested that victims of bullying were more 'in tune' with the amount of bullying that occurred in their school.

### **3.6.12 Effect on definition of bullying**

To investigate whether being a victim of bullying affected how it was defined, questions about defining bullying were compared to scores for overall experience of bullying. Firstly, the groups were partitioned based on their responses to questions about defining bullying. Next, the responses to the questions about defining bullying were used as independent variables in a 2-way ANOVA, with overall bullying experience as the dependent variable and group (Year 8 or Year 11) as the other independent variable. This was performed for each bullying behaviour.

*Table 52. Effect of overall bullying experience on how bullying is defined*

BEHAVIOUR	MAIN EFFECT OF RESPONSE	INTERACTION WTH GROUP
<b>Direct bullying</b>		
Hit/kick/punch	F (2, 1025) = 2.89	F (2, 1025) = 2.39
Stealing	F (2, 1025) = 2.29	F (2, 1025) = 2.48
Nasty name-calling	F (2, 1023) = 0.46	F (2, 1023) = 0.53
Damaging belongings	F (2, 1023) = 0.27	F (2, 1023) = 0.43
Threats	F (2, 1024) = 0.81	F (2, 1024) = 1.87
<b>Indirect bullying</b>		
Social exclusion	F (2, 1025) = 3.91*	F (2, 1025) = 0.90
Nasty e-mails/texts	F (2, 1022) = 1.35	F (2, 1022) = 1.23
Spreading rumours	F (2, 1024) = 6.61***	F (2, 1024) = 0.28
Getting others into trouble	F (2, 1024) = 3.67*	F (2, 1024) = 0.49

\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

The ANOVA revealed a significant main effect between responses to whether social exclusion could be regarded as bullying and overall experience of bullying but post hoc analysis showed no significant differences between any responses so it was not possible to identify where the differences existed. A significant main effect was also revealed for spreading rumours and Games-Howell post hoc test showed a significant difference for overall experience of bullying between participants who did not think that spreading rumours was bullying and those who were unsure (mean difference = 0.34,  $p < 0.05$ ) and also between those who were unsure and those who did think the behaviour was bullying (mean difference = -0.26,  $p < 0.01$ ). The only other significant main effect was for getting others into trouble. Games-Howell post-hoc procedure showed a significant difference for overall experience of bullying between participants who were unsure about whether the behaviour was bullying or not and those who did think the behaviour was bullying (mean difference = -0.24,  $p < 0.05$ ). Descriptive statistics for the above can be found in Tables W – Y (Appendix 18, p.641).

### **3.6.13 Summary of findings for self-reported experience of bullying**

For self-reported experience of direct bullying, a significant difference was found between Year 8 and 11 pupils, with higher levels of bullying reported in Year 8. Higher levels of direct bullying were also reported with boys compared to girls. School differences were also detected with post-hoc analysis suggesting a significant difference between reported levels of direct bullying in Schools 1 and 3. An interaction was found between the school pupils belonged to and their year group. An interaction was also found between the school participants belonged to and their gender. No meaningful relationships were revealed between self-reported experience of direct bullying and ratings of seriousness for either direct or indirect bullying behaviours. However, a positive relationship was found between self-reported experience of direct bullying and how often direct and indirect bullying were heard about occurring in school. No differences were found between how direct bullying was defined and self-reported experience of direct bullying except for hitting,

kicking and punching where there were higher levels of direct bullying reported in pupils who did not regard this behaviour as bullying.

For self-reported experience of indirect bullying, a significant difference was found between Year 8 and 11 pupils, with higher levels of bullying reported in Year 8. Higher levels of indirect bullying were also reported with boys compared to girls. No school differences were revealed. An interaction was found between the school pupils belonged to and their year group. No meaningful relationships were revealed between self-reported experience of indirect bullying and ratings of seriousness for either direct or indirect bullying behaviours. However, a positive relationship was found between self-reported experience of indirect bullying and how often direct and indirect bullying was heard about occurring in school. No differences were found between how indirect bullying was defined and self-reported experience of indirect bullying except for spreading rumours where there were higher levels of indirect bullying reported in pupils who defined this behaviour as bullying.

When the item totals were combined to form 'overall bullying experience' similar findings emerged. A significant difference was found between Year 8 and 11 pupils, with higher levels of bullying reported in Year 8. Higher levels of bullying were also reported with boys compared to girls. No school differences were revealed. An interaction was found between the school pupils belonged to and their year group, the school participants belonged to and their gender, and a 3-way interaction was revealed between school, gender and year group. Negligible relationships were revealed between self-reported experience of bullying and ratings of seriousness for either direct or indirect bullying behaviours. Positive relationships were found between self-reported experience of bullying and how often direct and indirect bullying were heard about in school. For defining bullying, the only differences were found for the indirect behaviours of social exclusion, spreading rumours and getting others into trouble. In these cases, it seemed that pupils who did define these behaviours as bullying had slightly higher reported levels of experiencing bullying overall.

## **Chapter 4**

# **Feedback on the project**

## **4. Feedback on the project**

As outlined in the Method section, each school was visited in the term following receipt of the Feedback Reports to discuss the project. The discussion was focused on examining what schools did with the reports once they were received, how useful the report was, comments on the findings, any action taken and general feedback about the project. In Schools 1, 2 and 4 the discussion was tape recorded and transcribed. In School 3, consent was not received for tape recording so notes were made during the meeting that were transcribed afterwards. The results are displayed around the topics covered in the meetings.

### **4.1 Dissemination of Feedback Reports**

In all schools, there had been attempts to disseminate findings from the Feedback Report around the school. This seemed to be the first stage of action schools took when receiving the reports. The senior team of staff (such as Heads of Year) were the most common staff to receive details of the findings, although the intention to distribute parts of the report to all staff was expressed.

*"The summary page was copied and sent to all Year Heads. The next stage would be to give them the whole report," (School 3 notes)*

*"...I distributed...your er Overall Findings...to all the senior team, all the Heads of Year, erm...the mentors, the Social Inclusion Officer..." (School 2)*

*"...all the staff have seen your conclusions...and your recommendations.." (School 1)*

*"...as far as I'm aware, most staff have had a copy of this..." (School 4)*

A notable finding from the discussion was the importance of the 'Summary of Findings' section at the end of the reports (see Appendix 17 p.620 for example). It

appeared that this had the most impact on the schools, was the most likely part to be distributed and may be the only part read in detail. This is unsurprising, but it highlighted the importance of including all relevant findings in the summary section so that key issues were of immediate impact to staff who are likely to have limited time to digest the information.

In addition to disseminating the findings, schools commented that results had been discussed in meetings, and people outside the immediate staff group had seen parts of the report.

*"...Heads of Year er it's been discussed at Heads of Year INSET training as well," (School 1)*

*"...it's been raised at our erm Leadership Group Meeting...they've all had their copies...I'm sure it was mentioned at the Governors...that we were having this done..." (School 2)*

*"...the Ofsted inspectors were aware that the school had participated in the project and also saw the 'summary of findings' page," (School 3 notes)*

*"...it was probable verbal feedback. People will have discussed it and said y'know in meetings one or two people will have said things about it..." (School 4)*

The fact that the project had been a topic of discussion in each school was an encouraging finding because it indicated that the issues raised had been brought to the forefront – raising awareness and provoking thought. Although seeing and talking about the findings does not necessarily result in change, it seems to be a good starting point.

#### **4.2 Content of Feedback Reports**

Feedback about the structure and content of the report was very positive.

*"...I thought (the Report) was super...I mean the actual detail in it...an awful lot of detail – it's tremendous..." (School 2)*

*"Found the 'Summary of Findings' useful. Only just starting to read the rest of the report in detail. Go to the summary first," (School 3 notes)*

When asked about other things that could have been included, ranges of subjects were suggested. Not all of these were directly related to bullying, indicating possibly that schools did not view bullying as an isolated phenomena – rather they saw it as being related to a variety of school issues.

*"...I think it would be a pointer for the future to erm look at the effects, y'know to pick up or pursue the issue of perceived boys bullying...and perceived girls bullying," (School 1)*

*"Issues of attendance and punctuality would be useful," (School 3 notes)*

*"...I'm sure it's a piece of research in it's own right, you could look at the effect of exclusion from school on young people...it's effectiveness and er the impact on the school..." (School 4)*

*"...you might want to look at the likes of the transition phase from Year 7 to Year 8...Year 6 to Year 7...and even from Year 9 to Year 10..y'know the two Key Stages..." (School 4)*

*"...the race is the one...that I would be very interested...in to how they would categorise that..." (School 1)*

Raising the issue of race was interesting because it suggested that this should be treated separately. However, School 1 described the difficulty with separating such issues out.

*"...we have an anti-race...policy...that's being reviewed er but...racist name-calling and stuff like that is all bullying...and the problem with separating them out...when you actually get round to all these policies you're doing sometimes I think you're doing more*

*offence by separating them all out...y'know if you had them all under...the heading...it would be 'interpersonal relationships'....and then you would mention...the bullying, sexism, racism, disabilityism..." (School 1)*

A particularly interesting issue that emerged was schools' desire to know how their findings compared to other schools, and also what other schools were doing to deal with bullying. There was a notable feeling that schools wanted to work together, network and share ideas.

*"...what would be useful is a little comment to say how it compares to other schools..." (School 2)*

*"...from the point of view of feedback er that's fine...but it still leaves it to the schools to sort it out...and what we hate doing is reinventing the wheel...and so it may be that erm for the schools would appreciate broader feedback from other examples of the research...sort of the types of strategies that we're all using...and the type of policies..." (School 1)*

This suggested that schools would have appreciated a section of the report focused on comparing findings to other schools and describing their practice.

### **4.3 Findings**

When discussing the actual findings described in the reports, initial feedback was a lack of surprise about what was found.

*"...people weren't...I don't think they were too surprised. Nobody's come along and said 'well that's not right'...they haven't been surprised by what you found out..." (School 2)*

*"No big surprises" (School 3 notes)*



However, discussing the findings in more detail revealed some interesting interpretations and illustrated how schools had begun to digest and reflect on the information in terms of their own working context.

*"...I got a sort of feeling from it that the younger pupils felt unsupported...because of the definition of bullying being so vague...I was sad to think that some things were going on...that they didn't think therefore...because they didn't define it..." (School 1)*

*"...so it upset me a bit to think that Year 8 were not going to define bullying as seriously as we...would if we knew about it...so I thought that was sad...and I very much took the point that y'know we need to re-define it...and we need to define it and we need to define it forcefully...as to what it is," (School 1)*

*"...it's interesting about where you say as you say like indirect bullying or direct bullying and people see the obvious bullying the 'if somebody hits somebody' or whatever..." (School 2)*

*"...and it's funny you...when you said, you made a point about pupils being sent nasty e-mail or text messages are heard about the least....it's interesting that that might be something that increases because we dealt with one case this term already..." (School 2)*

*"...it's interesting that you say that...some behaviours were regarded as less serious and regarded as less important like indirect things...the social exclusion...I don't think we think of...well perhaps we do think of them as less important..." (School 2)*

In School 1, the Deputy Head shared how other staff felt about the findings.

*"...it's very difficult, people feel inadequate unless you are actually a pastoral person...and dealing with it on a day-to-day basis...the main concern of other people is that they don't have the time...there is a erm y'know a strong anxiety amongst them that they're not handling it necessarily in the best way...but that a) they don't have the time and b) they don't have the confidence..." (School 1)*

This unexpected reaction highlighted how staff can feel under pressure to deal with bullying when they feel that they lack both the time and the skills.

#### **4.4 Action since project**

Regarding the impact that the project had in the school, re-defining bullying in terms of school policy documents was a common response.

*"We've re-vamped the bullying policy...I have added on the basis of your report...erm...setting someone up, getting a person into trouble.....I've strengthened the fighting....including the alleged toy fighting, y'know the 'only messing'..." (School 1)*

*"...the school...staff and student Bullying Policy needs to be re-visited in light of this...so they can be updated and perhaps made more explicit..." (School 2)*

Also, School 4 commented on their intention to raise awareness through a variety of routes.

*"...we need to spell it out in PSHE and assembly and say to them 'this is indirect bullying'..." (School 4)*

*"...we're planning in the next couple of months...at least one INSET day...where we're going to have erm bullying on the agenda..." (School 4)*

*"...It would be nice if we could use (the Report) as a starting point...for one of these training days...where we could look at it and say (inaudible) is going on in our school," (School 4)*

*"...(the Report) is something that...we want all the staff to not just look at it but to actually comment on it...and to use this..." (School 4)*

Unfortunately, School 3 had not made much progress since receiving the report.

*"Not much has happened so far because the school has just been through an Ofsted inspection, which took over priorities," (School 3 notes)*

This highlighted how other pressures on schools can move issues such as bullying further down the agenda – reducing the time and focus spent on it. Although this is understandable under some circumstances, it again emphasised the strain on schools to keep such issues in the forefront.

#### **4.5 Overall feedback**

The overall feedback about the project was very positive.

*“...really pleased about it anyway because it’s erm with bullying such high profile at the moment in the media and such we’ve got erm and it’s nice having a kind of external instrument to gauge it...” (School 2)*

*“...I think what you’ve done will certainly be of use (inaudible) reviewing our policies. It’s stuff that we’d never have done in a month Sundays...and for that I’m very grateful y’know as a school and I know \*named head teacher\* wanted me to say this y’know I’m very grateful for this. It’s a case of us going in to this now...” (School 4)*

*“...when you’re in school and you’re in the hurly burly you often...don’t have time to carry out research like this and that’s why...this has been so useful...” (School 2)*

An interesting issue emerged about the importance of timing when working with schools.

*“What happens in school is this. From one hour to another things change so much. If you want to get staff commenting on something like this you’ve got to hit them with it...” (School 4)*

This linked back to earlier comments about the pressure on staff, and illustrated how strategic efforts need to be made when working with them to keep issues in the forefront of their attention. Without clear guidelines, continued efforts to discuss issues and targeted action, bullying could easily be neglected. Teachers are not necessarily to blame for this – it is a result of circumstances with high demands on their role.

An important comment from School 1 pertaining to the use of quantitative data was illuminating with regards to the sort of information that would be most accessible to schools.

*"...I am forced as pastoral deputy to keep statistics...They mean nothing to me...you go away and do all the number crunching you like, what I'm interested in is the words and the individuals...so, y'know, as much feedback on...how things are perceived verbally...because it's the verbal translation that is far more effective..." (School 1)*

This raised the possibility that some qualitative data could have been very useful to schools. Although open-ended comments were collected from participants, these were not included in the Feedback Reports and this may have created more distance between the data and the schools concerned. Being able to see pupil and teacher views and experiences in detail might have had more immediate impact. However, it should be noted that the overall feedback from schools was very positive. They were extremely pleased with the reports and had all made plans to respond to the findings. This was encouraging because it indicated that schools benefited from participating rather than just providing data for a project they had no involvement in and no immediate benefit from.

# **Chapter 5**

## **Discussion of statistical findings**

## **5. Discussion of statistical findings**

### **5.1 General findings**

Irrespective of the group, school or gender of participants there were some consistencies identified in the way they responded. For example, there was a general tendency for indirect bullying to be perceived as being less serious than direct bullying. This finding reflects evidence by Birkinshaw and Eslea (1998) who found that teachers rated indirect behaviours as being the least serious forms of bullying. In addition, Menesini *et al.* (2002) claimed that teachers are more concerned about physical acts than indirect incidents and Craig *et al.* (2000) found that trainee teachers rated physical aggressiveness more seriously than any other form of aggression. The fact that pupils in this study also rated indirect bullying as being less serious is a relatively new finding. Oliver and Candappa (2003) reported that children interpreted bullying as including many behaviours each with varying degrees of severity, but whether indirect behaviours were the ones perceived as less serious was not stated. Lower perceived seriousness could result in pupils being less concerned about these behaviours when they occur - possibly lowering the chance of them reporting it to teachers. In support of this, indirect bullying was reportedly heard about less often than direct bullying, although the reported rates of experiencing direct and indirect bullying did not largely differ. As outlined in the Introduction, indirect bullying is more difficult to identify because of its subtle, covert nature (Hudley, 1993; Keise, 1992; Kikkawa, 1987; Sharp & Smith, 1994). This may explain why respondents reported to hear about it less often. Also, with its psychological nature, indirect bullying has less visible, immediate consequences on the victim (Craig *et al.*, 2000) – possibly explaining why respondents perceived it as being less serious. Despite lower perceived seriousness, research by Birkinshaw and Eslea (1998) revealed that children find indirect bullying the most distressing behaviour to experience. Furthermore, post-traumatic stress has been linked to experiencing indirect bullying (Mynard *et al.* 2000) emphasising that perceiving it as a less serious form of bullying is unfounded.

Further findings showed that respondents were also more uncertain about whether the indirect behaviours could be defined as bullying than they were about the direct behaviours. If indirect behaviours are not regarded as bullying, they are less likely to be reported when they occur – possibly explaining why frequencies of hearing about indirect behaviours were lower. In support of this, Rivers and Smith (1994) argue that children are particularly reluctant to report indirect bullying. The tendency for indirect behaviours to be excluded from definitions of bullying reflects a large body of research (Birkinshaw & Eslea, 1998; Boulton, 1997; Keise, 1992; Smith & Levan, 1995; Smith, Madsen & Moody, 1999; Stanley & Arora, 1998; Sutton *et al.*, 1999) and illustrates the tendency for people to focus on physical and verbal behaviours when they describe bullying. For example, Boulton *et al.* (2002) found that lower numbers of pupils regarded indirect behaviours as bullying than direct verbal or physical behaviours, and teachers were more likely to define incidents as bullying if there was a physical element to them (Hazler *et al.* 2001). This could be a symptom of how the word ‘bullying’ was originally understood. Smorti *et al.* (2003) explain how the English Anglo-Saxon definition of bullying does ultimately refer to physical and verbal aggression rather than indirect forms. Supporting this, Arora (1996) outlines how initial definitions of bullying focused on its physical nature, and it is only more recently that the definition has been expanded to include subtler, psychologically based behaviours (Smith *et al.*, 2002). Perhaps the fact that indirect bullying has received more attention will result in changing attitudes towards it. This could be monitored with further research. It has been suggested that pupils who do not define particular behaviours as bullying may be more likely to engage in those behaviours, or less likely to offer support to those who experience them, because they do not view them as being wrong (Boulton *et al.*, 2002). Therefore, it seems of vital importance that schools pay attention to how pupils define bullying.

The strong positive relationship between ratings of hearing about direct and indirect bullying indicated that people who knew about one type of bullying occurring, also tended to know about other types. There was only a negligible relationship between hearing about bullying and ratings for perceived seriousness and there was also no

effect of hearing about behaviours on how bullying was defined. This meant that the prediction that people may become 'desensitised' to behaviours that occur frequently was not supported.

Another general finding was that if respondents defined particular behaviours as bullying, their perceived seriousness ratings were higher. This illustrated a general tendency in people's perceptions to link 'bullying' with 'seriousness' and could explain why indirect bullying was rated as being less serious than direct bullying. As outlined, indirect behaviours were less likely than direct behaviours to be defined as bullying hence with a link between bullying and seriousness, ratings of perceived seriousness would be lower. This link between 'bullying' and 'seriousness' is encouraging. Although work is needed to broaden the behaviours that people encompass by the term bullying, it would be predicted that once behaviours are included in the definition, they would subsequently be regarded as serious. If something is regarded as 'serious', it is hoped that pupils or staff would be more likely to feel compelled to take action. Also, children may be less likely to engage in those behaviours (Boulton *et al.*, 2002). In addition, despite mean ratings for indirect bullying being generally lower, there was a strong positive relationship between seriousness ratings for direct and indirect bullying. This suggested that respondents perceived bullying as being on a continuum of seriousness. Supporting this, Menesini *et al.* (2002) found that pupils and teachers could clearly distinguish between incidents of bullying with varying degrees of severity. The statistical analysis in this study showed that direct bullying was perceived as the most serious form, and indirect bullying was also perceived as serious - but not *as* serious. The possibility of individuals having a mental scale of how serious different forms of bullying are is reflected by the seriousness ratings for individual behaviours. As demonstrated in the Results section, it was possible to rank the behaviours in order of their mean perceived seriousness. Threats emerged as being the behaviour respondents perceived as being the most serious. Interestingly, respondents also showed more certainty that threats constituted bullying than they did for any other



behaviour. This finding reinforced the emerging link between 'bullying' and 'seriousness'.

Why respondents were so sure that threats could be regarded as bullying is uncertain. It could be that threatening behaviour reflects common stereotypes of 'traditional bullies' who intimidate and frighten other children (Woolfson, 1989). Another possibility is the fact that threats are perceived as involving a clear bully and victim. Perhaps people feel there is less scope for ambiguity than if two pupils are fighting or calling each other names. The inclusion of the ambiguous scenarios in the questionnaire allowed investigation of how respondents dealt with deliberately unclear situations. Interestingly, most participants did not define these scenarios as bullying, or claimed to be uncertain. This indicates that ambiguity reduces the likelihood of an incident being interpreted as bullying – possibly explaining why people were so certain that threats equated to bullying. Importantly however, there were a proportion of respondents who did define the ambiguous scenarios as bullying. This may indicate that some individuals have overly broad definitions of bullying. It has been reported in previous studies that younger pupils have broader definitions of what bullying involves (Arora, 1996; Gumpel & Meadan, 2000; Madsen, 1996; Smith & Levan, 1995; Smith, Madsen & Moody, 1999; Smith *et al.* 2002; Swain, 1998) but this study showed that a small proportion of people in all groups defined the ambiguous scenarios as bullying. It could be that these respondents were sensitive to the lack of clarity in the situations and defining them as bullying demonstrated recognition of the subtleties and complexities involved in bullying. Alternatively, they may define bullying too broadly possibly resulting in misinterpretation of innocent incidents; increased reporting and unnecessary intervention. These suggestions are purely speculative and there is a need for further research investigating why some behaviours are more likely to be regarded as bullying than others. In addition, there is a need for research to focus on perceptions of subcategories of bullying, such as racial and sexual bullying, to investigate if similar results emerge.

## **5.2 Pupil perceptions**

Further to the overall findings that emerged from the data, there were numerous differences in responses between pupils. For example, a slightly higher proportion of Year 11 pupils compared to Year 8 pupils thought that the direct and indirect behaviours described in the questionnaire could be regarded as bullying. Age differences in definitions of bullying have been reported (e.g. Arora, 1996; Begotti & Bonino, 2003; Gumpel & Meadan, 2000; Madsen, 1996; Smith & Levan, 1995; Smith *et al.*, 1999; Smith *et al.* 2002; Swain, 1998) but interestingly these previous studies have tended to focus on children of primary school age. The fact that age differences appear to still be evident in secondary school suggests that pupils' definitions continue to develop. This contrasts with Boulton *et al.* (2002) who found no age differences in the way secondary school pupils classified behaviours as being bullying or not. Longitudinal research would be necessary to investigate this finding further. The use of two independent year groups as an age comparison in this study is not ideal because results could be explained by alternative factors to age. The year groups may have been fundamentally different to each other, having had different experiences and different social patterns. The potential effect of individual differences would be improved by using longitudinal designs.

Despite the apparent age differences in defining bullying, Year 8 and 11 pupils did not largely differ in their other perceptions of bullying. Year 11 pupils rated direct bullying as being slightly more serious than Year 8 pupils, but post-hoc analysis did not reveal a significant difference between the groups. In contrast, Year 8 pupils perceived indirect bullying as being slightly more serious than Year 11 pupils, but again post-hoc did not detect significant group differences. Some differences did emerge when it came to examining self-reported experiences of bullying however. For example, overall, reported experience of bullying was higher in Year 8 pupils. This was particularly notable in School 4 where there was a large difference between reported bullying in Year 8 and 11. The tendency for bullying to decrease with age is a common finding (e.g. Borg, 1999; Boulton & Underwood, 1992; Cartwright *et al.*,

1997; DfES, 1994, 2000, 2002; Kumpulainen, Räsänen, Henttonen *et al.*, 1999; Oliver & Candappa, 2003; Rivers & Smith, 1994; Whitney & Smith, 1993) but has often been explained by the fact that younger pupils have a broader definition of bullying (Smith *et al.*, 2002). However, bullying was measured in this study through behavioural questions that did not rely on pupils' interpretation of the word 'bullying'. By asking them directly how often particular behaviours occur, there was no assumption that they defined these behaviours as bullying.

A further explanation for apparent age differences in bullying has focused on the argument that younger pupils may be more likely to report bullying than older pupils – creating the false impression of more bullying occurring (Salmivalli, 2002). Again, this possibility should have been reduced by the use of behavioural questions to measure bullying. The reluctance pupils have to admit to being bullied (Besag, 1989; O'Moore, 1989) may be more pronounced in older children (Smith & Ananiadou, 2003), but reporting to experience a particular behaviour shifts the focus away from bullying. Therefore, higher rates of bullying reported by Year 8 pupils in this study seem to indicate a real age difference.

There are several reasons why this difference may be evident. The links that have been made between bullying and friendship could be an important factor. Friendship is argued to be important for the development of adolescents (Berndt, 1982; Bradford *et al.* 1986; Crick & Grotpeter, 1996; Parker & Asher, 1987; Renshaw & Brown, 1993) and it is possible that these friendships have become more stable by Year 11. Year 11 pupils are close to leaving school hence are towards the end of their teenage development. Younger pupils are still in a stage of learning and development in their social relationships, and bullying may be a symptom of this. More research would be needed to investigate the possibility. However, friendships are believed to be relatively stable during adolescence (Berndt, 1982), discrediting this theory. It should be noted that there was a slight exception to the age differences in School 2 where Year 11 pupils reported higher levels of indirect bullying than Year 8 pupils. According to Craig (1998), the nature of bullying has been shown to

change with age – possibly explaining this finding. What seemed important however was the fact that the age differences varied between schools. As outlined, the difference in bullying reported by Year 8 and 11 pupils was particularly evident in School 4, but inconsistent in School 2. This demonstrates that age and bullying are not fixed characteristics. The relationship between the age and bullying changes between schools – explaining why some studies found no age decrease in bullying (Boulton *et al.*, 2002; Slee & Rigby, 1993a; Yates & Smith, 1989). School variability is a crucial finding because it highlights that schools have the ability to manipulate bullying trends and also explains the inconsistent evidence linking age and bullying.

Age differences were not notably evident when the particular bullying behaviours experienced by pupils were examined. The most common bullying behaviour reported by both year groups was nasty name-calling, closely followed by other pupils getting them into trouble. As outlined in the Introduction, nasty name-calling has often been reported as the most frequently experienced form of bullying (Borg, 1999; Crozier & Dimmock, 1999; Karatzias *et al.*, 2002; Oliver & Candappa, 2003; Whitney & Smith 1993). According to Besag (1992), name-calling is an initial stage of bullying and intervening early can prevent the situation escalating. However, name-calling is difficult for teachers to interpret because the intent of the perpetrator and response in the victim can be ambiguous (Crozier & Dimmock, 1999). Therefore, teachers may miss incidents between pupils, or dismiss them. If name-calling is so common between pupils, and it can lead to further bullying episodes, the importance of staff awareness is clear. Reassuringly, teachers and support staff reported to hear about name-calling occurring the most often – supporting the reports of the pupils. Staff therefore seemed to be aware that name-calling was the most common bullying behaviour. Of course, awareness does not necessarily result in action and Besag (1992) claims that staff underestimate the distress caused by nasty name-calling. If this is the case, they may be aware of how often the behaviour occurs but may not feel compelled to intervene because it is disregarded as being unimportant. Contrary to this argument, the ratings for perceived seriousness showed

that staff ranked nasty name-calling quite seriously compared to other behaviours. It appeared mid-table in ranks of seriousness – closely matching pupil ratings. Early indications suggest that staff are aware that name-calling is a common occurrence between pupils but they do not disregard it as not being serious. It is unclear whether staff hear about name-calling mainly from pupil reports or whether they witness it. As outlined, witnessing name-calling could result in misinterpretation by teachers (Crozier & Dimmock, 1999) but Craig, Henderson and Murphy (2000) argue that teachers are more likely to intervene if they witness an incident compared to if a pupil reports an incident to them. Further research is required to investigate how staff find out about name-calling and how they respond when they hear about it or witness it.

The least common behaviour experienced was receiving nasty e-mails or text messages. With this being regarded by researchers as a relatively new form of bullying ('Text message' link, 2002), the result is unsurprising and reflects findings by Oliver and Candappa (2003) that only small numbers of children report experiencing this behaviour. Future research should monitor this behaviour because it is likely to become an increasing problem in schools.

More boys than girls reported experiencing bullying, supporting findings of Crick and Grotpeter (1996), Olweus (1995) and Sourander *et al.* (2000). However, the magnitude of this difference varied between schools. In fact, females in School 4 reported that they experienced more bullying than males did – the reverse of what was found in the other three schools. School 2 had much higher reported rates of male bullying than female bullying but there was virtually no difference in rates of bullying between Year 8 and Year 11. Findings about gender differences in being bullied have been inconsistent (e.g. Baldry & Farrington, 1999; Borg, 1999; Boulton & Smith, 1994; Mynard *et al.*, 2000; Oliver & Candappa, 2003) and the fact that results varied between schools suggests that this difference, like age, is not fixed. Again, the school variability highlighted the important role schools have in affecting the bullying that occurs. The fact that boys reported higher rates of both direct and

indirect bullying is interesting because much previous research has found that girls are more likely to experience indirect bullying, and boys are more likely to experience direct bullying (Baldry & Farrington, 1999; Crick & Nelson, 2002; Eslea & Smith, 1998; La Fontaine, 1991; Olweus, 1995; Pateraki & Houndoumadi, 2001; Rivers & Smith, 1994). However, several studies have reported no gender difference in experience of direct and indirect bullying (Boulton *et al.*, 2002; Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1997; Siann *et al.*, 1993) - supporting the findings from this study. Again, differences in findings may be due to school variability or differences in measurement.

Pupils who reported experiencing particular bullying behaviours also reported hearing about bullying occurring more frequently. This indicated that victims of bullying were more aware of the bullying occurring in the school. This finding, although unsurprising, highlights that bullied pupils could be important sources of information for staff about bullying in general and emphasises the importance of positive teacher-pupil relationships to facilitate this communication. Interestingly, Year 11 pupils reported hearing about bullying more often than Year 8 pupils did. Considering the fact that higher reported rates of bullying occurred in Year 8, this finding is surprising. It may be that younger pupils talk to older pupils about their experiences. Alternatively, perhaps Year 11 pupils are more willing to admit to hearing about bullying than experiencing it. If this is the case, the lower reported rates of bullying in Year 11 would be a result of older pupils not wanting to admit to being victims, rather than a real decrease in bullying with age. This possibility certainly warrants further investigation.

Experiencing bullying did not affect how it was defined. Therefore, pupils who were experiencing particular behaviours may not have defined them as bullying. This finding contradicts those of Siann *et al.* (1994) who found that experiencing bullying increased the likelihood of children defining behaviours as bullying. It should be noted though that experiencing bullying did appear to affect pupil definitions of hitting, kicking and punching and spreading rumours. Why these behaviours in

particular should be significant is unclear and the possibility of a chance result cannot be ignored. The fact that experiencing bullying did not result in higher perceived seriousness ratings would support this interpretation. As outlined previously, a link emerged between 'bullying' and 'seriousness' with behaviours being perceived as more serious if they were defined as bullying. The lack of relationship between experiencing bullying and perceived seriousness would therefore support the lack of effect on how behaviours were defined. However, Siann *et al.*'s (1994) findings indicate that self-reported experience of bullying and defining bullying *are* linked and, before conclusions are drawn, further investigation would be required to examine the inconsistent findings in more detail.

### **5.3 Teacher and support staff perceptions**

The fact that support staff have been neglected in bullying research, policy work in schools and training (Boulton, 1993a, 1996; Cartwright *et al.*, 1997; Sharp & Thompson, 1994a; Smith, 1991; Smith & Samara, 2003) led to predictions that they may have different perceptions about bullying compared to teachers. However, the predicted differences between teachers and support staff were not evident in the data. Whenever group differences were detected, post-hoc analysis did not reveal significant differences in the mean scores for teachers and support staff. Instead, they appeared to share perceptions, forming a unified group of 'staff'. This is a positive finding because it indicates that staff do not hold segregated opinions. Interventions can therefore focus on working with staff as a coherent group.

It should be noted however that there were a few differences identified between teachers and support staff. For hearing about behaviours, support staff did not differ in the frequency they heard about direct bullying happening to boys or girls whereas teachers reported to hear about direct bullying happening to boys more than girls. As outlined previously, more boys reported to experience bullying than girls so in this respect teachers' perceptions closely matched pupil reports. Support staff did not differ in their perceptions of seriousness depending on the gender of the victim but

teachers had higher ratings of seriousness for female victims of direct bullying than male victims. Although these differences should not be ignored, the fact that teachers and support staff had similar perceptions in other areas reduces any immediate cause for concern.

There was no relationship between the length of time teachers had been teaching, or support staff had been working in schools and perceived seriousness of bullying, or with frequency of hearing about bullying. These findings indicated that experience was not related to perceptions of bullying and goes against evidence by Borg (1998a) and Borg and Falzon (1990) who found that teachers with less experience tended to rate pupil behaviour as being more serious than teachers with more experience. It should be noted that the aforementioned studies investigated general undesirable pupil behaviour and did not focus specifically on bullying, possibly explaining the different results. The finding that perceptions do not appear to be mediated by experience is encouraging because it suggests that staff do not become increasingly negative or dismissive as a result of working with pupils. However, it could also be regarded as cause for concern that perceptions of bullying do not appear to change with experience. Increasing knowledge about pupil behaviour and having to deal with bullying would surely be expected to influence staff attitudes and beliefs. Previously, teachers have argued that their initial training did not prepare them effectively for managing pupils behaviour (Merrett & Wheldall, 1984) and they have reportedly lacked confidence dealing with bullying (Boulton, 1997). This would indicate that new teachers would have different perceptions to experienced teachers. Research highlighted the need for improved teacher training on bullying (O'Moore, 2000) although more recently Nicolaides *et al.* (2002) found that trainee teachers (hence with little experience) were reasonably knowledgeable about bullying and did not underestimate how much it occurred. An explanation could be that training has improved recently meaning that new staff are knowledgeable about bullying and prepared to deal with it. Therefore, their perceptions would fall alongside those of experienced staff – hence the finding in this study that there was no relationship with perceptions about bullying and



experience. This theory seems unlikely however because Nicolaides *et al.* (2002) report fairly recent evidence that initial teacher training programmes were still inadequate in addressing issues such as bullying. In order to examine this theory in more detail, a longitudinal approach would be appropriate whereby trainee teachers could be studied over time as they move through their teaching career to investigate if and how their perceptions change.

#### **5.4 Gender differences**

Examining the influence of gender on the results revealed several important findings. Firstly, the gender of the child described in the scenario seemed to have a small effect on responses. The scenarios involving a female victim tended to be regarded as more serious by some respondents than those containing a male victim. This suggests that bullying is perceived as being more serious when it happens to girls. Previous research has found that teachers perceive pupil behaviour differently depending on the gender of the child (Borg, 1998a; Borg & Falzon, 1989, 1990, 1993), respond to them differently (Condry & Ross, 1985) and judge them differently in terms of aggression (Condry & Ross, 1985; Merrett & Wheldall, 1984). The fact that pupils and support staff also followed this pattern is interesting. It is possible that differing perceptions of seriousness are a result of gender stereotyping. Condry and Ross (1985) found that the way teachers perceived pupils followed gender stereotypes. Perhaps females are regarded as weak and less able to cope (see Williams & Best, 1982, as cited in Franzoi, 2000) hence it is regarded as more serious when girls are bullied. It is also possible that female bullying deviates greatly from how girls are expected to behave. Males are traditionally perceived as more aggressive (Franzoi, 2000) hence bullying behaviour could be regarded as a natural expression of this. Females are not traditionally perceived as being as aggressive as males (Franzoi, 2000), so when they act in an aggressive manner it is more noticeable and taken more seriously (Birkinshaw & Eslea, 1998). However, if this is the case then it is the perceptions of female *bullies* that would be affected rather than the perceptions of female *victims*. The design of the questionnaire did not

allow investigation of how bullies are perceived and research into this topic would be recommended to investigate the issue further. Interestingly, School 2 was the only school where no significant differences emerged for ratings of perceived seriousness depending on whether the victim was a boy or a girl. This indicates that perceptions about the gender of the pupils are not stable and there is the potential for change.

Moving the focus to the gender of participants, female respondents were more likely to define behaviours as bullying than male respondents. Siann *et al.* (1994) found that girls were more likely to label acts as bullying, but the research is inconsistent with some studies claiming no gender differences in defining bullying (e.g. Boulton *et al.*, 2002; Smith *et al.*, 2002). Females also rated direct and indirect bullying as being more serious than males did. Borg (1998a) and Borg and Falzon (1989, 1993) found that the gender of teachers affected their perceptions of seriousness for pupil behaviour – supporting the findings of this study. Perhaps the fact that girls have reported to be more upset than boys when they experience bullying (Menesini *et al.*, 1997) means that they are more sensitive to the effects of it for others. There were some inconsistencies found with direct bullying though because male pupils gave lower mean seriousness ratings than female pupils, but male staff gave higher mean seriousness ratings than female staff. These conflicting results demonstrate that gender differences are not consistent. Individual differences in responses need to be considered as an explanation, although it is also possible that personality characteristics of participants could have more of an influence on their perceptions of seriousness than their gender. For example, Craig *et al.* (2000) found that teachers with high empathy scores took bullying more seriously. Females tend to score highly on empathy (e.g. Hanson & Mullis, 1985; Stein, 1997) – explaining why they tend to rate bullying behaviours more seriously than males. Also, children who bully others have been found to score less on empathy (Hazler *et al.*, 1997). As previously mentioned, the questionnaire did not attempt to identify bullies hence it was not possible to investigate whether pupils who bully rated behaviours less seriously. It is possible that personal traits such as empathy mediate perceptions of seriousness rather than gender and this possibility warrants further investigation because there is

more potential to manipulate perceptions through interventions if they are affected by factors other than fixed qualities such as gender.

### **5.5 Pupil and staff differences**

For all of the behaviours described in the questionnaire, the group participants belonged to was related to whether they defined the behaviours as bullying or not. Examination of the descriptive statistics indicated that higher percentages of teachers and support staff defined the direct and indirect behaviours as bullying than pupils. Boulton (1997) found a similar result, with teachers being more likely to define behaviours as bullying than pupils. There were several behaviours in the questionnaire where no staff thought the behaviours were not bullying (nasty name-calling; damaging belongings; threats; nasty e-mails/text messages). This was not the case with pupils and again implied staff were more certain about the behaviours encompassed by the term 'bullying'.

Staff perceived behaviours as more serious than pupils. Contrary to this, Ziv (1970) found similar levels of severity rating for undesirable behaviours between teachers and pupils, but the fact that this study did not focus specifically on bullying could explain the opposing findings. The findings of the current study disagree with O'Moore (2000) who claimed that many teachers do not regard bullying as a serious issue. The fact that staff appear to be taking bullying more seriously is interesting. It may be that this is due to the fact that they are clearer about how bullying is defined and the emerging link in the results between ratings of seriousness and definitions of bullying would support this. Because pupils had more uncertainty than staff about the behaviours regarded as bullying, their seriousness ratings would be predictably lower. The implication of this is the importance of working with pupils and staff to ensure they share a common understanding of bullying. The focus should be on deciding upon the behaviours included in the definition because results indicate that once behaviours are defined as bullying they would subsequently be regarded as serious.

For indirect bullying, both teachers and support staff reported to hear about it happening to girls more than boys. However, the self-report data from pupils indicated that boys experienced indirect bullying more than girls. It is possible that girls are more willing than boys to report indirect bullying because it is commonly perceived as occurring more in girls (Baldry & Farrington, 1999; Crick & Nelson, 2002; Eslea & Smith, 1998; La Fontaine, 1991; Olweus, 1995; Pateraki & Houndoumadi, 2001; Rivers & Smith, 1994). Interestingly, Besag (1989) claimed that teachers and parents reported the same amount of bullying occurring in boys and girls - opposing what was found in this study.

Overall, pupils reported to hear about bullying more often than staff, although this finding was only significant for indirect bullying. A complex picture emerged relating to this issue. The school participants belonged to affected how often they claimed to hear about bullying occurring (illustrated by the significant interaction between school and group). In School 1, pupils reported to hear about bullying occurring more often than staff did. This was the predicted direction of results because much previous research has indicated that staff underestimate how much bullying occurs (O'Moore & Hillery, 1992; O'Moore, 2000; Pervin & Turner, 1994; Pervin, 1995; Rigby & Slee, 1991; Smith, 1999; Thompson *et al.*, 1994). In contrast, in School 2 the differences between groups appeared smaller suggesting that staff and pupils were hearing about bullying around the same amount. This was especially true for direct bullying, where the means of all groups were very similar. However, in School 3 support staff claimed to hear about bullying occurring more often than any other group. Teachers claimed to hear about it the least often supporting evidence that they are the least likely people for pupils to confide in (Arora, 1989; Cartwright *et al.*, 1997; Cullingford, 1993; Houndoumadi & Peteraki, 2001; Pervin & Turner, 1994; Sharp & Smith, 1996; Smith, 1997). In School 4, staff reported to hear about direct bullying occurring more often than pupils did, whereas pupils reported to hear about indirect bullying more often than staff. This finding illustrated that there was variability in the climate of knowledge about bullying. It was not necessarily the case that staff had less awareness of the bullying that occurs

compared to pupils, contrasting with previous research indicating that teachers were unaware of bullying in their school (Borg, 1998a; Cullingford, 1993; Foster *et al.*, 1990; O'Moore & Hillery, 1992; Pervin & Turner, 1994; Smith, 1999; Smith & Thompson, 1991).

According to Besag (1989), a good pupil-teacher relationship is very important to deal with bullying effectively. The results have illustrated some differences between pupil and staff perceptions of bullying and it would therefore seem crucial that these are addressed. Pupils need to be encouraged to talk to staff about bullying and both groups need to work together to reach an agreement about how bullying should be defined. A cautionary note should be added here because evidence by Rigby and Bagshaw (2003) suggests that many pupils are reluctant to work collaboratively with teachers to address bullying. This is cause for concern because creating a community feel between pupils and staff, aside from focusing purely on bullying, is believed to be very important in the policy stage of intervention programmes (Arora, 1994; Besag, 1989) and it is possible that the school differences in results found in the current study could be explained by the quality of pupil-teacher relationships. Further investigation is required to examine ways of encouraging positive pupil-teacher interactions to facilitate a collaborative approach to bullying.

### 5.6 School differences

The results outlined up to this point demonstrate that variability between schools was a common characteristic in the results. Previous studies have identified school differences in perceptions of bullying (e.g. Siann *et al.*, 1993) and levels of bullying (e.g. Karatzias *et al.*, 2002; Stephenson & Smith, 1992). In addition to the differences already explained, a significant main effect was found for self-reported experience of bullying based on school. Although post-hoc analysis could not detect which differences were responsible for this main effect, the descriptive statistics showed that School 1 had the highest self-reported rates of bullying. Interestingly, it was also School 1 that appeared to show the most inconsistency with defining

bullying. The results showed that for both the direct and indirect behaviours a higher percentage of respondents in School 1 did *not* define these behaviours as bullying compared to the other schools. This would suggest that the definition of bullying in School 1 was unclear to respondents. Ratings of perceived seriousness for direct and indirect bullying were also lower in School 1, as were the reported rates of hearing about direct and indirect bullying. What seemed to be emerging was that bullying was occurring, but it was not necessarily being defined as such and it was not being reported (hence the lower frequencies of hearing about behaviours and higher reported experience of bullying). A reason for this could be that School 1 were looking to re-visit their bullying policy at the time they took part in the project. In fact, this was the primary reason for their participation. Eslea and Smith (1998) report that schools need to work consistently on their interventions to make sure the topic of bullying is kept in the forefront. It has been suggested that anti-bullying policies need to be re-visited often to ensure they are kept up-to-date and relevant (DfES, 1994, 2000, 2002; Glover *et al.*, 1998; Sharp & Thompson, 1994a). Therefore, perhaps School 1 results could be explained by the fact that their anti-bullying efforts had gone stale and were in need of refreshing. The intention of School 1 to address the topic of bullying before the project took place demonstrated their awareness of this issue and their motivation to focus on it. In fact, the feedback interviews showed that School 1 had already begun re-writing their bullying policy as a result of their Feedback Report. This is encouraging although the impact of these changes would need to be monitored.

School 4 generally scored differently to the other participating schools. For defining bullying, a higher percentage of respondents believed that the direct and indirect behaviours constituted bullying compared to the other schools. They consistently emerged as being responsible for school differences in post-hoc analysis. For example, they had significantly higher rates of perceived seriousness for direct bullying than the other schools and the main effect for school for perceived seriousness of indirect bullying was explained by the significant difference in ratings between respondents in School 1 and 4. Anecdotally, the researcher found School 4

to be the most receptive to the project. Staff were very enthusiastic, spent a lot of time with the researcher and were the most open with their plans for action once they'd received their Feedback Report. They responded to all requests for information and consistently portrayed the impression of being an active and cohesive school. These characteristics indicate a positive school ethos, which is believed to influence bullying significantly (Arora, 1999; Smith, 1997). Anti-bullying interventions have focused on establishing a positive school ethos (Besag, 1989; Naylor & Cowie, 1999; Stephenson & Smith, 1989) – highlighting its perceived importance. Whether ethos explains the results of School 4 cannot be concluded and suggestions as such are purely speculative. Furthermore, attempting to measure the ethos of a school objectively would be extremely difficult largely as a result of the debates about how it should be defined (e.g. Smith, 1998). There are other possibilities why School 4 stood out in the findings. As outlined in the Method section, School 4 was different to the other schools because it was smaller and was situated in a very socially deprived area. Schools in areas of social and economic deprivation have been found to have slightly higher rates of bullying (Smith, 1997; Whitney & Smith, 1993), but School 4 did not emerge as having higher rates of bullying than other schools. This would support evidence by Stephenson and Smith (1992) who claimed that social deprivation does not affect bullying. Alternatively, Stephenson and Smith (1992) claim that school size can affect bullying. With School 4 being much smaller than the other schools, it may explain why it fared better in comparison. Perhaps with fewer pupils, it is easier for schools to identify and deal with bullying. If this were the case then the highest levels of bullying would have been expected in School 3 because this was the largest school, but such a finding was not evident. In fact, School 3 had the lowest levels of reported bullying in most cases.

Attempting to reach firm conclusions about the roots of these school differences proves difficult. Although a lot of qualitative data was collected about each school through discussions with the Head or Deputy Head and gathering documentation, the range of information was inconsistent meaning schools could not be meaningfully

compared on these factors. The researcher constructed and circulated a list of information that was required from schools in order to develop their Feedback Reports but there were inconsistencies in the quality of information received and much of it was anecdotal. The lack of time staff had available when the researcher visited each school exacerbated the problem. Furthermore, examining school differences was not an initial aim of the study hence the ability to compare schools in a structured format did not form part of the research design. Using different schools in the study was a way of ensuring a large sample size, and differences in results between schools emerged by coincidence. It is acknowledged that a more structured approach to school comparison would have been beneficial and future investigations would need to be designed with this in mind. If school factors are central to differing perceptions and characteristics of bullying, it is essential that these factors are identified through detailed investigation so that appropriate intervention programmes can be designed. Previously it has been found that secondary schools are more resistant to change (Arora, 1994) and have had less success with reducing bullying than primary schools (Smith & Sharp, 1994; Smith & Ananiadou, 2003; Stevens *et al.*, 2000; Whitney, Rivers, Smith & Sharp, 1994). Perhaps interventions have not been designed to accommodate the importance of school variability possibly highlighting the need for approaches to bullying that are tailored to the needs of individual schools (Stevens *et al.*, 2000). The positive reaction expressed to the Feedback Reports each school received is relevant here because, as outlined in the Method section, these reports were tailored to schools based on their policies and individual results. The feedback interviews showed that the reports were well received and schools welcomed the support. However, there was a need for the right timing with schools in order to achieve the maximum interest and enthusiasm. School 3 were distracted by OFSTED hence the timing was not ideal and they had made the least progress. Alternatively, School 1 were intending to re-address their bullying policies hence the timing of the project was ideal for them. Concerns about time was certainly one of the issues that emerged from the feedback interviews and spending time tailoring policies to individual schools could therefore pose problems. The DfEE packs (1994; 2000; 2002) give



structured guidance to schools on how they can address bullying, but it may be that additional support would be needed.

### **5.7 Methodological issues**

The reliance on self-report measures in this study can be questioned. For example, Craig *et al.* (2000) raise the point that responses to questionnaire-based scenarios may not reflect actual behavioural response. It cannot be assumed therefore that responses to the questionnaires match how people react. The way pupils and staff interpret and deal with bullying may be very different to how they expressed their beliefs in written format and it is acknowledged that a multi-method approach to examine how self-reports match behaviour would be beneficial in future studies.

An important methodological issue was the low response rates in staff. In all schools, fewer than 50% of teachers and support staff handed in completed questionnaires. It is unclear why this was the case, but the impact this could have had on the results needs highlighting. It is possible, and indeed likely, that it was the staff who were interested or concerned about bullying who took the time to complete the questionnaires. The result of this would be an unrepresentative staff sample. Future research would need to consider ways of encouraging higher response rates in staff. One recommendation could be for researchers to become more involved in the schools. A feature of this study was the fact that there was minimal researcher involvement in the data collection procedure. Questionnaires were delivered and collected from the schools and, although guidelines were given for the procedure, the schools co-ordinated the project themselves. Therefore it was not possible to know how well publicised the project was with staff. Schools reported that questionnaires were distributed to staff via pigeonholes, but whether there was any encouragement for them to complete them, or any information given in meetings is unclear. The support staff group in particular are important because, as Boulton (1996) and Cartwright *et al.* (1997) outline, they have been neglected in research on bullying and are unlikely to be involved in bullying work in schools. This was why

support staff were being included in the study, but this may also be precisely the reason why the response rates for this group of staff were so low. Ineffective channels of communication between teaching and non-teaching staff may have resulted in them not knowing about the questionnaires. If they were not usually involved in bullying work, they may have been unsure why they were suddenly being included. Furthermore, the fact that some support staff may be part-time, or only in school for short periods each day (for example, lunchtime staff) would have made it more difficult for them to find out about the study, ask questions and even return their questionnaires. This illustrates that a more structured approach to data collection, with more involvement from the researcher may have been beneficial.

The response rates for Year 11 pupils in School 2 and 3 (28.30% and 22.10% respectively) were notably lower than those for other schools, and for Year 8 pupils in general. The reason for this is possibly because these two schools were the last ones to receive their questionnaires and their subsequent data collection procedures took place close to the end of the spring term in 2003. This meant that Year 11 pupils were very close to their GCSE examination period and were very busy in preparation. Both schools outlined that scheduling data collection with this year group would be difficult because of the amount of other business that needed to be taken care of before the pupils finished for their study period. An important point related to this is the likelihood that those Year 11 pupils who did complete the questionnaires were from classes where there were less time pressures, or classes who were more organised for the examinations. The representativeness of the sample could therefore be questioned. Against this argument, schools reported that their data collection took place in PSHE lessons - a subject taught by form tutors to their individual tutorial groups. Anecdotal information from the schools suggested that these groups were not streamed, were set when children arrived at the school in Year 7 and remained constant until they left in Year 11. Therefore, there is nothing to suggest that individual tutorial groups would be unrepresentative of the rest of the Year 11 population.

The fact that schools collected their data at different times is another issue because there have been suggestions that bullying may be affected by seasonal variations (Ahmed *et al.*, 1991). School 1 participated in the project in November 2002 whereas the other schools participated at various points of the school term between January and April 2003. This situation was unavoidable, but raises questions about the effects these time differences may have had on the results. In order to eliminate this problem, it would be necessary for future projects to be conducted at the same time of year. Practically, this would be very difficult to implement. One thing that emerged from the project was the way in which schools are guided by their own agendas. As outlined previously, School 3 was undergoing an OFSTED inspection at the time data collection took place and this was clearly taking priority over everything else. The Deputy Head explained this in the feedback interview and outlined how the school had not had the opportunity to fully engage with the material provided in the Feedback Report because of the pressure of the inspection. When they agreed to participate in the project, it was clear that it would have to 'fit in' around everything else. Therefore, attempting to enforce a data collection time on them would have been inappropriate. In addition, getting access to schools in the first place was very difficult. Initial contact via letter proved ineffective and participation from schools was eventually achieved through word of mouth and personal recommendation. When initial contact was made, schools explained that they were willing to participate in research projects, but they were constantly bombarded with requests from various sources and did not have the time to agree to many of them. This highlights the importance of researchers working with schools so that both parties benefit from the process. The supply of Feedback Reports to schools certainly encouraged other schools to participate in this study and it is unlikely that so much data would have been collected without these. The reports gave schools an incentive to participate, but stipulating too many conditions on schools, such as insisting on set times and conditions for data collection, could have alienated them - reducing participation rates.

It is acknowledged that being adaptable to schools' needs reduces the amount of control researchers have over the procedure. In this study, guidelines were given to schools about the importance of pupils completing the questionnaires during supervised class time without being able to see each other's answers, but it is impossible to know how strictly these recommendations were enforced. In fact, it came to light that several pupils in School 1 took their questionnaires home because they did not have time to finish them in class time. This situation was far from ideal because of the possibility of interference when pupils were completing their questionnaires in the home environment. However, the researcher did not know about this until the questionnaires had been collected. In addition, the need to work on schools' terms seemed crucial to ensure their continued participation. The risks of being flexible and accommodating were outweighed by the benefits of maintaining co-operative relationships with the schools. Experimental conditions are difficult to employ in certain circumstances and it is unlikely that subtle differences in procedure would have largely affected the results

### **5.8. Summary**

The statistical findings revealed the general tendency for indirect behaviours to be perceived as less serious and less likely to be defined as bullying. The gender of the victims in the scenarios, and the gender of the participants appeared to have a small effect on perceptions. Although perceptions of teachers and support staff did not largely differ, there were numerous pupil-staff differences. In addition, there were several differences between the perceptions of Year 8 and Year 11 pupils. However, variability between schools indicated that perceptions of bullying were unstable and could potentially be mediated. The importance of tailoring interventions to individual schools was therefore highlighted. The positive feedback received from schools about the Feedback Reports suggested that they would welcome additional support in this respect.

# **Chapter 6**

## **Open-ended comments**

## **6. Open-ended Comments**

As outlined in the Method section, the questionnaires contained comment boxes where participants could provide additional information about their responses, or give feedback about the questionnaires. In order to analyse any open-ended comments that respondents had made, each questionnaire was checked and comments transcribed. The transcribed comments were organised into groups based on the school respondents belonged to and the scenario where the comment had been made. Individual comments were then coded with a label corresponding to the content. It was then possible to identify key themes emerging from the comments. These themes are described below with example comments.

### **6.1 Defining bullying**

Many of the comments revealed important information about how respondents defined bullying. There were several sub-categories that emerged through the analysis, which fell under the umbrella term of defining bullying. These sub-categories highlighted the decision making process respondents went through when trying to decide whether the particular scenario was bullying or not.

#### **Context**

Several respondents made comments about needing to know more about the situation before they could judge how serious the incident was, or whether it was bullying or not.

*“ I think that the seriousness of the situation depends on the circumstances. It could just be messing or it could be serious” (Male, Year 11, School 4)*

*“I am making the assumption there are victims in all these situations and that I am not observing a game. Most of the situations are very simplistic and would usually require a good deal of investigation on*

*my part to back up my initial judgment as often things are not what they seem” (Male Teacher, School 1)*

*“The answer to questions could be either the child is being bullied or not depending on the circumstances e.g. has the child antagonized others?” (Female Teacher, School 1)*

In particular, some respondents suggested that there were subtleties within a category of behaviour that affect a decision about whether that behaviour is bullying or not.

*“ Depends on the rumour – if it is a joke or not” (Male, Year 11, School 1)*

*“This depends on how bad the rumour is” (Female, Year 8, School 3)*

*“Depends if they are blackmailed or not (copying homework)” (Female, Year 8, School 1)*

### **Intent of the ‘bully’**

A notable finding was the high frequency of comments relating to incidents that met the description of the scenario but were ‘just joking’ or ‘messing around’.

*“This (hitting, kicking or punching) could be bullying or it could be playing a game or messing around with friends” (Female, Year 8, School 1)*

*“Not everyone who gets hit, kicked or punched is getting bullied, as it’s usually stupid games they play!” (Female, Year 11, School 4)*

*“Sometimes people skit each other but it’s only joking” (Male, Year 8, School 1)*

*“I think it (hitting, kicking or punching) depends on if it is a game or not” (Female, Year 8, School 1)*

Pupils reported to experience particular behaviours on the self-report scale but then qualified this by claiming a lack of intent on behalf of the person involved.

*"I don't think the people who do it (social exclusion) actually know they are doing it" (Female, Year 8, School 1)*

*"My mates threaten me but they're only joking" (Female, Year 8, School 1)*

This lack of intent seemed important when defining whether a particular situation was bullying or not.

*"It (hitting, kicking or punching) depends on if they are being serious or not" (Female, Year 11, School 1)*

*"Depends if it is being asked for nicely or nastily (copying homework)" (Female, Year 11, School 3)*

*"If people are being left out deliberately it might not be that serious because the people might have their own personal reasons why they don't want to hang around with that person anymore" (Female, Year 8, School 1)*

*"It (getting others into trouble) might not be bullying cos that person who doesn't get the blame just doesn't want to get into trouble" (Female, Year 8, School 1)*

*"The people in the class are only sticking up for themselves (getting others into trouble)" (Male, Year 8, School 3)*

Although the idea of 'joking' and 'messing around' was mentioned often, a few pupils made the point that this could easily be misconstrued and also that situations could be missed because of the assumption of lack of intent.

*"Sometimes people only mess about but sometimes it's bullying. I think you don't mess because someone might think it's serious" (Female, Year 8, School 1)*



*"Only got hit but they said they were only messing, but if they were messing they would not have done it in the first place" (Female, Year 8, School 4)*

*"There are many incidents that go unmentioned. These are incidents that are passed off as fun" (Female Teacher, School 4)*

*"You wouldn't really know if someone was getting bullied because there are games where they fight or two people who really hate each other and start beating up each other" (Male, Year 8, School 1)*

*"Sometimes people are messing, but they hurt people and we don't know" (Female, Year 8, School 4)*

### **Perception of the 'victim'**

Similar to the above issue of the intent of the bully, there seemed to be a degree of importance put on how the pupil on the receiving end of the behaviour perceived the situation. If they were upset by the behaviour, it was more likely to be regarded as bullying whereas a pupil who brushed off the behaviour or saw it as a joke was less likely to be seen as being bullied.

*"Most kids are being hit by their friends. They think they're messing but it's still bullying" (Female, Year 11, School 2)*

*"Most of the time people's belongings are taken as a joke but can upset the person" (Female, Year 11, School 4)*

*"People call each other names for a joke most of the time but people do sometimes get hurt by what people say" (Female, Year 11, School 1)*

*"Most of the time these names aren't deliberately intended to hurt the victim. Most people subjected to this bullying don't show their feelings so people don't know when to stop" (Male, Year 11, School 4)*

There was also a focus on the response of the victim, and whether they had the choice to be involved or not.

*"Not if the pupil is retaliating (arguing with friends)" (Female, Year 11, School 1)*

*"It's their own choice (spending lunchtime alone) so they're not being bullied" (Female, Year 8, School 1)*

*"It's not being bullied because they choose to spend dinner time alone" (Female, Year 8, School 3)*

*"Most situations described could be seen as bullying but it would only be bullying if the 'victim' felt he/she was being bullied" (Female Teacher, School 2)*

### **Importance of seriousness**

The use of the word 'serious' came up many times in the comments. The respondent's perception of whether the behaviour was serious or not seemed to determine whether they thought it was bullying or not.

*"It (hitting, kicking or punching) is normally just friendly as we are friends but when it is serious then I would say it is bullying" (Male, Year 11, School 1)*

*"(Stealing belongings) On 'how serious is this', it depends what's stolen" (Male, Year 8, School 3)*

*"I get my pencils robbed and my pens, but it is not serious. People just do it for fun" (Female, Year 8, School 3)*

*"Because they are getting called names does not mean it's serious. It could just be calling each other names for fun" (Female, Year 8, School 1)*

*"Usually if people are making fun of someone it is as a joke so not serious" (Male, Year 11, School 1)*

*"If people are arguing with their friends, it's not that serious because lots of friends have arguments all the time but it doesn't mean they're getting bullied" (Female, Year 8, School 1)*

### **Frequency of occurrence**

Many respondents indicated that they would only define a situation as bullying if it occurred more than once.

*"I don't understand Q1 (hitting, kicking or punching) because it doesn't say if it happens a lot or if it happens just once" (Male, Year 8, School 1)*

*"I have only had money stolen once or twice but the times were irregular so I don't see it as bullying" (Male, Year 11, School 1)*

*"If people are getting their stuff damaged deliberately it is serious and they must be getting bullied if it keeps happening" (Female, Year 8, School 1)*

*"It depends if people are taking advantage of someone or if they just need to borrow their homework once or twice" (Female, Year 11, School 1)*

*"The questionnaire is not clear over repeated incidents or once only. Bullying is rarely a one only incident but build up from small events that accumulate" (Male Teacher, School 2)*

### **How unique the situation is**

A further tendency in the comments was that a small number of respondents seemed to only define an incident as bullying if the incident was something that only happened to a few people.

*"I don't think a pupil is being bullied if their belongings are stolen because everyone gets things stolen" (Female, Year 8, School 3)*

*"Everyone in school skits one another through a joke but if someone has being in particular picked on then yes they are being bullied" (Male, Year 8, School 1, Participant 154)*

*"It is bullying if it is more than 1 person against 1 person" (Female, Year 11, School 1)*

*"If there is people ganged up on one person then it (arguing with friends) would be bullying" (Female, Year 11, School 1)*

### **Fault of the victim**

It was interesting to notice a tendency in some comments for pupils to 'blame the victim' for their treatment.

*"If they were getting hit it could be for a reason like the person who is getting hit could have been a bully to them" (Female, Year 8, School 1)*

*"Depends on what they've done to the other person whether it's (hitting, kicking or punching) being bullied or not" (Male, Year 8, School 1)*

*"If it is self-inflicted, it can't be classed as bullying (choosing to spend lunchtime alone)" (Male, Year 8, School 3)*

*"They probably did something to make the other person do it (nasty e-mails/text messages)" (Female, Year 8, School 3)*

This trend to blame the victim was particularly noticeable for certain behaviours such as those involving property (stealing belongings or belongings being damaged).

*"People should keep their things safe (stealing belongings)" (Female, Year 8, School 1)*

*"I think they shouldn't bring valuable belongings into school and they should stand up for themselves no matter what (stealing belongings)" (Male, Year 11, School 1)*

*"They should look after their things and not let people do things like that" (Female, Year 11, School 4)*

*"They should not lend them to people if they keep damaging them" (Female, Year 11, School 4)*

Social exclusion was another behaviour where the victim was sometimes placed at fault.

*"Some people are anti-social so they do get left out" (Male, Year 11, School 1)*

*"I don't think many people get left out and if they do, it is probably for a good reason" (Female, Year 8, School 3)*

*"If people don't like somebody, they don't like them. They must have done something to be left out" (Female, Year 8, School 3)*

Being sent nasty e-mails or text messages was sometimes blamed on the victim giving out their number to people. This was interesting because there was an assumption that the person sending the nasty e-mails or texts was someone who would not normally have the victim's contact details (i.e. not friends or family).

*"You shouldn't give your number to people you don't like or who don't like you" (Female, Year 8, School 1)*

*"It isn't very nice, but maybe they shouldn't have given their phone number or email address to people they don't trust" (Female, Year 8, School 4)*

## 6.2 Gender Issues

On some occasions, respondents commented on the difference between the behaviour of males and females. This revealed important background information about their perceptions of bullying.

*"Girls argue more than boys because they are more 'bitchier' than boys" (Female, Year 8, School 3)*

*"I think a lot of this stuff (nasty e-mails/text messages) happens to girls rather than boys" (Female, Year 8, School 3)*

*"It (spreading rumours) is less serious with boys because a lot of the time they don't mean the rumours and are just joking around"*  
(Female, Year 8, School 1)

Many of the comments about gender differences were made in association with the first scenario (hitting, kicking and punching) suggesting that people are more likely to perceive this behaviour as being different depending on the gender of the person involved.

*"It is more serious if a girl gets hit because lads are stronger"*  
(Female, Year 8, School 1)

*"Girls can't take bullying as much as boys, so that's why I've circled extremely serious"* (Female, Year 8, School 3)

*"I think it is more serious for girls because they are a lot weaker than boys. Boys are always fighting"* (Male, Year 8, School 3)

*"Boys bullying is less serious because it happens more often and it is mostly intended to be playful, although it is not. Girls tend to mess about in that way and when bullying occurs it is usually more serious"*  
(Male, Year 11, School 4)

*"It always seems like the boys more than girls who get bullied"* (Male, Year 11, School 4)

### **6.3 Importance of friendship**

Many of the comments revealed important information about how respondents felt about friendship. There were several sub-categories that emerged through the analysis, which fell under the umbrella term of friendship.

#### **Qualities of friendship**

When respondents were making comments about friendship, many focused on the qualities involved in good friendships and how this contrasted with the bullying

behaviours described. This was particularly evident for the indirect behaviours of social exclusion and spreading rumours.

*"But then I know who my friends are because they will stay by you (spreading rumours)" (Female, Year 8, School 3)*

*"Make new friends, they obviously are not good mates (social exclusion)" (Female, Year 8, School 1)*

*"My friends are too nice (social exclusion)" (Female, Year 8, School 1)*

*"Some people are mean to their friends so they are not real friends (social exclusion)" (Female, Year 8, School 3)*

### **Protection of friends**

A few comments about friendship appeared to focus on the protection from bullying that could occur from having friends.

*"If someone gets threatened, they should stay in a big group and avoid being alone" (Female, Year 8, School 2)*

*"If a pupil chooses to spend time alone they may just feel like being alone that day. If it happens a lot, they may be being bullied and don't have a network of friends to support them. They may just be someone who doesn't make friends easily" (Female Support Staff, School 1)*

### **Relationships within the group**

Many comments revealed important information about the sorts of relationships pupils have with their friends.

*"Most of the time it (nasty e-mails/texts) is friends who have temporarily broken up who send nasty e-mails to get back at them" (Male, Year 11, School 1)*

*"Calling people nasty names is part of everyday communication" (Male, Year 11, School 1)*

*“If people are arguing with their friends, it’s not that serious because lots of friends have arguments all the time but it doesn’t mean they’re getting bullied” (Female, Year 8, School 1)*

*“Friends always argue but then they just make friends again” (Female, Year 8, School 2)*

#### **6.4 Attitudes towards bullying**

There was a clear ‘anti-bullying’ tone in many of the comments. The majority of pupils and staff were open in their negative feelings about bullying.

*“I think bullying should be illegal” (Male, Year 11, School 1)*

*“I hate bullying and I think it is a horrible thing. Nobody would like it to happen to them” (Female, Year 8, School 3)*

*“I don’t think anybody should be bullied, no matter how they look or dress etc.” (Female, Year 8, School 4)*

*“I think some rumours are horrible, and I don’t think people should spread them” (Female, Year 8, School 3)*

*“My school sucks for bullying. They can’t deal with it children get no help” (Female, Year 11, School 1)*

*“I think any type of bullying is a really big problem and hope you don’t just pretend to do something about it and actually DO something effective” (Male, Year 11, School 1)*

*“I am pleased you are taking the time to look at this serious issue. I hope through your efforts many children will be helped through very traumatic times. Keep up the good work” (Male Support Staff, School 2)*



## **6.5 Action**

Many respondents made suggestions about what the pupil in the scenario should do about their situation. There was a notable trend towards the importance of telling someone.

*“If you do get bullied tell an adult (teacher or family) straight away before it gets any worse” (Female, Year 8, School 1)*

*“A lot of people in our school get this but don’t tell anyone and it gets worse. I think if it happened you should do something. It happened to me and I didn’t tell anyone. It got worse” (Female, Year 8, School 1)*

*“They should tell a teacher (threats)” (Female, Year 8, School 1)*

*“If someone got bullied they should tell someone” (Female, Year 8, School 1)*

*“I think if it keeps happening they should go to someone” (Female, Year 8, School 1)*

Other respondents made more general comments about what should be done about bullying.

*“There should be somewhere you can go if you are on your own and be able to talk to someone (social exclusion)” (Female, Year 11, School 1)*

*“Once again, something should be done about this (stealing belongings). Every school should have lockers in every class, form room and gym” (Female, Year 8, School 1)*

*“We need lockers (damaging belongings)” (Female, Year 11, School 1)*

*“Schools should all have their own bullying specialists to deal solely with this problem. They should be given time to identify and deal with any and all bullying incidents” (Male Teacher, School 2)*

*“I think our school is too big to deal with all the bullying situations that go on. A smaller school (approx. 800) would make it easier to manage bullying going on” (Female Teacher, School 3)*

*“Bullying needs to be addressed through less teacher workload and proper financing. This would help schools to deal with these issues” (Male Teacher, School 4)*

## **6.6 Personal experience**

A lot of respondents made comments about their personal experiences of the particular scenarios. This revealed a lot about the individual respondent and their relationships with other pupils.

*“It’s so annoying (nasty name-calling). It doesn’t get to me as I don’t care what people think about me. But it is very annoying and the school does nothing. I have complained on several occasions and sent letters in from my parents about it but still nothing is done. Justice?” (Male, Year 11, School 1)*

*“Hardly ever (nasty name-calling) but if it did it just doesn’t make you feel nice. It makes you feel weird like when you get called (specific word referred to) you feel upset and really makes you want to die. I know. It has happened to me (Female, Year 8, School 4)*

*“I get left out in sports even though I am quite good. Also people won’t sit next to me in class and keep moaning if they are put next to me” (Female, Year 8, School 4)*

*“I feel as though I’m not wanted when I get kicked or punched” (Male, Year 8, School 4)*

*“Usually in PE. Money being stolen. My bus pass was stolen last month and I didn’t get it back” (Male, Year 8, School 2)*

*"I do not hear about/experience in my classes children being bullied obviously. I think it happens more in the playground than in the classroom. Unfortunately, staff don't always therefore witness what is going on. We can only act on something if we know about it" (Female Teacher, School 1)*

*"It's made me realize that bullying takes place but I probably don't recognize it" (Female Teacher, School 1)*

*"I worry because I do not have enough time to notice all of the things that go on" (Female Teacher, School 4)*

## **6.7 The questionnaire itself**

### **Context**

There was some negative feedback about the lack of information provided in the scenarios. Respondents felt that they could not answer the questions accurately because they needed to know more about the particular situation.

*"The questions about how serious it is are stupid because it depends on the situation" (Female, Year 8, School 1)*

*"We don't know if it is serious or not (hitting, kicking or punching and stealing) so we can't really answer them" (Male, Year 11, School 1)*

Staff were particularly negative in their feelings about this issue.

*"It is very difficult to make judgments without investigating the incident. The views given here are possibilities but each individual case will have a context. Answer on such scant information are not valid" (Female Teacher, School 1)*

*"The difficulty with this questionnaire is that it does not take account of the individual nature of incidents in school. No two situations are ever the same." (Male Teacher, School 1)*

*"The nature of the questions and possible answers is such that I feel this questionnaire (is difficult) to complete meaningfully. Without some*

*details it is impossible to say if a situation is bullying and if it is, how serious the bullying is" (Male Teacher, School 1)*

*"So many of the responses depend upon the context, age, number, attitude, relationship of the protagonists that I find such a broad generalisation virtually meaningless" (Male Teacher, School 3)*

*"Without knowing the background it is impossible to answer these questions accurately" (Female Support Staff, School 1)*

*"A lot of questions were far too general. Most questions are entirely dependent on the situation at the time and take no account of potential playful occasions of such occurrences" (Male Support Staff, School 2)*

### **Response options**

Several respondents commented that they would have liked additional options on the scales. In particular, the scale used for questions about frequency of occurrence was criticised.

*"I have put 'once or twice' a term on several answers where 'never' would not be true but 'once or twice a term' is too often. That is, 'once a year' might have been more appropriate" (Male Teacher, School 1)*

*"Need more options. Most of these questions would be 'now and then' throughout the school year" (Female Teacher, School 1)*

*"Questions were hard to answer and could have done with a box between 'every week' and 'every term'," (Female Teacher, School 1)*

*"Should be another tick box. There is a big difference between 'one and two times per term' and 'never'," (Female Teacher, School 1)*

*"A category between "never" and "once or twice a term" would be more useful, that is why I have ticked in between the boxes" (Female Teacher, School 3)*

## Questions

Some respondents found it difficult to answer particular questions through either lack of understanding or lack of relevance to their personal situation.

*"When it gives you an answer to circle sometimes I don't think any of them" (Female, Year 8, School 1)*

*"I don't think many people 'hear' about a boy/girl getting hit, kicked or punched but they might see it" (Male, Year 11, School 1)*

*"Maybe Year Heads/Form Tutors are made more aware of behaviour amongst the pupils. I don't often hear about it" (Female Teacher, School 1)*

*"We would only hear of the odd incident of bullying in passing" (Female Support Staff, School 1)*

*"Information about pastoral matters is rarely 'passed on' to the admin/support staff at this school. Details of incidents only tend to filter through 'staff room gossip' - even then, only the more serious incidents come to our attention" (Male Support Staff, School 1)*

*"Some answers aren't necessarily applicable to me as the area in which I work means I may not necessarily be aware of certain situations" (Female Support Staff, School 4)*

*"Questions not specific enough based on my experience in the classroom- not accurate!" (Female Support Staff, School 3)*

## Qualitative data

There were a number of comments about the desire to give more information than the questionnaire allowed. Several members of staff requested that comments should have been possible all through the questionnaire to explain their decision making process. A few pupils also commented that they would have liked to be able to describe their answers rather than tick a box.

*"We should be able to write our answers, not just choose" (Female, Year 8, School 1)*

*"Needed open-ended option to express detail feelings on key issues per question" (Male Teacher, School 1)*

*"More specific question pertaining to teacher views and experiences" (Female Teacher, School 4)*

These comments, along with the others made about the questionnaires, suggested that some participants (particularly staff) felt restricted by the quantitative, structured nature of the questionnaire and would have welcomed a more qualitative approach to the issues being studied.

# **Chapter 7**

## **Discussion of open-ended comments**

## **7. Discussion of open-ended comments**

### **7.1 Link to statistical findings**

The analysis of the open-ended comments revealed some themes consistent with the statistical findings. For example, several of the comments focused on perceived differences in seriousness depending on the gender of the victim. The statistical analysis revealed that there was a tendency for scenarios to be perceived as being more serious if the victim was female. It was suggested that this could be explained by gender stereotyping with the assumption that females are weak and would be unable to cope with bullying as well as males. In support of this theory, several respondents claimed that boys were stronger than girls and that girls 'can't take' bullying as much as boys. Condry and Ross (1985) claimed that teachers perceived pupil behaviour in terms of gender stereotypes, but examination of some of the open-ended comments suggests that pupils follow this tendency also. Several comments focused on the perception that boys experience bullying more than girls – reflecting the statistical trends identified in pupils' self-reported experience of bullying.

In addition to the themes about gender, a further finding from the open-ended comments mirrored those revealed in the statistical analysis. The tendency for some respondents to comment on how serious they thought incidents were when making a decision about whether the scenario was bullying or not suggested a link between 'seriousness' and 'bullying'. It seemed that respondents were judging how serious the situation was, and a perception of seriousness equated to a definition of bullying. This reflects the statistical findings where significant differences were detected in perceptions of seriousness depending on whether particular behaviours had been defined as bullying or not. The positive implication for this is the indication that participants regard bullying as serious. This reflects the amount of comments made expressing negative attitudes towards bullying. As previous research has shown (Boulton *et al.*, 2001; Boulton *et al.*, 2002; Eslea & Smith, 2000; Glover *et al.*, 2000;



Menesini *et al.*, 1997; Rigby & Slee, 1991), children tend to exhibit negative attitudes towards bullying and the findings from the open-ended comments illustrate this. It should be noted however that there was a trend for some pupils to 'blame the victim' for their situation. Comments were made implying that the victim must have done something to encourage their treatment. This was especially the case for scenarios involving property (i.e. stealing and damaging belongings), social exclusion and nasty e-mails/text messages. These comments implied that a proportion of respondents viewed bullying as understandable or justified in the circumstances. A tendency to blame the victim for bullying has been reported in several studies (Hara, 2002; Menesini *et al.*, 1997; Smith & Shu, 2000) and, in particular, bullies have been found to claim their behaviour was justifiable as a response to being provoked by the victim (Boulton & Underwood, 1992). Bullies have been found to deflect responsibility for their actions onto their victims (Cranham & Carroll, 2003) and it is possible that blaming victims removes any guilt experienced by bullies (Owens *et al.*, 2000). It would have been interesting therefore to examine whether the respondents who made comments like these also admitted to performing bullying behaviours. The statistical findings revealed that self-reported victims had slightly different perceptions of bullying, and it is highly likely that bullies would also perceive bullying differently. For example, Boulton *et al.* (2002) suggest that not defining behaviours as bullying could be a reason why children engage in these behaviours. The design of the questionnaires did not allow identification of children who bully others, but it would certainly be an interesting angle for further investigation.

## **7.2 Additional findings**

Aside from links to the statistical findings, the open-ended comments revealed important additional information about respondents' perceptions of bullying. Some pupils used the questionnaires as an opportunity to share their personal experiences of bullying. Although these narratives were often upsetting to read, they indicated that pupils were willing to report what had happened to them. The anonymous nature

of the questionnaire is likely to have aided this disclosure (Arora, 1994; Smith & Sharp, 1994) and illustrates how self-report questionnaires like this can be useful sources of information to staff about the bullying that occurs in the school (DfES, 1994, 2000, 2002). Interestingly, staff also shared their experiences with several respondents expressing concern about how well they are handling bullying and the lack of time they have to deal with it. These comments reflected some of the findings from the feedback interviews pertaining to lack of time. Branwhite (1994) acknowledges the time limitations teachers face because of the many responsibilities they have. In fact, there were some comments made about the need for additional support for schools through funding and even specialist members of staff. The emerging tone of the comments was that teachers were concerned about bullying and regarded it as a serious issue, but did not feel able to spend as much time as they would like addressing it. The apparent tension between time and resources is likely to contribute to feelings of stress (Borg *et al.*, 1991) and stress in teaching is associated with lowered involvement in the job and reduced quality of pupil-teacher relationships (Kyriacou, 1987, 2001). There is a need for more investigation on teacher stress and its effects (Kyriacou, 2001) because a large proportion of intervention strategies rely on prolonged and extensive input from staff (Birkinshaw & Eslea, 1998; Menesini *et al.*, 2002; Nicolaides *et al.*, 2002).

There was a focus in the pupil comments on friendship and how friends can offer protection from bullying. This reflects the *friendship protection hypothesis* outlined in the Introduction (Boulton *et al.*, 1999; Egan & Perry, 1998; Hodges *et al.*, 1997; Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1997; Smith, 1991) and highlights that pupils view bullying and friendship as related. Pupils also spoke about the quality of friendship and the characteristics of their friends. The implication for this is that pupils do not see bullying in isolation and make clear links to the importance of the peer group when discussing the issue. The importance of the peer group is regarded as crucial for addressing bullying because of the developmental benefits associated with positive friendships in adolescence (Boivin *et al.*, 1995; Gavin & Furman, 1989; Parker & Asher, 1987, 1993) and also because of the contribution peers can make to bullying

situations (O'Connell *et al.*, 1999; Salmivalli, 1999). The fact that pupils recognise this is encouraging because it would suggest they would be receptive to interventions focussing on peer support and involvement (e.g. DfES, 2000, 2002; Menesini *et al.*, 2003; Naylor & Cowie, 1999). However, seeing bullying and friendship as closely linked raises potential problems. If pupils regard bullying as occurring within friendships, they may be less likely to report it. Smith and Thompson (1992) argue that pupils regard problems such as falling out with friends as being personal to them and separate from school, hence teachers are unlikely to be informed about it. The fact that indirect behaviours are believed to often occur within friendship groups (Besag, 1992; Crick & Nelson, 2002; Cullingford, 1993; Keise, 1992; La Fontaine, 1991; Stanley & Arora, 1998) would therefore explain why this form of bullying in particular might be under-reported. It should be noted that there was a general trend in the comments for pupils to outline the importance of telling someone if bullying is occurring. This is a positive finding and suggests that pupils would be willing to report it. However, further investigation is required to examine whether pupils are able to distinguish bullying from normal peer conflict.

Related to this point, many pupils claimed that the behaviours in the questionnaire could be dismissed as 'joking' or 'messing around'. As Besag (1992) outlines, children will often dismiss incidents as being a game or 'horseplay' (Gamliel, Hoover, Dougherty & Imbra, 2003) and evidence suggests that the distinction between bullying and playing can be unclear. Garner (2003) claims that teachers find it difficult to distinguish between bullying incidents and those that are part of natural peer conflict. For example, Schåfer and Smith (1996) found that enjoyable play fighting was common between friends but teachers underestimated how often it occurred and overestimated the amount of real fighting. It is likely that pupils sometimes claim to be 'messing around' as an excuse, but it is also the case that pupil peer relationships involve an element of 'rough and tumble' that is normal, developmental and distinct from the problem of bullying (Boulton, 1993a; 1993b; 1996; Humphreys & Smith, 1987). In fact, numerous comments from pupils suggested that they viewed some behaviours (particularly name-calling and arguing)

as part of normal peer relationships, therefore they did not regard them as bullying. In addition, there was a tendency for some respondents to focus on whether incidents were unique and only happened to a few people for it to be defined as bullying. Attempting to identify the subtleties that separate normal conflict, play fighting and bullying is difficult, and previous research has shown that people take a variety of factors into account. For example, Boulton (1993a, 1993b, 1996) found that indicators such as facial expressions, physical actions, inferences about intent and the outcome of the incident were important when distinguishing 'real' from 'play' fighting. The open-ended comments partially reflected these findings because several respondents explained that for an incident to be defined as bullying, the perpetrator of the incident should have intended to cause distress in the recipient. The importance that some respondents put on the intent of the bully was interesting because the importance of intent has been evident in the debates surrounding the educational definition of bullying (Madsen, 1996; Guerin & Hennessy, 2002; O'Moore, 1995). The fact that members of the school community also appear to be undecided on this issue suggests the debate is far from resolved. Related to this, further debates emerged about definition that reflected the disagreements educational researchers have battled with. The importance of repetition was raised by several participants, with the argument that they would only define situations as bullying if there were a series of incidents. Hazler *et al.* (2001) and Siann *et al.* (1993) emphasise the importance of repetition whereas Arora (1996) and Stephenson and Smith (1992) do not think the notion of repeated behaviour should be a requirement for incidents to be defined as bullying. Instead, the interpretation of the victim is regarded as important and how they feel as a result of the incident (Arora, 1996; Guerin & Hennessy, 2002). Some open-ended comments supported this with respondents focusing on how the victim feels when deciding whether the scenarios were bullying or not.

Previous research has demonstrated that members of the school community disagree about definitions of bullying in similar ways to researchers (Madsen, 1996; Hazler *et al.*, 2001; Siann *et al.*, 1993; Smith & Levan, 1995) and the findings from this study

support this. Differences in opinions such as this are likely to have significant implications for interventions. According to the DfES (1994, 2000, 2002), it is important for members of the school community to work together when dealing with bullying. If everybody has different interpretations of what bullying involves, they will not be targeting it in a unified, consistent manner. Also, the way staff deal with bullying is believed to be important because of the messages that their behaviour sends to pupils (Besag, 1989; Madsen, 1996; Maines & Robinson, 1991; O'Moore, 2000; Soutter & McKenzie, 2000). Not intervening in an incident indicates that staff are condoning the behaviour as acceptable (Cranham & Carroll, 2003). If some staff think that incidents are only bullying if the perpetrator intended to cause distress in the other person, they are likely to dismiss situations where intent is not evident. Alternatively, staff that do not regard intent as important are likely to intervene and take action more often. The subtleties in the concept of repetition could also cause confusion (Sharp, Thompson & Arora, 2000) because some staff may treat a one-off as bullying, another member of staff may treat a series of incidents from *different* perpetrators as bullying whereas others may only label incidents as bullying if a pupil is harassed repeatedly by the *same* perpetrator. The result of this would be inconsistencies in response between staff, which sends mixed messages to pupils and also creates a segregated staff community. Soutter and McKenzie (2000) argue that staff working together is the first requirement of an effective anti-bullying program. Pupils who have differing opinions about bullying are also likely to respond differently in terms of reporting incidents to staff. As Boulton (1997) outlines, pupil reporting of incidents is likely to be affected by their definition of bullying. Therefore, there is a need for schools to re-address how bullying is defined, focusing on subtleties such as intent, repetition and perceptions of the victims to ensure all members of the school community share a common understanding of bullying (Menesini *et al.*, 2002). Whilst there are differences in opinion and subsequent differential response, a unified approach to bullying is unlikely to be achieved.

### **7.3 Questionnaires**

Interestingly, many participants used the comments boxes to express their feelings about the questionnaires. There was a lot of support provided in this feedback, with participants welcoming the opportunity to express their views on the issue. This was encouraging, but it should be noted that there were many comments made indicating methodological problems with the questionnaires. The negative comments that were made were initially disheartening. The fact that some participants did not feel able to respond accurately because of the design of the questionnaire cast doubt on the validity of the statistical findings. However, as previously outlined, many of the themes identified in the comments reflected trends already detected in the statistical analysis. This added weight to the statistical findings and showed that the existence of negative feedback did not necessarily discredit the results. On reflection, the comments added a great deal of insight into the perceptions of participants and, rather than being interpreted in a negative way, they should be regarded as a positive development to the investigation. For example, there were comments made about the lack of detail provided in the scenarios and how this made answering the questions difficult. In particular, staff outlined how incidents needed to be investigated before decisions could be made about whether situations were bullying or how serious they were. Furthermore, there were comments made about the individual nature of bullying incidents and the fact that they are context-specific. This indicated that participants viewed bullying as being a complex phenomenon that could not be defined or interpreted in simple terms. Despite the scenarios being designed to represent recognised bullying behaviours, some respondents seemed reluctant to accept them at face value without knowing more about the circumstances. This is a positive finding because it indicates that people do not make quick judgements about bullying and prefer to thoroughly investigate incidents – reflecting recommendations by Boulton (1993a). Therefore, the probability of situations being misinterpreted is reduced.

However, there are several implications for this finding. Firstly, investigating incidents in detail is likely to be very time consuming for staff. They would need to talk to the pupils involved at length to decide what occurred. Staff expressed concern about their lack of time so this is certainly an issue. In addition, such a lengthy process is likely to involve a series of interpretations before decisions are made. Personal opinions and subjectivities would certainly enter this process. Furthermore, the long process would mean a delay before action is taken to deal with the bully or victim. A delay such as this may reduce the impact of resulting action. For example, according to the principles of learning using behaviour modification (Skinner, 1953, 1971, as cited in Carlson, Martin & Buskist, 2004), the negative outcome of an unwanted behaviour should occur shortly afterwards to ensure the stimulus and response are paired. Aside from the possible effect on the bully of delayed reactions by staff, there are implications for victims and non-involved pupils too. If staff are not reacting at the time an incident is reported or witnessed, pupils may interpret them as condoning the behaviour, or being indifferent (Arora, 1989). Onlookers, or pupils on the fringe of incidents may be unaware of ongoing investigation by staff if it is covert and they would not necessarily see the result of any action taken. Teachers in particular are believed to be important role models for pupils (Besag, 1989; Madsen, 1996; Maines & Robinson, 1991; O'Moore, 2000; Soutter & McKenzie, 2000) so if they are seen as not intervening in bullying, they are likely to portray a bad impression to pupils. This would highlight the importance of transparency by staff in their procedures so that pupils are aware of what is being done to deal with incidents (Arora, 1989). If a pupil reports an incident, teachers would need to explain what action they will be taking to investigate it and, within the boundaries of confidentiality, keep the pupils updated of progress. The DfES (1994, 2000, 2002) highlight the importance of members of the school community being kept regularly updated about intervention work in the school – supporting this suggestion.

There were some comments made about the response options of some questions. For example, there were numerous requests for an additional option between 'never' and

'once or twice a term' on the perceived frequency and self-report scales because respondents felt there was a big jump between the two choices. On reflection this suggestion seemed entirely appropriate and future research should consider this if similar questionnaires are being used.

An important part of the questionnaire design process was ensuring that the same wording was used for pupils and staff (Boulton, 1997). If different questions were asked of each group, responses could not have been meaningfully compared. In practice, this was a difficult target to fulfil because the wording of the questions needed to be suitable for both groups. Clearly, there was a large age difference between pupils and staff and although a certain level of skill in reading and writing could be assumed in the staff sample, the same assumption could not be applied to pupils who were likely to have a varying range of abilities. To deal with this, the questionnaires were kept as simple as possible but it is acknowledged that some pupils may still have faced difficulties with completion. Furthermore, staff may have found the questions inappropriate or too simplistic. In fact, several comments made by staff suggested that, in some circumstances, this was indeed the case. As outlined in the Introduction, previous research comparing pupil and staff views have used different measures for each group (e.g. Boulton, 1997) and, although there are associated problems with lack of consistency, it may be that this approach is more appropriate. It would certainly be very difficult to design a measure suitable for use with both staff and pupils in primary school. A questionnaire suitable for such young pupils would be far too simplistic for staff and would therefore lack face validity for them. Within a secondary school environment, the gap between pupils and staff is smaller but problems with design are not eliminated. It is recommended that further research is carried out into the potential of using identical measures with pupils and staff. Additional thorough piloting and re-design may have resulted in a more suitable questionnaire.

It should be noted that the style of questionnaire used to measure perceptions in the study reflected previous research by Borg and Falzon (1989, 1990), Borg (1998a)



and Boulton (1997). They did not outline difficulties in the procedure or report receiving negative feedback from participants. It is probable this is due to the differences between studies but the problems in this study were only identified through examining the open-ended comments and the studies outlined did not include a qualitative element. This emphasised the importance of collecting qualitative data in this study and suggested that more focus on qualitative material could be advisable when examining perceptions of bullying. In fact, many respondents made comments about the structured nature of the questions and how they would have liked more opportunity to explain their answers. There were also requests for open-ended questions rather than fixed-choice options. Therefore, some respondents were advocating adopting a qualitative approach to the issue. If similar methods for data collection are employed in further studies, it would be recommended that more focus is applied to the use of qualitative data to complement the structured responses. Comments for every section would allow participants to explain why they responded in a particular way and could add considerable insight to statistical findings.

Overall, the open-ended comments illustrated the complexity that exists in individual interpretations of bullying. Many of the debates researchers have had surrounding how to define bullying were mirrored by participants in this study and therefore raise several implications for intervention. The value of using qualitative techniques to investigate bullying was highlighted and important methodological problems associated with the design of the structured questionnaires were raised.

# **Chapter 8**

## **Semi-structured interviews with staff**

## 8. Semi-structured interviews with staff

### 8.1 Rationale for additional study

Evidence from some of the open-ended comments made on the questionnaires suggested that respondents viewed bullying as a context-specific behaviour. This meant that several participants found answering structured, closed questions about the issue very difficult. In addition, comments were made about the suitability of some questions to individual experience, and the desire to give more descriptive, thorough answers. The questionnaires clearly revealed important findings about how people in the school community perceive bullying, and their merit is not being negated. However, it appeared that other issues were emerging that were not being suitably portrayed through the quantitative, structured nature of the questions. Peoples' perceptions of bullying seemed to be mediated by a complexity of issues and in order to investigate these in detail a different approach was required. The distinction between quantitative and qualitative research is pertinent to this discussion of a suitable approach. Quantitative research is characterised by measurement of variables and analysis of causal relationships whereas the qualitative approach emphasises the importance of "how social experience is created and given meaning" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p.13). The qualitative approach would therefore appear suitable to investigate the issues raised in the open-ended comments further. The qualitative data generated by the open-ended comments has already proven invaluable in adding to the statistical findings, so expanding the qualitative approach will hopefully yield similar benefits. As Flick (2002) explains, whilst carrying out a research project, quantitative and qualitative approaches can be incorporated at different stages of the design. In this study, the quantitative stage revealed issues that required investigating through qualitative techniques. Combining quantitative and qualitative approaches within a piece of research - a form of *triangulation* - can add insight to the issues being investigated by utilising the strengths and weaknesses of each approach (Flick, 2002). The difference in philosophical stance between quantitative and qualitative research has raised

questions about the suitability of combining the approaches within a study but, as Langdrige (2004) notes, researchers are increasingly seeing the merit of using both approaches because of the added insight that can be achieved. From a pragmatic standpoint, it is argued that epistemological differences should be put aside to allow practical consideration of “what works” (Langdrige, 2004, p.256). With the topic of research being school bullying, the appropriateness of including some qualitative investigation seems unquestionable. In fact, the apparent lack of qualitative research in the field of bullying seems surprising. Some qualitative investigations were revealed through a literature search (e.g. Cranham & Carroll, 2003; Gamliel *et al.*, 2003; Owens *et al.*, 2000) but these were few and far between. As outlined previously, some researchers advocate a qualitative approach to studying bullying (e.g. Boulton, 1997; Owens *et al.*, 2000; Smith & Brain, 2000). In addition, it was mentioned that Siann *et al.* (1994) recommended using additional techniques alongside questionnaires to investigate bullying. This reflects comments from the Deputy Head in School 1 during the feedback interviews that some qualitative data would have been useful. With this in mind, it was decided to conduct a qualitative investigation of perceptions of bullying. The aim of this additional study was to examine the perceptions of bullying that were investigated in the questionnaires in more depth.

It should be noted that qualitative research is not a unified approach and there are divisions within it based on different philosophical standpoints, alternate approaches to methodology and analysis and debates about definition (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Therefore, it was necessary to identify a suitable approach within the qualitative framework that would be most appropriate for the aims of the investigation. The technique of *Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis* (IPA) involves “analysing in detail how participants are perceiving and making sense of things that are happening to them,” (Smith, 2003, p.55). The focus is not on testing hypotheses, but on exploring an issue in detail (Smith, 2003). This approach seemed to reflect the aims of the qualitative study well. The analysis of the questionnaires allowed investigation of general trends in responses, but what was required now was a

detailed investigation of the complexities underlying perceptions of bullying. In IPA, “meaning is central, and the aim is to try to understand the content and complexity of those meanings rather than measure their frequency,” (Smith, 2003, p.64). Therefore, the approach of IPA seemed most appropriate to this part of the investigation. Despite similarities being drawn between IPA, standard thematic analysis and grounded theory, the IPA approach to qualitative research has been growing in popularity (Willig, 2001). It has its roots in phenomenology where the overall aim is examining participants’ experience of a particular phenomenon (Langdridge, 2004). However, IPA focuses more on interpretation with the awareness that the researcher has an active role in making sense of how the participants are making sense of their world (Smith, 2003). The importance IPA researchers place on sense-making reflects the theoretical standpoint of the cognitive perspective that is dominant in mainstream psychology (Smith, 2003). Theoretically, there is perceived to be a connection between how people think, feel and talk – viewing individuals as cognitive beings (Smith, 2003). However, the depth of analysis involved in IPA contrasts to the quantitative experimental designs cognitive psychologists traditionally employ (Smith, 2003).

According to Smith (2003), IPA researchers tend to use a small homogenous sample for their studies where the aim is to examine perceptions of a particular group rather than make generalised claims. In this way, a form of *purposive sampling* (selecting participants based on their suitability to the research question – Willig, 2001) is employed to find a closely defined group (Smith, 2003). In the open-ended comments, staff were the most open in their critique of the structured questionnaire format and about their desire to discuss bullying in more depth. Also, the design of the questionnaires meant that a lot of qualitative data had already been collected from pupils. The open-ended comments boxes appeared throughout the pupil questionnaires whereas the staff questionnaire only had comment boxes at the end. Therefore, it was decided that members of staff would be the most suitable people to approach for further study as they formed a close group of the school community.

Most researchers using IPA generate their data from conducting semi-structured interviews (Langdrige, 2004; Smith, 2003). Researchers use semi-structured interviews if they want to “gain a detailed picture of a respondent’s beliefs about, or perceptions or accounts of, a particular topic,” (Smith, 1995, p.9). As Burman (1994) notes, interviews can allow investigation of issues too complex to be studied using quantitative methodologies. It has been suggested that people are more likely to express their views in a flexible interview situation than through structured questioning or questionnaires (Flick, 2002). Interestingly, as outlined in the Method section, during the informal feedback stage of the pilot study one of the head teachers actually recommended conducting some face-to-face interviews. All these factors justified a decision to use semi-structured interviews for this part of the research.

## **8.2 Semi-structured interviews**

Semi-structured interviews follow the format of a focused conversation (Mason, 1996). The researcher has specific issues they want to discuss, but the format is flexible to accommodate new information that emerges (Burman, 1994). The researcher aims to develop a relationship with the participant, minimising psychological distance and facilitating a relaxed approach (Hayes, 2000). Semi-structured interviewing requires a great deal of skill because researchers have to adapt to incoming information, respond suitably to the participant’s emotion and non-verbal communication, probe with appropriate follow-up questions and phrase questions in an open format so as to yield detailed information and not lead participants (Mason, 1996; Willig, 2001).

Despite the flexibility of the interview process, researchers are advised to develop an interview schedule in advance that can help to retain their focus on the central issues of concern (Mason, 1996; Smith 1995). The guidance given for developing an interview schedule varies, but the central features revolve around developing a list of themes or topics to be covered (Rubin & Rubin, 1995; Smith, 1995), formulating

any standardised questions that need to be asked, considering a logical order of topics (Smith, 1995) and thinking about the phrasing of possible questions. With this in mind, an interview schedule was developed for the semi-structured interviews with school staff. This schedule was designed to be flexible and was largely guided by the issues measured in the questionnaires. The schedule was designed as a list of issues meaning it would be quick and easy to refer to during the interviews. It included the following topics:

- How long the participant had been in their current role
- How long they had worked at the school
- Year groups and subjects taught/main duties
- How they define bullying
- Differences in types of bullying and perceived severity
- Ways in which they find out about bullying incidents
- Factors that affect decisions about whether incidents are regarded as bullying or not
- Factors that affect decisions about the seriousness of incidents
- Factors that affect decisions about investigating and dealing with reported incidents
- What school factors may be involved
- Training received
- Support that is available for staff
- Other emerging issues

### **8.3 Procedure**

Each of the four schools that had participated in the questionnaire project were contacted again in the summer of 2003. Through liaising with the Head or Deputy Head, a date was arranged for the researcher to visit each school and conduct interviews with two to three members of staff. The Head or Deputy Head circulated information to staff members and selected a small number of participants who were

willing and available to take part in the interviews on that date. This process involved both *convenience sampling* (selection through opportunity) and *typical case* sampling (choosing 'average' people from a field) (Flick, 2002). When the researcher met each participant, the overall project and reasons for conducting the interviews were explained verbally and also in written format on an information sheet. The participants were then asked to read and sign a consent form. All participants (except 2) gave consent for their interviews to be tape recorded, and the tape was turned on once the consent forms had been signed. For the interviews that were not taped, detailed notes were made during and immediately after the interview. Interviews lasted between 15 and 25 minutes depending on the amount of time staff had available.

During the interviews, topics from the interview schedule were covered in varying orders depending on the flow of conversation. On some occasions, the focus moved away from the interview schedule when an interesting topic emerged that required further discussion. In all cases, the interviews were kept as relaxed as possible and often became more of an informal conversation.

After the interviews had taken place, they were transcribed using a simple transcription technique (Langdrige, 2004). Where tape recordings had not taken place, the field notes were transcribed to form an organised account of the interview around the topics of the interview schedule. Participants were sent a copy of their transcript or interview notes for approval. This approach reflects Flick's (2002) explanation of *communicative validation* whereby participants are given the opportunity to authenticate their transcripts. One minor factual detail was amended as a result of feedback from one of the participants. No other amendments were requested.

### **School 1**

All interviews at School 1 took place in the Deputy Head's office with just the researcher and participant present. There were 3 participants interviewed. The first



was a female member of support staff involved in administration duties and lunchtime supervision; the second was a male teacher who was Head of Year 7 and the third was a male teacher who had previously been a Head of Year and was now Head of Graphics and Resistant Materials at the school.

### **School 2**

The interviews in School 2 took place in the Deputy Head's office with just the researcher and participant present. The Deputy Head came into the room briefly during one of the interviews. There were 2 participants interviewed. The first was a female teacher who was Head of Year 8 and the second was a female subject teacher.

### **School 3**

The interviews in School 3 took place in various locations. There were 3 participants interviewed. The first was a female teacher who was Head of Year 11. The interview took place in her office and she did not give consent for the discussion to be taped hence notes were kept. The second participant was a female teacher who was Head of Year 10 and the discussion took place in her office. The third participant was a female lunchtime supervisor. She was interviewed during lunchtime in the school dining hall so it was inappropriate to use a tape recorder and notes were made afterwards. This discussion was brief and she was distracted several times due to the fact she was still on duty.

### **School 4**

The interviews in School 4 took place in a staff room with only the researcher and participant present. There were 3 participants interviewed. The first was a male teacher who was Deputy Head with a focus on pastoral issues. The second participant was a female teacher who was Head of Year 10 and the third was a female teacher who was a Key Stage Coordinator in the school.

### **Feedback interviews**

The interviews that had been conducted with the Head or Deputy Head in each school to receive feedback on the project had often moved off the issue of feedback to discuss bullying in general. It was felt that these interviews provided a wealth of data so the transcripts were included in the analysis. This meant that there were 15 separate interview transcripts being analysed.

### **8.4 Analytical process**

The process of analysis using IPA involves active engagement with the transcripts and close interpretation of meaning in the text (Smith, 2003). There are no strict guidelines for conducting IPA, and researchers are encouraged to adapt the process to suit their own research (Smith, 1995, 2003). Through identifying commonalities in the step-by-step criteria (described by Langdrige, 2004; Smith, Jarman & Osborn, 1999; Smith, 2003; Willig, 2001), the following approach was adopted for analysing the transcripts:

#### **1. Initial coding**

Smith, Jarman and Osborn (1999) describe two approaches to analysis depending on the number of participants involved. For a sample size of 10 or less participants, they suggest an idiographic approach whereby individual transcripts are analysed one-by-one before findings are brought together. However, they explain that this approach would not be appropriate for larger samples. Instead they advocate a process of “exploring and theorizing shared experiences,” (Smith, Jarman & Osborn, 1999, p.228) where themes relevant to all participants are identified at the beginning of the analysis. Therefore, the first stage of analysis involved reading the transcripts thoroughly (Langdrige, 2004; Willig, 2001). On each transcript, initial ideas, thoughts and reflections about the meaning of the text were made in the left-hand margin (Smith, Jarman & Osborn, 1999; Smith, 1995). In the right-hand margin, initial broad codes were developed that reflected the content of large sections of the text (Smith, Jarman & Osborn, 1999; Smith, 1995; Willig, 2001).

## 2. Identifying themes

The codes from stage 1 were examined to see how they could be grouped together into themes. This process was conducted on each transcript resulting in a clustered grouping of themes for each participant (Smith, Jarman & Osborn, 1999). The aim was to apply a form of order or structure to the list of themes that emerged from the words of the participants (Smith, 1995; Willig, 2001).

## 3. Clustering shared themes

The themes identified above for individual transcripts were examined for the group of participants as a whole to investigate connections between them. The aim of this stage was to identify themes reflecting the shared experience of participants (Smith, Jarman & Osborn, 1999). Some themes were discarded at this stage if they appeared irrelevant to the topic being investigated (Langdrige, 2004). Themes that appeared to relate to each other across participants were clustered together to form master themes (Willig, 2001). Each master theme was given a label that suitably encompassed the content of the themes included in it (Langdrige, 2004). Re-examination of the transcript was an important part of this stage to ensure that the master themes were truly reflecting the words of the participant and were not too far removed from the data (Smith, 2003). In addition, extracts from the transcripts were selected as examples of the master themes. This involved detailed interpretation of the text - investigating where examples of the themes may not have been previously identified in the early coding stage (Smith, Jarman & Osborn, 1999). The result of this stage of analysis was a list of master themes with corresponding constituent themes, each having a list of participant quotes to support them (Langdrige, 2004).

## 4. Investigating patterns

The final stage involved detailed interpretation of the master themes – examining how they related to each other to further explain participants' experiences (Smith, Jarman & Osborn, 1999). This process was designed to move the analysis away from segmented themes towards “a more holistic perspective on the data” (Smith, Jarman & Osborn, 1999, p.232). In many ways, investigating patterns between

categories like this reflects the model-formation or theory building stage of grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Complexities, ambiguities and contradictions within master themes were also examined at this stage (Smith, 1995). As Smith (1995) notes, each stage of analysis involves moving further away from the data and becoming more interpretive. Therefore he emphasises the importance of re-visiting the transcripts to ensure the abstract concepts emerging are closely related to and reflect the spoken accounts of the participants. The findings were then translated into a narrative account – shown in the following section - demonstrating the shared experience of the participants but also recognising individual variations (Smith, Jarman & Osborn, 1999; Smith, 2003).

## **8.5 Analysis**

The analysis revealed 6 master themes explaining staff experiences of dealing with bullying in the school environment: complexity in perceptions of bullying; identification of bullying; dealing with bullying; organisational factors affecting staff behaviour; outside influences on the school environment and policing terminology. The clusters of themes that were grouped to form each master theme revealed the complexity of experience shared by the participants.

### **8.5.1 Complexity in perceptions of bullying**

The participants spoke about how they perceived bullying and there were diverse comments about this.

#### **Origins of bullying**

Several issues emerged about what staff believed caused bullying. In particular, several participants seemed to interpret bullying as a learned behaviour.

*“...well, you’ve only got to watch a programme like ‘Eastenders’ and listen to them going on...listen to these kids here...they’re reflecting (inaudible),” (School 4, Participant 2)*

*“...most bullies have been bullied haven’t they? Y’know, it’s a learnt behaviour erm if you can’t beat them by avoiding them then join them...” (School 1 Feedback Interview)*

Boredom was another issue that emerged as being an important precursor to bullying. Several participants indicated that keeping pupils occupied would prevent many incidents occurring.

*“...if the kids have sort of got a lot of time...say, I mean we only have like a half hour break...(inaudible) but if the kids got sometimes y’know an hour, an hour and a half, whatever hour and a quarter, different schools, I think they can have lunch and sometimes they can*

*sort of...there's not a lot to do in the school yard. Y'know, they're with their mates they're having a chat or whatever and sometimes things start to escalate...and it might be that they've got this time and it might start off as a bit of fun...filling their time y'know," (School 2, Participant 2)*

*"Break of 20 minutes is too long. Children get bored. Lunch – there is a lot of queuing up and it's very easy for stuff to happen. Children need to be kept busy." (School 3, Participant 1 Notes)*

### **Defining bullying**

When participants were discussing what they understood by the term bullying, some interesting factors emerged. Firstly, there was a debate about whether incidents needed to occur repeatedly before they were defined as bullying. Some staff did not feel the concept of *repetition* was important.

*"...it could be short term, it could be a one off, it could be a long term thing," (School 4, Participant 1)*

Other staff did emphasise that they only viewed incidents as bullying if they occurred more than once.

*"...it can be like once a day, every hour or whatever but if there's, if there's a pattern behind it" (School 1, Participant 2)*

*"In my eyes if it's just that one-off incident that it's usually from fall out...I don't...I don't see that as bullying...if it is a continual thing which has happened from y'know from one day to the next to the next and the next and has continued and continued and continued er...then yeah, that is, that is bullying," (School 1, Participant 2)*

*"But obviously if they're coming back telling you time and time again that they're being pushed...I will try to find out who and what and why and where y'know," (School 2, Participant 2)*

There were references to dominance regarding bullying, indicating that an imbalance in power between the victim and the bully is perceived by some staff as being important for a definition of bullying.

*"dominance, pressure...erm...as in perhaps force," (School 1, Participant 3)*

*"it may mean trying to assert their dominance...assert dominance through one way or another" (School 1, Participant 3)*

*"...the kids are establishing a sort of pecking order...but also, and also one or two incidents of older pupils starting to assert their dominance," (School 2 Feedback Interview)*

When deciding whether an incident was bullying or not, many staff talked about how *victims* were interpreting the behaviour.

*"anything which somebody feels as if they're being persecuted," (School 1, Participant 2)*

*"and when the child is so upset...than that-that decision is-is made that some...that child is being bullied...I have to sort it out," (School 2, Participant 1)*

*"Bullying to me is anything, whether it's verbal or physical, threats or actual contact...er...against another pupil that hurts them...makes them feel unhappy....anything at all which....anything which threatens erm another person's happiness at school," (School 4, Participant 1)*

*"...I always say to the children that bullying is anything that makes anybody feel uncomfortable or...if you...if you don't feel right about something then it's bullying," (School 4, Participant 3)*

Some staff also talked about the importance of the bullying being *intentional*. An incident would only be regarded as bullying if the bully intended to cause the victim distress.

*"...and something that has been erm thought out. Not just a...a reaction but something that has been thought through...pre-meditated," (School 4, Participant 1)*

However, other staff discounted intention as an important factor, suggesting that often pupils do not consider their behaviour to be bullying.

*“you’re not always sure if they understand...what it is they’re doing wrong...because if they’re just saying stuff they don’t always think that they’re doing anything wrong...like just name-calling or whatever y’know might have happened when they’re out playing in the streets they do it to other friends when they’ve been at other schools. They’ve done it...and they can’t always see that it’s just wrong and it’s upsetting,” (School 2, Participant 2)*

*“...I have a lot of kids who skit (name-call) and take it too far and don’t realise it’s (inaudible) and it’s difficult. And school policy says ‘deliberately hurtful behaviour’...I think they’re doing it subconsciously...that it’s a habit...skitting is a habit...and I think...they see it...I find it very difficult to get them to see it as bullying,” (School 4, Participant 2)*

*“...a lot of the time I think the children don’t realise it’s bullying. They think they’re teasing.....They do...they don’t see it as bullying very often...erm...and this is why I’m always on at them...l-let’s get this straight before we start, I’m gonna say to you that bullying is anything that makes somebody else uncomfortable no matter what you think whether you think it’s bullying or not, if they’re not happy with what you’re saying or doing...that is a form of bullying,” (School 4, Participant 3)*

When staff were discussing bullying, there was a tendency for a *staged approach* to be described. This was not immediately obvious, but careful investigation revealed numerous distinctions between ‘levels’ or ‘degrees’ of bullying and also the concept of bullying developing.

*“You’re not gonna come across that until it’s really...full stage bullying” (School 1, Participant 1)*

*“it can snowball on then,” (School 2, Participant 2)*

*“Bullying starts as something petty then escalates,” (School 3, Participant 1 Notes)*



*"As a result of an extreme form of bullying," (School 4, Participant 1)*

It was almost as if some staff regarded bullying as being on a continuum from low severity to high severity incidents.

These conflicting views often occurred within schools and irrespective of the way schools defined bullying in their policy documents. Therefore, it suggests staff operate with an *internal personal view* of bullying that exists independently of the school in which they work.

### **Children involved in bullying**

Staff spoke about the *types* of children who become involved in bullying. In particular, staff spoke about how they can often identify the bullies and the victims in the school. Interestingly, the perception of the bullies and victims in the school sometimes seemed to have an impact on whether incidents were perceived as bullying or not.

*"I take great note of who they say the instigate...who the bullyer is,"  
(School 3, Participant 2)*

*"but...where you hear the same name, where you hear the...you know that there's a students who is vindictive...and I think I would begin to take it more seriously maybe," (School 3, Participant 2)*

*"I know enough about the pupils in this school now to know if there is somebody who is a bit of a bully," (School 4, Participant 1)*

*"...there's also children that you know for certain sure are gonna be...are less dominant than others and y'know if there's one boy who is always...at somebody and there's another one who's very quiet...then it's its sort of...you get...(laughs) to arouse suspicions..."  
(School 4, Participant 3)*

Certain children were seen as *attracting* or *inviting* bullying from their peers.

*"Victims are slightly different to the norm. Have a 'bully me' label," (School 3, Participant 1 Notes)*

*"...the way they walk the way they sit the way they react to other students can perpetuates the er...victimization" (School 3, Participant 2)*

*"...we have certain children who have always got victim written all over them...often just by their demeanour, by their actions, by something and they can be picked on not by one or two...it can be a general thing," (School 2 Feedback Interview)*

*"You get some kids who wind other kids up...they'll wind them up by saying things..." (School 2 Feedback Interview)*

Interestingly, several staff described children as *misinterpreting* problems in their peer relationships as being bullying.

*"I would think to me most incidents are fairly natural...as I said before...arguments, breakdowns in relationships, falling out of friendships...and they're over and done with very quickly. The students who think they are perpetually being...er...bullied you tend to find that as you track through the incidents, it's the same victim but there are lots of difference so-called perpetrators...and I think it is more to do with their perceptions of relationships generally," (School 3, Participant 2)*

*"The lower down the school...I don't take things less seriously but I am a bit more open minded about alleged incidents of bullying...because I know in Year 7 there are one or two pupils who will come to me by the minute saying they're being bullied "I'm being bullied", when in fact what is happening is they're just not getting on with other pupils...or they can't relate to other pupils, and they're just saying "go away" ...and it's not bullying as such...it's just the fact that they can't cope with that particular situation," (School 4, Participant 1)*

## Age

The reference to pupil age in the previous quote was interesting because age emerged as an issue in other discussions. In particular, staff felt that younger pupils were more likely to report bullying incidents.

*"...students who tell you...students who disclose it...erm...I think it varies as they grow older. As you go through the years if you start off in Year 7...you get a lot more incidents," (School 3, Participant 2)*

*"I think the younger ones will more often...actually say," (School 4, Participant 3)*

*"I have to say that we do tend to have particularly younger kids they will come and report it," (School 2 Feedback Interview)*

If younger pupils report incidents more often, it would suggest that staff might have more accurate knowledge of the bullying that occurs in the lower year groups.

## Gender

When discussing distinctions between boys and girls, there was a notable trend for staff to describe bullying between girls as longer lasting because they were perceived as 'bearing grudges'.

*"But I have known the boys to have a fight and when they've had a fight its finished. Y'know...sometimes there's still a few little niggles...sometimes girls can have a fight but it's still not finished...y'know...they're not always happy...that's not the end of it," (School 2, Participant 2)*

*"Girls are the worst. They are bitchy. Problems happen in friendships and girls bear grudges. Boys fight and then the argument is over with." (School 3, Participant 1)*

Different behaviours were described between boys and girls. Girls were perceived as resorting to verbal behaviours that often occurred within friendship groups.

*“I suppose there is the same amount of bullying...but...the girls tend to do the talking out and the y’know the nasty comments...to one another. And the boys flare out with their fists, have a, have a bit of a fight and it’s all over with y’know,” (School 4, Participant 3)*

*“I have to say...it’s a sexist thing...it sounds sexist I know but girls fall out, girls fall out and then say “I’m being bullied”...cos sometimes they will fall in and out of, in and out of friends...” (School 2 Feedback Interview)*

The previous example was particularly interesting because reported incidents of bullying appeared to be dismissed because of the perception that the girls were friends. There seemed to be an underlying assumption that bullying occurs outside friendship groups.

These comments revealed how staff perceptions of bullying can guide their subsequent reaction to reported incidents. Staff appeared to have differing opinions about the children involved in bullying based on factors such as gender, age, previous knowledge of individual children and friendships. These opinions seemed to affect how seriously they regarded incidents that were reported to them.

### **8.5.2 Identification of bullying**

Several issues emerged that were focused on how staff identify when an incident of bullying is occurring in the school.

#### **Sources of information**

It emerged that the most common way staff find out about incidents is when they are reported to them. One source of information about bullying was reported to be pupils’ parents.

*"it comes through from parents making a phone call...and saying my son or daughter is being bullied...I hear quite a few er I'd say perhaps 50, 60% from parents," (School 1, Participant 2)*

*"parents will ring in...parents will ring in and say so-and-so's being bullied," (School 3, Participant 2)*

The parent reports are of course reliant on pupils reporting their experiences to them in the first place, and are also mediated by the parent's own perception of what bullying involves. However, staff reported that parents do provide useful information about bullying in the school.

Another source of information about bullying was pupils themselves coming forward and telling staff they are being bullied, or friends of pupils reporting incidents.

*"...sometimes other children will come to me and say that y'know "so and so's being bullied" ...so er, th-they do actually tend to...I mean, I'm sure there's others we don't get to hear about...but there's an awful lot of them who will come and talk," (School 4, Participant 3)*

The comment above also acknowledged the fact that many incidents are not reported, and reflected experiences from other staff who regarded pupils as less willing to come forward.

*"...in my time here it's been very very rare...to actually have someone come along and say "look,...I've been (inaudible), this, that and whatever's going on" ...it's very rare," (School 1, Participant 3)*

An interesting issue relating to sources of information about bullying emerged in several interviews. There seemed to be an underlying belief that there is a *turning point* for victims of bullying where they finally 'give in' and report their experience.

*"they are the ones who finally let it go at home and then it comes in to school," (School 1, Participant 2)*

*"Apparently erm it wasn't until someone made fun of her...her size...she actually cracked in school," (School 4, Participant 2)*

The awareness staff showed of pupils' reluctance to report bullying seemed to be attributed to pupils' lack of confidence, with the idea that increasing pupil confidence would lead to increased reporting.

*"What I have to do is give the victim the confidence to say to me "it is happening again...erm I want you to do something about it"..."*  
*(School 2, Participant 1)*

*"Pupils are beginning to feel confident in coming to me now...and saying "I think I'm being bullied...because this is what's happening to me"..."*  
*(School 4, Participant 1)*

The perceived lack of confidence pupils have when reporting bullying could be regarded as a *barrier to disclosure*. When discussing the reluctance of pupils to report bullying, staff mentioned several *barriers to disclosure* that contributed to the situation. These barriers focused on the belief that children experiencing bullying are embarrassed to admit their plight.

*"So I know what can happen...and how a child can keep it from you...because they're just embarrassed," (School 1, Participant 1)*

There was also the belief in pupils that reporting incidents could make the situation worse.

*"But she was frightened...of the erm comeback from the kids..."*  
*(School 4, Participant 2)*

*"There is the other thing of course...this reluctance of some kids and some parents to report things because (inaudible) if we report it, it we tell, it'll get worse," (School 2 Feedback Interview)*

The lack of reporting was perceived as being part of a *culture of silence* whereby telling staff led to accusations of 'grassing' or 'telling tales'.

*"I've made it very clear to the Year 7 pupils it's you've got to come and tell me if you feel that ...an issue is building up between you and somebody else...se we can talk it through er that doesn't happen very often...because there's this 'grass' mentality...with kids not wanting to tell tales cos they think it's going to get worse," (School 1, Participant 2)*

The concept of a pupil culture was interesting because it reflected a discussion in one of the interviews about the terminology pupils use about bullying and how staff need to be aware of it. The idea that pupils have their own 'code' or 'language' reinforces that fact that they form a distinct group in the school community, with their own identity.

*"...and then you'll say "you were friends (inaudible)" and then she'll say something about "she snarled at me" ...that's a new expression that...That's a new one...y'know....just y'know...Oh yeh, yeh, snarl. That's one of the latest expressions...(laughs) Yeh, that's it, know the terminology...Skitting yeh, but snarl....but that's.....that's only come, I've only noticed that this term really since the start," (School 2 Feedback Interview)*

The concept of pupil culture also reflects comments from a member of support staff who felt that pupils open-up to people who are perceived to be segregated from the teachers.

*"I just find that erm...if they (pupils) see you as part of being in with the teachers y'know...they clam up and they stop," (School 1, Participant 1)*

It appeared that the amount of information that is reported to staff is largely dependent on their ability to become an accepted part of the pupil culture.

*"...they know who to say what to...erm...y'know...if you kind of can be on their level...they will talk and if you can't they go "pff!" y'know,"*  
(School 1, Participant 1)

The apparent distinction between pupils and teachers in this respect was interesting because it seemed as if they were perceived as being very separate groups and the quality of information received from pupils was related to the quality of communication channels between the two groups. During the interviews, support staff emerged consistently as being perceived as a 'bridge' between pupils and teachers. One member of support staff commented that pupils would often discuss their problems with her.

*"...sometimes they (pupils) come and tell you their problems y'know...I've had a few tell me that they've had problems at home..."*  
(School 1, Participant 1)

The willingness of pupils to open up to her was attributed to the fact that support staff are perceived by pupils as being separated from the teachers.

*"...the kids see them (lunchtime staff) as totally different...they see them as...outsiders...in the canteen and they're more friendly to them,"* (School 1, Participant 1)

Not only were support staff regarded by pupils as separate from the teachers, but it also appeared that they were perceived as having different relationships with pupils.

*"It's just that the likes of the mentors do have their ears to the ground in the sense that they're around all the time and kids will confide in them more than they will us...they (pupils) see us as authority...They (support staff) are seen as being on the side of the kids...and that's a good thing,"* (School 4 Feedback Interview)

*"...the learning mentors are going to become increasingly involved as well...because they're a good point of contact...er both from the point of view of, of erm giving us information...and erm relationships their different relationships with the erm children,"* (School 1 Feedback Interview)



*"I think with them being around, walking around carrying their stuff and carrying whatever they need delivering here there and...whatever they do...sharpening chisels, doing the y'know the design work and y'know preparing for D and T...make sure the computers are all up and running y'know these people come across children...and they are wonderful sources of information...if they knew they were being valued, because kids drop their guard with them because they're not teachers," (School 1 Feedback Interview)*

There seemed to be growing awareness amongst the teachers interviewed that support staff were an important source of information about pupils and could act as a bridge for communication between pupils and teachers.

### **Witnessing behaviours**

Apart from incidents being reported to them, staff commented that they sometimes witnessed bullying occurring. Interestingly, the incidents that were reported to be witnessed involved groups of children and tended to focus on physical action.

*"...on break duty y'know you might see kind of 2 or 3 boys chasing somebody or throwing bags at them but then I think a lot of that is just normal...just...rough and tumble behaviour...er if I think that the...if it looks as if it's a kind of ganging up situation or if it looks as if the victim isn't retaliating...and isn't joining in...if they look as if they're trying to escape it..." (School 3, Participant 2)*

*"I mean when...sometimes, if they don't know that you're watching...then you'll see somebody throw something at somebody or...er...y'know...just if you're by the window when you come down...and see something going on in the yard or see somebody fighting or something you've got a hold of them and you'll...they'll say "it was only a toy fight"..." (School 4, Participant 3)*

*"Well aggression as in a group against one...erm...that's mainly what you see...I think, in schools...always a gang against one...If it's one against one as I say...very quietly done...you're not, you're not gonna see it," (School 1, Participant 1)*

The final comment demonstrated the awareness that the more invisible, indirect forms of bullying are unlikely to be witnessed by staff. However, alternative strategies emerged for identifying subtle bullying. There was tendency for staff to be alert to *deviations from normality* in pupils' behaviour and use it as an indication that something may be wrong.

*"...sometimes, if a person is normally seated by somebody for a long time...and then they split up...or they'll come and say "can I sit on my own?"...I would say "why?"..." (School 2, Participant 1)*

*"If you see a group of 'scally girls' talking to someone they wouldn't normally be friends with, have nothing in common with and would normally be with different people, you know something is up," (School 3, Participant 3 Notes)*

Staff also commented on their reliance on an *inner sense* or feeling about whether something is occurring.

*"...you can just tell when there's something not right amongst them," (School 1, Participant 1)*

*"...it's just to pick up on vibes and look at why...and seeing how people how the children are acting," (School 1, Participant 2)*

*"...you just feel it, you know what's going on," (School 1, Participant 3)*

*"I pick it up by standing around in a mack and y'know on the yard...erm just watching children....and just feeling uneasy," (School 1 Feedback Interview)*

The ability to identify bullying was often attributed to previous experience, with the suggestion that experience enhances the ability to detect incidents when they occur.

*"...it's just life experience...for me...that's what I find...and I've got that...I know I've got that personality that...that I can relate to them," (School 1, Participant 1)*

*"...it's just experience...and the-the ability to zoom in on a situation...to pick something up," (School 2, Participant 1)*

*"Through my...the past 12 years...13 years...it taught me that I know when there is a...I think I'm quite competent when there is a...an incident of bullying taking place," (School 4, Participant 1)*

### **8.5.3 Organisational factors affecting staff behaviour**

Once an incident of bullying has been identified, there appeared to be many factors affecting staffs' subsequent behaviour. These factors were related to the school as an organisation and raised issues pertaining to the occupational health of the school.

#### **Referral**

A notable finding from the interviews was the importance of referring information. There seemed to be a chain of command in the schools whereby individual staff members would pass on information about bullying incidents to more senior members of staff for them to deal with. However, the decision to refer was complex – raising implications about how much information senior staff did actually find out about. For example, one teacher commented that physical bullying is passed on immediately.

*"I mean, if it's a physical thing then it's violent...I immediately have to report it to y'know, Head of Year...Senior Management, whatever and I pass it to them," (School 2, Participant 2)*

This implies an underlying assumption of physical bullying being taken more seriously because it is handled at 'senior level' whereas other forms of bullying are more likely to be handled by individual teachers. Another teacher appeared to make his decision to refer based on the complexity of the incident.

*"I've always given a pledge to kids in my form that I'll resolve a situation within half a day...and if I can't resolve it I'll pass the*

*book...er...and give it to someone else who's on, who's on...if I can't resolve it at my level of management er then maybe it's bigger than I can actually deal with...and therefore it's got to go along the chain of command," (School 1, Participant 3)*

This suggests individual differences in the decision to refer. In fact, the decision to refer was acknowledged to be based on personal judgement.

*"I mean it can be other things you're, you're supposed to use your discretion obviously...So until a situation occurs you don't always know" (School 2, Participant 2)*

Further to this, some staff outlined *conflicts of disclosure* that affected their decision to refer. For example, a member of support staff was concerned about losing the trust if the pupils if she passed information on.

*"Well, if I thought something was major where it was gonna effect their health...or or something really wrong...I would go then to the Year Head...and say this one's been to me and said this...but other than that, I keep it to myself...keep it confidential because they come back time and time...to talk to me and I think if they...if they think they've got your confidentiality...they will talk to you," (School 1, Participant 1)*

Related to this point, an interesting issue emerged about how experience related to referral decisions.

*"...there's another girl yeh yeh well she's actually she's new to working in schools...she's only...this is her first 12 months...she's done in schools and it's took her a bit of time to get used to it so...but she's slowly coming round to...taking on...the personalities...and what they're actually coming to her for...because at first she didn't know how to (inaudible) so she passed everything over right away...but you c...we find at certain times you shouldn't d it...because that's what they want, they want to talk to you," (School 1, Participant 1)*

What seemed to be happening is that people with less experience were perceived to refer more incidents to senior staff, whereas more experienced staff were handling

things themselves because they became aware of the *conflicts of disclosure*. There was also the suggestion that referring immediately indicated a lack of interest on behalf of the member of staff.

*"Some support staff...they just don't wanna know...and they just...and as I say...if there's a major problem probably with them they would just pass it on right away...yeh. They don't even wanna find out whether it's trivial or not, y'know," (School 1, Participant 1)*

There also seemed to be inconsistency with who information was passed to. For example, one teacher spoke of including mentors in some situations rather than senior staff.

*"We have mentors in each of the years...and sometimes with a certain child different things I would speak to the mentor and ask the mentor to get involved...but again, its somebody else that you can talk to...if you've got a problem with a child," (School 2, Participant 2)*

Therefore, different people were being told about different things. A result of this, in conjunction with individual decisions to refer information, could be that senior staff have an unrepresentative perception of what is happening in the school.

## **Communication**

The referral process could be regarded as a bottom-up process whereby individual staff pass information up to senior staff. However, the importance of top-down communication emerged as being important with individual staff commenting that they wanted to know what senior staff were doing.

*"...it's also very rare to be told of incidences...from the rest of the chain...Y'know, there's a definite demarcation of responsibility...er...and I suppose I wouldn't expect to be told...er...there's processes going on elsewhere in the school and find that they get on with it," (School 1, Participant 3)*

Importantly, this communication was regarded as a strong motivator for individual staff members taking the time to deal with bullying.

*"...one of the things that we as a school are not very wonderful at is passing information on or back...and sometimes you think so-and-so's had a really rough day, I managed to solve it for him...and I passed the problem on...because that's what we've got to do...what happened?...and sometimes you don't necessarily know what happened to him or her...er...and we never do unless we bump into him on the passage way...6 months later..."are you alright?" "Yeh!"...That's the way of this place because it's so vast...er, in terms of communication we're poor...and if you don't know what's happened (inaudible)...to put in that amount of effort...should I really get involved and wound up about something and care enough...for me not to get a response... "Yes, everything's fine now" it's all I need to know," (School 1, Participant 3)*

Furthermore, communication between the senior team and individual staff was regarded as important because of the risk of individuals interfering with 'management business'.

*"I the form teacher...or I the teacher...erm...could take a situation as "why are you doing this? Stop doing that. Detention."...Erm...but it may then come about that that kid's actually involved in something else...and then when Year staff, Pastoral staff, Deputy Heads and Head Teachers are informed...then obviously they don't want things like that to interfere...so there are...there are channels, there are avenues...er...for dealing with any situation really...you can go so far...and then it becomes someone else's responsibility...because they've got the management pressure...to be under," (School 1, Participant 3)*

*"I mean it's the age old thing isn't it y'know erm a subject teacher is absolutely incensed at a kid's behaviour, incensed at the lack of homework or incensed at something y'know and they want to ring home. And on the face of it that sounds good idea yeh they haven't done their Maths homework or y'know or we have, we have a homework system, 3 homeworks then a letter home, but there are certain things that happen and parents, and staff want to phone home. And on the face of it that's great...but if the kid has 15 to 20 teachers...that would be 15 to 20 phone calls all of them handled very differently...erm and in the meantime grandma has died, father has run*

*off, mother's gone in for an operation...now we tend not to share the details of the sort of information with all staff...now we would always say that a member of staff before contacting home directly just put it past the Head of Year...just y'know and just "is there any reason why it would be inappropriate for me to contact them at the moment?" ..."*  
(School 1 Feedback Interview)

These comments highlighted the perceived importance of communication between staff about what they are doing and what is happening to pupils.

## **Team**

When staff were discussing their experiences of bullying, the importance of a team spirit amongst staff emerged as an important issue. In particular, support and advice from colleagues was frequently mentioned.

*"..because I'm new at the job I'm...there's \*named teacher\* who's Assistant Deputy Head in the school...er...she's helped me a lot...on how to deal with things...she's given me a lot of advice and support...on how to deal with these issues,"* (School 1, Participant 2)

*"..if you need any assistance, a Head, they're there and they a very supportive...and they do back the staff...erm...they'll ally incidents, they will give you guidance and it's "what can I do? Have you tried this? Perhaps you should try this..."...and they are very helpful,"*  
(School 1, Participant 2)

*"I always have erm my colleagues that sort of I work, y'know, wherever you are...you make friends with certain people than with others...so I always have, if I feel that I needed to talk to somebody about it I always have my friends...that I sort of, for want of a better description, that I can talk to...I have my line manager...who is very supportive...and y'know that, mine personally, can't agree with everybody else cos I don't know...but mine is very supportive. I also find that any senior management in school...y'know, Assistant Heads, Deputy Heads...they're always very supportive y'know...you go to them with an issue I have never ever known them to dismiss it or say "oh deal with it yourself" ...and everything, always been supportive,"*  
(School 2, Participant 2)

The concept of colleague support was closely related to communication because staff indicated that feeling comfortable and supported facilitated discussions and opened channels of communication between staff.

Within the 'staff team' the importance of form tutors was highlighted. In all participating schools, pupils were members of a form group for registration and PSHE lessons that remained constant during their time at the school. Several staff seemed to feel that form tutors were very important 'frontline' detectives for identifying bullying because the constant class group allowed them to get to know individual pupils and develop a relationship with them.

*"...at the moment it seems to come straight to the Head of Year...whereas perhaps form tutors or somebody could see their role in the school as more important...some form tutors don't see it as being an important role but I think....it's "we do the register and that's it" ...whereas in...I feel they should be developing the children cos they stay with them from Year 7 to 11...and if bullying goes on in your form...there's form tutors who don't know anything about any bullying incidents...yet I have phone calls from parents saying my son is being bullied...or daughter's being bullied by another member of their form," (School 1, Participant 2)*

*"I think a good form teacher can have a kid's whole career sorted...I think you've got to have a solid form teacher...and then from the form teacher base, a solid year teacher...not a y'know someone who intimidates and threatens and does...their own form of bullying if you like but someone who's strong and reasonable...erm...good with direction," (School 1, Participant 3)*

Some tension emerged about the power that form tutors have to deal with incidents that occur.

*"Form teachers er generally know their kids best (inaudible)...er...and they're usually not used to their full. They actually know...very very good form tutors can resolve situations...very very quickly and...but sometimes they're not allowed to...It's because of change over...er...there are people responsible for different things," (School 1, Participant 3)*



This tension was closely related to the referral process and could suggest further *conflicts of disclosure* because individual staff members may want to handle things themselves.

## Size

There were several comments made about the size of the school affecting levels of bullying and staff ability to identify and deal with it.

*"It's always happened but recently I think the media have picked up on it and are pushing it cos there's been some serious cases...and parents see it and think "that's, that might happen in my school" and schools seem to get quite a lot of stick...but we're doing, y'know we've got 1500 kids in here...it's not going...it's not going to be pupils coming in, do their lessons and go there's always going to be lots of little incidents," (School 1, Participant 2)*

*"I mean its like y'know they'll come "Miss, somebody pushed me on the stairs". There's 1100 kids in school...so I mean I'll say "who pushed you?" "I don't know, it was a bigger one" ...not a lot I can do," (School 2, Participant 2)*

*"The size of the school – don't know all of the children. They suffer in silence. Unless children tell you, you don't know about it." (School 3, Participant 1 Notes)*

In addition, there were references made to classroom size being a mediating factor in bullying because of pupils believing they are less likely to be detected.

*"when you've got large numbers of kids...you've...it can be affected y'know even large classroom sizes and things...cos I think then as much as anything some of them think they can get away with it without being noticed...so I think numbers are the...have a great deal to do with it," (School 2, Participant 2)*

Also, certain types of classes were seen to be vulnerable to bullying incidents occurring. In particular, classes where children have to move around were perceived to be more difficult for teachers to control.

*"...you then have classrooms where children do have to move around. And then the child doesn't know whether he's (inaudible) never mind the teacher...cos they've left their workstation for a while...certainly if it's a D and T (Design and Technology) classroom or if it's a Home Economics room and...some people are doing (inaudible) and erm...go ingredients...y'know everything, you have to maybe try and wash up at the sink...somebody, somebody will always feel at a disadvantage," (School 1 Feedback Interview)*

Overall, staff were describing factors operating within the school as an organisation that were beyond their individual level of control. The systems and practices in the school along with quality of communication and relationships between staff was important in shaping individual experiences of responding to and dealing with bullying.

#### **8.5.4 Dealing with bullying**

The organisational factors described above appeared to affect the behaviour of staff once a bullying incident had been identified. If staff were then in a position to deal with the incident, numerous factors affected how they responded.

##### **Responsibility**

There were several comments made about staff considering whether it was their responsibility to act on an incident. For example, a member of support staff explained how she would only go and intervene if there were no other staff around.

*"I've always been amongst them so if anything's gone on and there's nobody there...I've been able to go over to it and say "eh, y'know, this is not on" or y'know," (School 1, Participant 1)*

There appeared to be a *diffusion of responsibility* if other staff were present, with the underlying assumption that someone else would respond. Further to this, certain issues were perceived as being outside her responsibility and being the concern of somebody else.

*"Probably when they've got problems at home...and...erm...but then it's not my concern because it's the Educational Welfare Officer who would know like that," (School 1, Participant 1)*

The above quote highlighted how this member of staff assumed other staff had knowledge about certain pupils. This assumption affected her subsequent behaviour because she would not act on information given to her by an individual pupil if she thought somebody else was already dealing with it. There appeared to be an inherent trust between staff that they had all the relevant knowledge and were acting in the appropriate way. For example, one teacher described how once he had referred information on, he had to trust that somebody else was dealing with it and his personal responsibility had been transferred.

*"...as a form teacher I'd go to my Year Teachers...er...so-and-so's in trouble, so-and-so's doing this, that whatever else. "Ok leave it with me"...and then you know that the responsibility's been passed on...er...if (inaudible) couple of days or weeks or whatever later they've come back and said "this has happened" but otherwise you would assume that it's been dealt with because you've passed it on," (School 1, Participant 3)*

Some tensions were revealed about the referral process however with one teacher (who was Head of Year) feeling there was too much diffusion of responsibility and that individuals should take a more active role in dealing with incidents themselves.

*"...at the moment it seems to come straight to the Head of Year...whereas perhaps form tutors or somebody could see their role in the school as more important," (School 1, Participant 2)*

There were situations when staff seemed to analyse a situation to decide whether it was their responsibility to act. For example, a member of support staff explained how she feels reluctant to interrupt teachers when they have lunch so would assume responsibility to deal with incidents if they occur.

*"...if it's something that could be sorted out I just do it...leave the teacher's to it...because they do the duties and they go and get their dinner and they don't wanna be disturbed y'know...I mean myself if I was sitting down eating my dinner I wouldn't want to be disturbed to a point...but erm...so that's where we take over y'know," (School 1, Participant 1)*

Overall, the decision to act on an incident appeared to be mediated by staff appraisals of responsibility.

### **Discussing**

Following the decision to act, staff discussed the methods they use to deal with bullying. There was great commonality here with the main technique employed being talking the situation through with the children involved.

*"I'd say 9 times out of 10 the person who's said they're being bullied is willing to sit down with the person...I mean we have frank discussions and say y'know they tell "this is what you've been doing to me"...and they say "well, this is what you've done to me" and have conversations like that and I'd suggest that that works quite, that has worked quite well," (School 1, Participant 2)*

*"I think that's the best way...is to get them together...yeh, erm talk to them separately first and then get them together...and go through the stories and the incidents and try and work through it," (School 3, Participant 2)*

*"...if a pupil comes to me and says that so-and-so's bullying me...I'll always bring that pupil in...and with the agreement of the pupil allegedly being bullied...I'll sit them down...and say...right let's, let's discuss this problem...and that's more often than not how I resolve issues," (School 4, Participant 1)*

## Monitoring

After the discussions had taken place with the children, staff explained about the process of monitoring where they would check if incidents are still occurring and remain alert to continuing problems.

*"Where we monitor...er...I make sure I...for 2 weeks it'll be intense like "right, how are you doing? ...Has anything happened? ...You can, you can talk to me" and it won't be in front of the person or the friends of the person who says they're being bullied...it's done in private...perhaps take them out of registration and have a quick word... "How's things going on? ...Is anything else been said?" Erm, they usually because they know that they can talk...open with us and er they usually do say y'know "it's fine...nothing's happened"..."*  
(School 1, Participant 2)

*"And for a few weeks afterwards I see the-the victim and I'll just have them popping in to my office...at the end of the day...and sometimes they'll just give me a wave...and I'll just say g...y'know, I know everything's ok...and 9 times out of 10 then, y'know, it's successful,"*  
(School 2, Participant 1)

Interestingly, the monitoring process appeared to be entirely reliant on children reporting how the situation had progressed and whether further incidents had occurred. Although this is an understandable approach, the effectiveness of the technique could be related back to staff comments about pupils reporting incidents to them and the barriers to disclosure that affect this reporting.

## Strategic approaches

A common experience that emerged from the interviews was the way staff employed strategic approaches when dealing with bullying. An example of this was the way staff tried to protect children who reported incidents to them. Staff were aware that a barrier to disclosure focused on pupil concerns that telling someone about bullying could make the situation worse. Therefore, staff had a common approach of claiming somebody else other than the child had witnessed and reported the incident.

*"...and we don't divulge names y'know if a child comes along and says that erm "I'm being picked on" and I'll say "well, I'm not going to say you told me, I'm going to say a teacher saw it" ...and you'll say "a teacher saw it, a teacher reported it"..." (School 2 Feedback Interview)*

*"...y'see if I'm investigating some vicious name-calling or doing something in class and the victim says "well y'know I don't want them to know I've told you" I do a secret deal with a member of staff. I'll wait a couple of lessons (inaudible) and I will say to that member of staff "can you do a deal? Erm can you go and y'know stand near there for a couple of lessons erm and then can I use your name as in, as a lie and say erm "I don't know what's going in your lessons but y'know Miss Jones tells me that she's got an uneasy feeling about er your relationship with some of the pupils"..." (School 1 Feedback Interview)*

The above quote highlighted how staff also sometimes tried to organise witnesses to an incident so that their reports could be used as evidence rather than the pupil who initially came forward. This strategy also expanded to physically planting staff in particular locations so they could gather information.

*"We use people with...in classroom (inaudible). Y'know, "where does so-and-so go?" "They're always outside room 9" ...so er, that's where they're doing it, that's when they start talking and then I send er, I make sure the windows of room 9, which is upstairs, are open...and then a member of staff will sit in... 'cos they won't look up...they'll look round...but they don't look up...so, I've done...I mean these are all actual incidences that I've done. I'm not doing them every week...y'know I'm not...It's strategies that you do...so that you can...the victim is given you the information but you get it verified by fiddling a few things...and you get it verified" (School 1 Feedback Interview)*

The strategies did not just focus on staff in the school. One teacher explained how she made an arrangement with a parent, so that the pupil concerned did not know that his mother had broken his confidence.

*"Had a phone call from mum...too frightened to come to school...so we...and I couldn't ring on her land line...I had...I was given instructions ring on my mobile because she didn't want her son to know...that she'd been in touch with school...so I contacted her on her mobile. We made this plan that we would get him in with me to discuss his attendance...and then I said to him we've...some of your teachers have noticed there're problems in a few of your lessons and on the corridor...he then told me what was happening," (School 2, Participant 1)*

The use of such strategies highlighted how staff are sensitive to the pupils' concerns and try and act in their best interests. However, for these approaches to be effective they would need to remain covert. Therefore, they could not effectively be used as a way of encouraging pupils to report incidents.

### **Time**

The strategic approaches staff employed were often time consuming and many concerns were raised in the interviews about the time involved in dealing with bullying effectively. The Deputy Head in School 2 explained how the quickest and easiest way to deal with bullying was to shout at and punish the bully involved. However, he acknowledged that this was not the most effective technique with discussion-based approaches being better but more time consuming.

*"...a better way in many cases I think is to spend more time talking with the bullies and discussing where they've gone wrong and so on...that of course takes a lot longer doesn't it? Takes a lot longer," (School 2 Feedback Interview)*

These feelings were mirrored in School 3 where the Deputy Head outlined the time it takes to deal with an incident thoroughly.

*"Following the school policy properly involves monitoring (i.e. making arrangements to see pupils on future occasions to follow-up and check things are ok) which is fine if there's only one or two pupils but when there are lots of incidents it becomes very difficult. Your*

*whole time could be taken up dealing with it but there are lots of other things that need to be done too," (School 3 Feedback Interview notes)*

The conflicting demands on staff time, outlined in the above quote, reflect comments from other staff who commented on the lack of time they have to deal with incidents.

*"It's hard to ensure safety in school. Teachers are busy – busier than ever before – so are not on the corridors. Teachers have limited time to deal with things," (School 3, Participant 1 Notes)*

The lack of time staff have appeared to contribute to their concerns about dealing with bullying effectively.

*"...it's very difficult, people feel inadequate unless you are actually a pastoral person...and dealing with it on a day-to-day basis...the main concern of other people is that they don't have the time...erm...there is a erm y'know a strong anxiety amongst them that they're not handling it necessarily the best way...erm...but that a) they don't have the time and b) they don't have the confidence...particularly if they think we've got it in hand," (School 1 Feedback Interview)*

*"...we don't always have the time...as a, as a teacher...y'know. I mean in the morning I have them for registration I have a quarter of an hour in the morning with them...I have an hour of PSHE with them. But other than that I don't...my Year 7 I don't have any contact with them y'know...And sometimes if there's an issue going on y'know you sort of need to have to pull them to one side and it's not always a lot of time...But as I say, it's...it's not always...like my place...doesn't sound right my place...does it? But do you know what I mean? It's...maybe if there is something and it's going on I should pass it over to somebody else who has got the time to deal with it," (School 2, Participant 2)*

The time issue was closely related to referral and, as outlined above, limited time seemed to increase the chances of incidents being referred. However, as previous quotes suggested, senior staff also operated within time constraints and the possibility of corners being cut in order to manage conflicting demands could not be ignored.



## **Stress**

The time pressure on staff seemed to contribute to increased feelings of stress. One teacher explained how stress can affect her relationship with pupils.

*"...probably more short tempered...but I don't mean short tempered (inaudible)...less patient...y'know as I say, sometimes if it's...I'm sort of thinking "oh I could do without this now...what is it you...sort of want?" I mean I don't sort of ss...say to the kids "what is it you want from me?" but that's maybe going through my head...y'know "what is it you want?" or whatever and I think like let's just get this sorted or y'know...it seem minor...compared to everything else that's going through your head," (School 2, Participant 2)*

What appeared to be emerging from the discussions was that dealing with bullying was a small element of staff roles. Although they acknowledged it's importance and were concerned about how they respond to it, they were constantly under pressure to manage other aspects of their job meaning that bullying sometimes had to be lowered in their list of priorities.

### **8.5.5 Outside influences on school environment**

There was a notable feeling from the interviews that staff felt as if they were a small cog in a very big wheel. They discussed several factors operating outside the school environment that they believe affected bullying.

## **Media**

The perceived impact of the media interest in bullying emerged as an important issue. In particular, several staff felt that parents were more likely to report that their children were being bullied because of the amount of coverage about bullying.

*"It's always happened but recently I think the media have picked up on it and are pushing it cos there's been some serious cases...because*

*bullying is so much in the papers and what you have now, I feel that some parents are reading this and saying "I bet that's happening in my school"...and they're going...and then come home "I've been called this"... "my son's being bullied" cos it's in their head...not what they've seen," (School 1, Participant 2)*

*"The Deputy also commented on the national publicity about bullying and how he thinks this has affected parent's perceptions. He said parents are more likely to call the school now to say their child is being bullied whereas before they may just have left it or told their child to stick up for themselves. He said parents see name-calling as more serious than they used to," (School 3 Feedback Interview Notes)*

There was also the perception that incidents can be misinterpreted or exaggerated because of the media interest.

*"...sometimes there are incidents but I think a lot of it is blown out of proportion...(sighs) cos there's so much in the press isn't there? Y'know...it's...issues...the media, press, television...y'know, there seems to be a band wagon," (School 3, Participant 2)*

There seemed to be a feeling of tension between schools and the media. Although the media coverage developed to raise awareness of the problem of bullying, with beneficial intentions, staff appeared to be feeling that the increased interest was serving against them and, in some cases, making their job more difficult.

### **Societal changes**

The problem of bullying was often discussed in terms of changing societal values. In particular, the behaviour of children in school was perceived to have changed and the way they relate to each other and the teachers.

*"...the schools have changed...so much over the past...since I've been in school...things have changed completely erm and...that wasn't long ago...what er...I mean...just how children are reacting towards teachers...I'd say the different way er I went, I didn't go to school in \*named place\*, I'm from \*named place\*...and it was a council estate, secondary modern...er, low A-C erm grades, but...the majority of*

*children I'd see remembering from my school they was...scallies y'know...but they didn't respond to teachers in the way that some of the even brighter kids, more academic kids will react to teachers – questioning and arguing. There's a bit more of that...but that's not a fault of education that's society's...a change in society," (School 1, Participant 2)*

*"...you don't see the...it's very rare to see the day of out and out thug. Erm...there was one time...when you'd look who was the school bully and you knew who it was...and...lots of pupils sort of respected that...didn't they...and now it's a bit more underhand (inaudible), a lot of it comes into school from outside...er...a lot of hassle is created in school in my mind comes from home...y'know, the night before, or the weekend before...there's a spill over," (School 1, Participant 3)*

The concept of bullying developing outside school and being brought in was a common finding.

*"...it may be one problem or one consequence of being a community school...is that problems out in the neighbourhood spill over into school," (School 2 Feedback Interview)*

## **Location**

The concept of bullying developing outside the school environment was related to the location of the school. For example, School 4 was different to the other schools in that it was located in an isolated and close-knit community. This impacted on the situations staff were having to handle.

*"One of the problems we've got in this school is that the community of \*area\* is very much an isolated community...It's an island. Its, its...its bordered by a river, an airport, a main road and farmland. And so it's out on a limb...there's very much a village culture here, a village mentality, which is good in some ways...cos they all look after each other. Bad in other ways because they all know what's going on...So, anything that happens outside of school, it may be family related it may be nothing at all to do with our pupils...what happens out there comes into here...And likewise, what happens here goes outside. So we have had incidents of bullying that have come into school from outside...Er...which have not really been school based but even have*

*not even been initiated in school and that's difficult because then you can have parents involved and you can have all sorts of other factors that come into play...and nothing to do with the school but we have to deal with that," (School 4, Participant 1)*

*"Most of our kids are superb but we do have some very challenging youngsters.....and their families are very challenging as well (inaudible) and I feel sorry for the 97% of the kids and their families who have to live in this area. And y'know \*named Head Teacher\* has been here 30 odd years he'll actually talk about there being a critical mass. There's a large number of people who are great but there's a small number who are...totally off the wall and they just pick pick pick," (School 4 Feedback Interview)*

The school environment appeared to be affected by the nature of the surrounding area. This added to the pressure on staff who were having to deal with incidents that were largely outside of their control.

## **Families**

Strongly related to changes in society and the location of the school, the families of children in school were believed to impact on the bullying climate.

*"A lot of our kids from Year 7 through to 11 know each other...before they start school...erm...a lot of them...er...mixed families...if you like...one mum and lots of different dads so and so on...er, erm...a son in Year 7 might have...a y'know, a brother in Year 7 might have a sister in Year 10 and they might come from totally different backgrounds...and they just know one another outside school," (School 1, Participant 3)*

It was discussed previously how staff depend on parents reporting bullying incidents to them. However, a tension between staff and parents emerged as an added difficulty when dealing with bullying.

*"...the difficulty has been (when) a parent will not support...and they make excuses...and they tend to make excuses for their child's poor*

*behaviour in lessons as well as their poor relationships with their own peer group so that is difficult to deal with," (School 2, Participant 1)*

*"The most difficult thing is dealing with the parents who don't believe their child is bullying someone. Kids who are bullies have no family life. The families don't have meals together and the parents don't know what their kids are doing," (School 3, Participant 1 Notes)*

*"I mean you will get a hard core aggressive bully in the parents...they know their rights, they intimidate you, intimidation, arrogance, swearing," (School 4, Participant 2)*

The fact that tension with parents was described as being so difficult to handle suggested that staff perceived having support from and good relationships with parents as very important when dealing with bullying effectively.

Overall, the focus staff put on external influences suggested that they viewed bullying as being related to many factors without a single cause. There was the sense that staff felt they had limited control over bullying because of this.

*"Sometimes you sort of realise that there might be not a lot you can do about it...because you know that within school you can do as much as you can...within the system...but you know that because its such a large close knit community...that's coming in to school...you know that the situation's gonna get resolved outside anyway...so sometimes your hands are tied...or you feel as though they are" (School 1, Participant 3)*

#### **8.5.6 Policing terminology**

It became apparent during the analysis of the transcripts that schools were attempting to control bullying in a similar way to how the police deal with criminal activity. For example, there was a notable trend in the discussions to talk about the importance of using witnesses and gathering evidence and proof that an incident has taken place.

*"...when there's denial going on and they're not, they're not owning up and again that needs to be, I think that needs to be addressed and try and get as much proof as possible if you can and we do get other witnesses from either other children writing things down anonymously...and say this has happened to...and so on and so we get this int...you're saying it's not happened but you've got 4 other people who," (School 1, Participant 2)*

*"You need proof, but people won't tell you things. It takes time to deal with things," (School 3, Participant 1 Notes)*

*"The reaction of the pupil's friends. If they've been there I'll go and speak to the pupil's friends...er...the reaction of the staff. So...I don't just take it on face value that an incident is a bullying incident...I will speak to other parties...and then I'll make a decision," (School 4, Participant 1)*

One teacher explained how he identifies perpetrators of incidents he witnesses by referring to a school database of pupil photographs. This strongly reflected the methods police use to identify criminals through photographs and identity parades.

*"I've got a good recognition of face...and they don't realise that I also carry the database of photos for the school...so I can go back and...that was one, that was one, that was one...and then they get picked up," (School 1, Participant 3)*

The importance of personal safety and security measures to prevent incidents emerged as an issue. For example, one teacher explained her concerns about using identity badges for staff in school

*"...it makes someone feel very vulnerable...if they get a telephone call (from a parent)...it's one of my reservations about us wearing badges cos too many parents come to school (inaudible)...and I think y'know they can be directed by their child to a room...erm I think to make it any easier for them by y'know finding someone wearing a label "so that really is Miss Jones"...I mean tempers are such that er they'll find anybody that says Miss Jones whether it's the right one or not and thump them and then walk out," (School 1 Feedback Interview)*

There was almost the feeling that staff were having to police the school and manage security alongside their subject teaching. School 4 had recently introduced a scheme whereby senior staff had radios to communicate with each other.

*"Not every member of staff has one because if everyone did it'd be chaos...All senior staff have one. We have what you'd call pager erm and that's something (inaudible) most schools have these in place. Any child who's causing major problems and needs to be removed from the classroom, call on the radio someone will come and take them to the silent work area...we had an incident a few weeks back...2 young boys...(inaudible) fighting in the classroom with a very small member of staff...and this member of staff just said (inaudible) can you please come and help and I think I was teaching and I ran out of the lesson and within seconds the whole thing diffused...the boys were taken out and it was calmed down. They're a very very (inaudible) and they're not abused...staff do not abuse them...It is great...it is a really useful thing. Plus as well we now have erm several cameras...on the street...which is the corridor...and we're having two more installed on the yard...one at opposite ends. That way we will be able to cover the whole school...erm and it is all part of making the youngsters feel secure and safe...and staff as well" (School 4 Feedback Interview)*

The reference to security cameras in the above quote highlights the lengths schools are going to in their policing role. What seemed to be emerging was schools forming a 'mini-society' with their own police force. Interestingly, the use of the term 'street' to refer to the school corridor in the above quote reinforced this interpretation. Within this 'mini-society', staff were faced with similar issues to the real police force with the public not wanting to share information. In fact, one teacher actually described this similarity and explained how cultural values regarding authority figures are brought in to school.

*"In \*named place\* you don't tell the police...you don't er...yeh (laughs)...it's quite...quite anti-authority y'know and erm...a lot of our kids... "well who did it to you" "I'm not saying" and, y'know erm...within...the kids will...i-if they see somebody being bullied...and they won't give you names," (School 4, Participant 3)*

This was closely related to the outside influences on the school environment such as the location of the school and changing societal values.

### **8.5.7 Integration**

The 6 master themes that emerged in the data, although distinct, were closely related to each other in a number of ways. Close examination of the themes revealed how they could be integrated together to form a graphical representation of staff experiences of dealing with bullying in the school environment (see Fig.11, p.267).

The emerging pattern between the themes focused initially with the complexity in perceptions of bullying. Staff appeared to be operating with an internal view of what bullying involved, which was partly mediated by the outside influences on the school environment. Factors such as societal changes, media coverage and school location seemed to contribute to how staff perceived bullying. These internal views of bullying impacted on the identification of incidents. For example, the way a report from a parent or child was handled was largely dependent on how the staff member perceived bullying. In addition, their internal views of bullying affected how incidents were dealt with. Incidents were only likely to be referred and followed up if the member of staff perceived them as bullying.

Identification of incidents were not only affected by complexity in perceptions of bullying, but also by outside influences on the school environment. Staff were largely dependent on reports from parents about bullying and the reliability of this information was related to the quality of relationships schools had with parents. In addition, factors such as media coverage were perceived to affect rates of reporting bullying.

There seemed to be a reciprocal relationship between identification of bullying and complexity in perceptions of bullying because the way incidents were identified mediated how bullying was defined. For example, pupil reports were a common way



that staff found out about bullying but the children who did report incidents appeared to influence staff perceptions of the types of children involved in bullying. Younger pupils were perceived to report bullying more often and subsequently were perceived to be 'misinterpreting' the term bullying.

Organisational factors mediated the relationship between identifying incidents and dealing with incidents. For example, it appeared that individual staff were responsible for referring information to senior staff who then subsequently dealt with the incident. This referral process involved a complex decision making process affected by differing perceptions of bullying and colleague support. The result of this is that not all incidents that were identified were referred on to other staff.

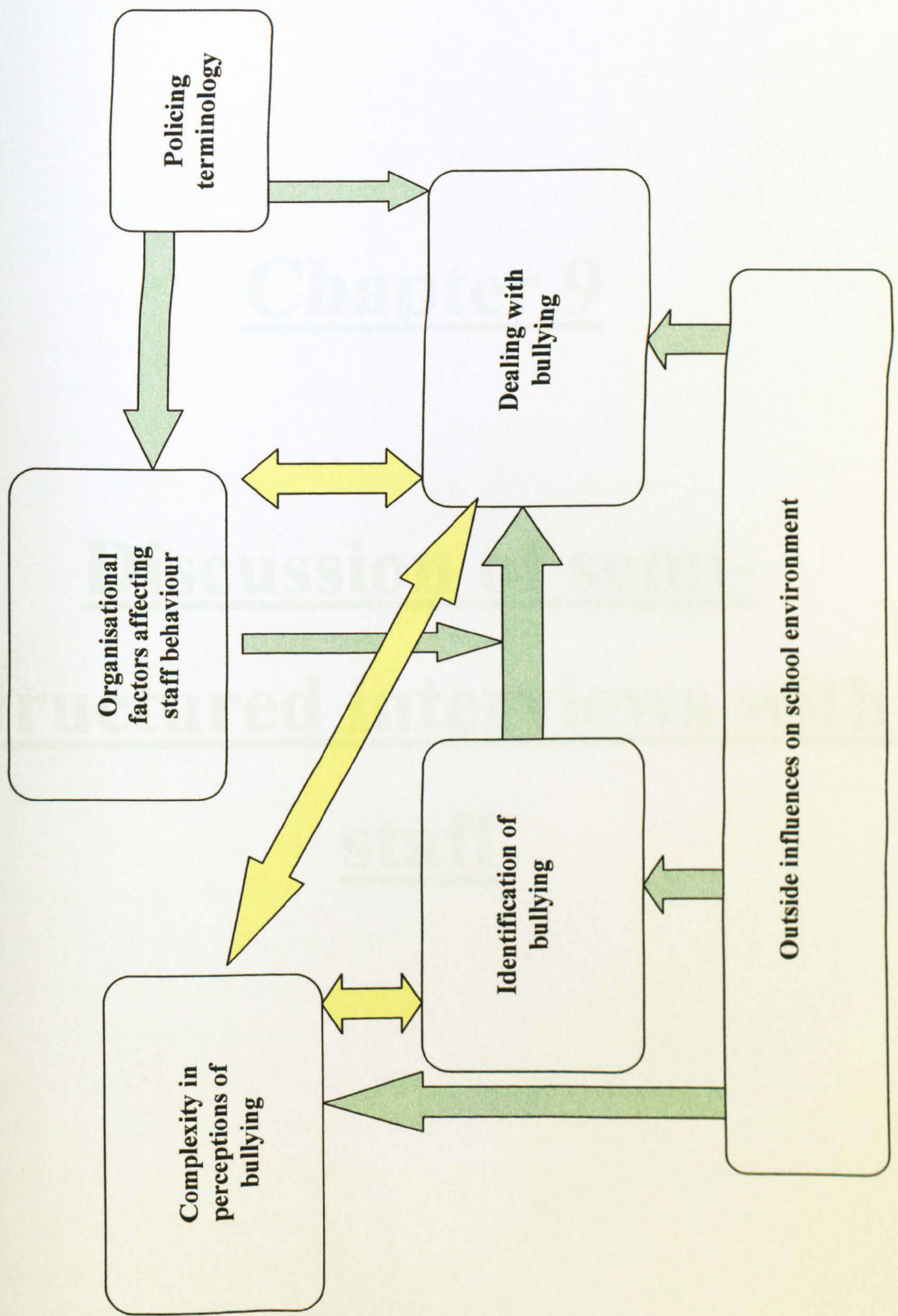
The process of dealing with bullying was affected by organisational factors such as staff time, communication between staff and team spirit. For example, some of the strategic approaches that were employed relied upon other staff being involved as witnesses and would therefore require a team approach. Outside influences on the school environment also contributed to dealing with bullying because incidents brought in from outside school were perceived as more difficult to handle and also the relationship staff had with parents seemed important for the effectiveness of interventions. The way bullying is dealt with is likely to link back to complexity in perceptions of bullying. For example, the perceptions about gender differences with girls being seen as 'bearing grudges' appeared to be based on staff experience of dealing with female bullying.

Finally, organisational factors and the process of dealing with bullying were characterised by the use of policing terminology such as reference to witnesses, proof and gathering evidence.

Overall, what was emerging was a complex pattern of experience situating bullying in a wider context. The way bullying was being dealt with was largely dependent on how the school was running as an organisation and how the school was relating to

and responding to outside influences. Within this context, individual staff were making complex decisions about what bullying involves, how to respond to incoming information and what information to pass on to other staff. This highlighted the importance of viewing bullying in relation to other influences in the school environment and not treating it in isolation.

Fig 11. Graphical representation of integrated themes illustrating staff experience of dealing with bullying in the school environment



# **Chapter 9**

## **Discussion of semi- structured interviews with staff**

## **9. Discussion of semi-structured interviews with staff**

### **9.1 Link to statistical findings**

There were numerous similarities between the themes that emerged from the semi-structured interviews and the statistical results revealed from the questionnaires. Firstly, there was evidence of staff having different perceptions of male and female bullying. In particular, they reported the tendency for boys to use more direct forms of bullying and girls to use indirect forms. This view reflects a lot of evidence illustrating gender differences in bullying (e.g. Baldry & Farrington, 1999; Crick & Nelson, 2002; Eslea & Smith, 1998; La Fontaine, 1991; Olweus, 1995; Pateraki & Houndoumadi, 2001; Rivers & Smith, 1994) but did not support the reports of pupils collected from the questionnaire data. The statistical findings showed boys reporting higher levels of both direct and indirect bullying compared to girls, so in this respect the staff comments were not reflecting the pupil reports. Of course, the pupil self-reports may have been inaccurate due to their reluctance to admit bullying or because of other methodological issues outlined in the Discussion of Statistical Findings. Also, because only Year 8 and Year 11 pupils were questioned, their reports may not reflect the rest of the pupil groups. The interviews with staff focused on bullying in general so their comments are likely to have been based on their experience with all pupils - not just those in Year 8 and 11. Therefore, it is not possible to conclude that staff were *inaccurate* in their perceptions of gender differences in bullying. However, there were other comments made by some staff that indicated they held stereotypical views of the children involved in bullying. For example, they spoke of listening for particular names of pupils when incidents are reported to them – claiming to know who the ‘typical’ bullies are. They also spoke of being able to identify victims through common traits they share. It was outlined when discussing the statistical findings that teachers have been found to hold views of pupils that follow gender stereotypes (Condry & Ross, 1985), and evidence from this study suggests they also utilise other stereotypes towards pupils. It is unclear whether these stereotypes reflect the situations in schools. For example, numerous

characteristics of typical bullies and victims were described in the Introduction that are supported by evidence. As Karlins *et al.* (1969, as cited in Franzoi, 2000), stereotypes tend to be based on 'probability judgements' whereby people estimate the likelihood that certain individuals possess particular characteristics. If previous experience has linked particular children to bullying, or teachers have identified certain characteristics that victims possess, this could result in stereotypes developing. Importantly, "stereotypes are fixed ways of thinking about people that put them into categories and don't allow for individual variation" (Franzoi, 2000, p. 114). Because they are based on generalisations, stereotypes can result in incorrect judgements being made of people (Nelson, Acker & Manis, 1996, as cited in Franzoi, 2000). With this in mind, it is likely that children not fitting into the stereotypes possessed by staff may be neglected or misinterpreted. There is a need for further investigation of how staff perceive pupils in terms of stereotypes and the effect this may have on their subsequent behaviour towards them.

The statistical findings revealed some age differences in reports of being bullied - with Year 8 pupils reporting to experience bullying more often than Year 11 pupils. Despite this trend reflecting bodies of evidence showing age decreases in bullying (Borg, 1999; Boulton & Underwood, 1992; Cartwright *et al.*, 1997; DFES, 1994, 2000, 2002; Kumpulainen, Räsänen, Henttonen *et al.*, 1999; Oliver & Candappa, 2003; Rivers & Smith, 1994; Whitney & Smith, 1993), it was suggested that the apparent age difference in experiencing bullying could be due to older pupils being more reluctant to report incidents than younger pupils (Smith & Ananiadou, 2003). Interestingly, the interviews showed staff describing younger pupils reporting more bullying than older pupils but their comments indicated that they *did not* interpret this as meaning more bullying occurred in the lower years. Instead, staff claimed younger pupils often *misinterpret* what bullying involves or are just more willing to report incidents. This reflects findings of Salmivalli (2002) who reported that the number of *self*-identified victims decreased with age but the number of peer and teacher-reported victims did not. Younger pupils have been found to have a broader definition of bullying (Arora, 1996; Gumpel & Meadan, 2000; Madsen, 1996; Smith

& Levan, 1995; Smith, Madsen & Moody, 1999; Smith *et al.* 2002; Swain, 1998), and this has been argued to lead to increased reporting (Smith *et al.*, 2002) – supporting the views of the staff. The statistical results revealed that Year 11 pupils were more likely to define behaviours as bullying than Year 8 pupils indicating that Year 8 pupils were unclear about which behaviours were encompassed by the term ‘bullying’. Therefore, the reports from staff would reinforce the suggestion that the apparent age decrease in bullying found in the questionnaires was due to differential reporting and understanding of what bullying involves. Further investigation is required to establish why older pupils seem to be more reluctant to report being bullied.

The tendency for some staff to speak of bullying in terms of a ‘staged approach’ with incidents ranging from low to higher severity reflected the differential ratings of seriousness shown in the questionnaire data. It was suggested that participants had a mental scale of how serious different forms of bullying are and the lower ratings of seriousness for indirect bullying indicated that respondents viewed these behaviours as lower down the scale. Staff did not specifically mention regarding indirect forms of bullying as less serious but it would be interesting to further investigate the idea that people have a mental representation of a bullying continuum because this could help explain differential perceptions of behaviours defined as bullying and subsequent decisions to intervene.

An interesting issue that was raised in the interviews was the way staff reported to rely on their *inner sense* when identifying bullying. They spoke of having a ‘gut instinct’ or ‘just knowing’ when something was occurring between pupils. When they were asked about this, they claimed that their instinct developed as a result of experience. Importantly, the statistical results did not find a relationship between staff experience and perceptions of bullying, yet the comments from staff appear to disagree with this finding. Previously, research has reported links between perceptions of pupil behaviour and experience of teachers (e.g. Borg, 1998a; Borg & Falzon, 1990) again supporting the views of the staff. It should be noted however

that staff tended to speak in terms of *life* experience rather than *teaching* experience. This would suggest that staff older in age might have different perceptions to younger staff, rather than those who had been teaching a long time compared to new teachers. If this is the case, the questionnaires may not have been measuring experience in the most appropriate way explaining why no link was found between perceptions and experience. It seems important to investigate the inner sense that staff reported to experience and examine how they articulate its development and affect on their behaviour. Furthermore, additional research on the experience of staff is needed to understand if and how it relates to their perceptions of pupils.

## **9.2 Link to open-ended comments**

In addition to the relationships with the statistical findings, there were several links that could be drawn between themes identified in the interviews and those identified from the open-ended comments. For example, the interviews revealed that staff shared many of the debates surrounding the definition of bullying that were also evident in the open-ended comments. There were differences in opinion about whether repeated incidents were required for a definition of bullying, whether intent in the perpetrator was required and also about the importance of how victims interpret their experience. In addition, further to the findings in the open-ended comments, some staff in the interviews also spoke of 'power' and 'dominance' in their definitions. These debates mirrored those expressed by educational researchers when they have attempted to reach a consensus about how bullying should be defined. As outlined previously, Hazler *et al.* (2001) and Siann *et al.* (1993) argue that repeated incidents should be required for a definition of bullying and several of the staff appeared to share this view. However, some staff indicated that one-off incidents could still be regarded as bullying (Arora, 1996; Stephenson & Smith, 1992). Instead there was a tendency to focus on how the victim feels and staff explained how they look to the victim to see how upset they are by what has happened when making their decision about whether the incident is bullying and how serious it is. Hazler *et al.* (2001) found that teachers did not always include



repetition of events in their definition of bullying – supporting the findings from this study. Importantly, the differences in opinion staff expressed about how bullying should be defined occurred independently of how the schools defined bullying in their policy documents. In fact, when discussing the concept of intent, one teacher openly disagreed with the school definition where intent of the perpetrator was included. Again, it was the perception of the victim that was regarded as important. The divisions of opinion that existed independently of the school policy documents indicated that staff were operating with an *internal personal view* of what bullying involves. Craig *et al.* (2000) outline that there is a degree of subjectivity associated with defining incidents as bullying. This supported evidence from the open-ended comments that respondents have individual perceptions of bullying and reflects research findings showing that members of the school community disagree in similar ways to educational researchers about how bullying should be defined (Madsen, 1996; Hazler *et al.*, 2001; Siann *et al.*, 1993; Smith & Levan, 1995). The implication for this is the apparent limited impact the school definitions have had on people's perceptions of bullying. It may be that these policies were written without involving the views of everyone in the process – highlighting the importance of schools working collectively (DfES, 1994, 2000, 2002). However, it is believed to be important for policies to be re-appraised and revised frequently (DfES, 1994, 2000, 2002; Glover, Cartwright, Gough & Johnson, 1998; Sharp & Thompson, 1994a). With this in mind it is possible that schools have not kept their policies active meaning individuals have reverted to their own opinions about bullying. Alternatively, it may be that the challenge of reaching a universally agreed definition of bullying has been underestimated. What has emerged consistently through all stages of the research is the different opinions people hold about bullying. Although it was predicted that different groups might hold varying opinions (such as pupils and teachers), the fact that complexities existed *within* these groups highlighted that perceptions of bullying were more complicated than expected. The implication for this is that schools need to spend much more time discussing what is meant by bullying before other strategies are put in place. Unless there is a shared

understanding of the term, interventions addressing bullying in schools will face problems with differential definitions.

A problem with schools needing to spend time addressing definitions of bullying is the fact that staff reported a distinct lack of time to spend on bullying. There were concerns raised about the lack of contact time available with pupils to discuss issues and also the length of time it takes to follow up incidents thoroughly. It was noted that the most common method employed by schools to deal with bullying were discussion-based approaches where the victim and alleged bully would come together to talk about the situation. This technique closely reflected that of the 'no blame' approach (Maines & Robinson, 1992) to conflict resolution. Staff outlined how they found this strategy effective, but that it was time consuming to implement properly. In addition, the monitoring that was required afterwards to ensure the situation had been resolved also appeared costly in respect to time. Sharp *et al.* (2000) acknowledge that such approaches do not offer a "quick fix" solution to bullying and as such staff often dismiss them (Sharp *et al.*, 2000, p. 44). This reflects the comments made by some staff in the open-ended comments where they expressed their desire to address bullying but did not feel able to commit the necessary time to it. It was outlined how lack of time could contribute to stress and this link was mentioned in the interviews. One member of staff reported how her relationship with pupils can be affected by periods of stress, supporting claims by Kyriacou (1987, 2001). In addition, it appeared that lack of time increased the chance of incidents being referred on to other members of staff. This trend was particularly interesting because Oliver and Candappa (2003) found that children complained about teachers passing information on when incidents were reported. This suggests that pupils prefer situations to be handled by the person they report the incidents to. If this is not the case, it could reduce the chance of pupils reporting bullying in the first place. So, lack of time appears to have far reaching consequences for both staff and pupils.

When staff spoke about some victims of bullying 'inviting' their treatment, it reflected the concept of 'provocative victims' (Besag, 1989; Boulton & Smith, 1994; Hodges, Malone & Perry, 1997; Sharp & Smith, 1994; Stephenson & Smith, 1989) whereby children encourage others to bully them by antagonising them. There were interesting links here with the open-ended comments where some respondents showed a tendency to blame the victim. Interestingly, it was discussed that bullies may blame victims to remove associated feelings of guilt (Owens *et al.*, 2000), but the fact that staff members also showed this tendency indicates there may be an alternative explanation. Cranham & Carroll (2003) reported that bullies "have a great capacity for deflection of responsibility" (2003, p.128) and tended to blame victims. The concept of passing responsibility raises questions about whether staff blame victims as a way of avoiding intervention. They would feel less guilty (linking to Owens *et al.*, 2000) if they attributed their lack of action to the victims 'causing' the behaviour themselves. This theory is speculative and would require investigation. An alternative explanation could be that staff have unsympathetic attitudes towards victims. Eslea and Smith (2000) reported that a minority of parents expressed unsympathetic attitudes towards victims of bullying and it would be interesting to investigate if the same situation occurs with school staff. It should be noted however that there was no indication from the interviews that staff expressed positive attitudes towards bullying. Instead, they all appeared to take it very seriously hence comments that were made about provocative victims might purely reflect evidence in the literature that there are children who actively invite bullying. Further research is needed to investigate this because the boundaries between arguing that some children invite their treatment and arguing that victims are to blame seem unclear.

The analysis of the open-ended comments showed that pupils made a clear link between bullying and friendship. Contrary to this, the interviews seemed to show staff making a clear distinction between bullying and friendship. They claimed to dismiss incidents that are reported to them if they occurred within friendship groups. This tendency raises concern because of the evidence that some bullying,

particularly indirect behaviours, are believed to occur within friendship groups (Besag, 1992; Crick & Nelson, 2002; Cullingford, 1993; Keise, 1992; La Fontaine, 1991; Stanley & Arora, 1998). If staff are not interpreting these incidents as bullying, there may be many occasions where they are not intervening in bullying behaviours. Similarly, it has been suggested that pupils may be reluctant to tell teachers when they fall out with their friends (Smith & Thompson, 1992). Therefore, only a minority of incidents like this are being reported and those that are being reported are unlikely to provoke a response in teachers. The fact that pupils see bullying and friendship as linked, but staff do not appear to agree illustrates a clear difference in opinion. This apparent conflict needs to be investigated further because currently much of the discussion relating to this is speculative. More detailed discussions with staff and pupils could reveal the subtleties underlying their perceptions of bullying and friendship.

### **9.3 Additional findings**

Further to the links between the statistical findings and the open-ended comments, the semi-structured interviews revealed important additional findings about staff perceptions of bullying. For example, when staff spoke about witnessing bullying, the incidents they described were very physical in nature. This is unsurprising, as physical bullying is much more overt and visible (Salmivalli & Nieminen, 2002) compared to indirect forms of bullying that can be difficult to identify (Hudley, 1993; Keise, 1992; Kikkawa, 1987; Sharp & Smith, 1994; Smith, 1994). This finding supported the statistical results where indirect bullying was reportedly heard about less often than direct bullying. Importantly, staff seemed to be aware that they were unlikely to witness indirect bullying directly and as a result they adopted other techniques such as observing 'deviations from normality'. Here, several staff explained that they take notice when children behave in unusual ways and investigate things further to find out what has caused the change. This was a reassuring finding because it appeared that staff were actively involved in identifying incidents. However, there were conflicts with other parts of the

interviews when issues of time and school size were discussed. One teacher complained about the size of the school because it meant that it was impossible to know all of the children. For staff to be aware of how pupils normally behave requires them to know individuals very well, and the indication was that limited time and the sheer size of the schools hindered this relationship. The link between school size and bullying is inconsistent (Arora, 1999; Stephenson & Smith, 1992; Whitney & Smith, 1993) and it is possible that the conflicting results found in previous studies could be explained by differences in pupil-teacher relationships between schools. The pupil-teacher relationship is believed to be very important when dealing with bullying (Besag, 1989; Menesini *et al.*, 2002) and evidence from the interviews indicated that the role of form tutors were crucial here. In order to cope with large numbers and to give pupils a consistent base, all participating schools had a form tutor system whereby individual pupils had a constant tutor group and teacher for registration period and PSHE lessons during their time at secondary school. There were some tensions revealed between the importance of form tutors, their power to act and their willingness to take their role seriously. Interestingly, this tension emerged in School 1, which was also found to have the higher rates of reported bullying compared to other schools. The indication could be that school size itself is not the pertinent issue, rather it is how the school is managed to ensure that within the large organisation pupils have a particular teacher they can identify with and who knows them well. In support of this, Besag (1989) claims that having a relationship with a particular teacher can give a child a sense of identity rather than feeling anonymous in a large school.

It is possible that organisational factors such as the form tutor system could be responsible for the other school differences that emerged in the statistical findings. It was noted that results varied between schools but it was not possible to reach conclusions about the origins of these differences. However, the interviews revealed a wealth of knowledge about school issues that could begin to explain the findings. A master theme from the interviews was the organisational culture that staff were working within. There were systems in place that staff were required to follow but,

in practice, a complex picture emerged about their effectiveness. For example, the referral process appeared to be a crucial stage schools used to handle bullying, yet the decision to refer was very personal and there were individual differences between staff. There were conflicts to disclosure such as the risk of losing trust from pupils, and also inconsistency with who information was referred to. Therefore, there was a lot of information that was not being passed on. This is cause for concern because Besag (1989) argues that “the clear and effective transfer of information is essential to the satisfactory resolution of a bullying problem,” (1989, p.116). Once information had been referred, there was a need for trust between colleagues that the matter would subsequently be dealt with. Furthermore, there were tensions revealed about the lack of top-down communication from senior staff as a result of referral so that individual staff knew the outcome of incidents. Overall, the success of the referral process appeared to be mediated by the quality of communication between employees and senior staff, the quality of relationships between colleagues and the clarity of guidelines. The importance of a team approach and support from colleagues and senior staff was also discussed. In fact, Soutter and McKenzie (2000) claim that relationships between staff can “form powerful models for students” (2000, p.97). Besag (1989) outlines how a unified team approach, with good management, can help achieve goals in the school environment. All of these factors related to the school as an organisation and highlighted how the structure and functioning of a school can influence employee relationships between teachers and subsequent handling of pupil behaviour. Viewing bullying as part of an organisational system has not been extensively discussed in the literature and it seems important for further investigation of how the organisational health of a school can affect bullying. Interestingly, Karatzias *et al.* (2002) found an association with pupils’ school satisfaction and bullying. It is probable that a ‘healthy’ school would lead to higher satisfaction for both pupils and staff and subsequently impact on the bullying climate. A deeper understanding of such issues could help explain the evident school differences in rates, perceptions and handling of bullying.

The interviews indicated that staff were aware that pupils under-reported bullying and understood many of the associated reasons for that. Cranham and Carroll (2003) argued that school staff needed to be aware of pupils' reluctance to contact them, and the results indicated that this was the case. This was an encouraging finding because it suggested that staff were knowledgeable about their pupils and could identify with their concerns. However, despite this, there was clear evidence in the interviews of a pupil-teacher division. In particular, staff spoke about the way pupils were more likely to talk to people separate from the teachers. Also, the terminology used by pupils created the impression of a sub-culture within the school environment. Teachers were having to 'keep up' with pupils' language about bullying in order to understand them. Support staff were perceived as being the 'bridge' between pupils and teachers, and one support staff participant explained that pupils often talk to her about their problems. This was particularly interesting because in the Introduction, it was predicted that support staff could be more knowledgeable about bullying than teachers (Thompson *et al.*, 1994). However, the statistical results showed that in most cases teachers and support staff responded to questions in similar ways suggesting that they shared similar perceptions of bullying. When these findings were compared to the interview data, it appeared that it was the *perception* of support staff that was different rather than their actual knowledge. Teachers seemed to be reasonably knowledgeable about their pupils, but pupils were more likely to talk to support staff because they were perceived to be segregated from the teachers. Staff claimed pupils had different relationships with support staff because teachers were regarded as 'authority figures'. The implication for this is the potential resource support staff could provide for schools when addressing bullying. Pupils' willingness to talk to them should be encouraged and utilised to its full potential. In the feedback interviews, the schools discussed their intention to involve support staff in their intervention work because they were beginning to realise what a useful resource they could provide. This is a positive development, but a further consideration should be investigating why pupils do not want to, or feel able to relate to teachers in the same way as support staff. As Rigby and Bagshaw (2003) suggest, teachers need to acknowledge that they lack credibility with children

regarding bullying and they need to find ways of altering their strategies so they can work effectively with pupils.

An important issue relating to the role of support staff was the way one participant viewed her responsibility to intervene if she witnessed bullying. Her reports indicated that she would only act in the absence of other staff. In particular, she explained how she would take responsibility if teachers were busy, or not present. The inherent assumption from her comments suggested that she viewed herself as having less responsibility for pupil behaviour than teachers. She regarded teachers as the primary staff responsible to handle incidents, and only stepped in if they were unavailable. This finding could reflect the lack of attention support staff have had regarding bullying (Boulton, 1996). Researchers have suggested such staff are unlikely to have received training on how to handle pupil behaviour (Boulton, 1993a; Sharp & Thompson, 1994a; Smith, 1991) and are also unlikely to be involved in bullying work in the school (Cartwright *et al.*, 1997). The result of this may be a lack of confidence in managing pupil behaviour and also a feeling that the school undervalues their input in this respect. Therefore, they may view themselves as less important than teachers. However, the evidence showing how important their input can be illustrates that schools need to spend more time and effort integrating support staff into the school and valuing their work. If support staff feel appreciated, rewarded and involved they may view their role more seriously and therefore feel more responsible to intervene in incidents of bullying if they witness them.

Aside from the importance of school factors, there were several outside influences that staff reported to affect bullying. There were several references to the impact of the media and how the flood of interest about bullying in recent years has worked *against* schools. Staff felt that there was a tension between the public expectations of bullying, guided by the media, and the reality of dealing with it in schools. In particular, staff felt that parents reacted quicker and more aggressively than they used to if they suspected their child was being bullied. This was attributed to a media 'band wagon' where incidents have been exaggerated. Parents were also seen as



working against staff on occasions by not supporting them and acting aggressively towards them. Eslea and Smith (1998) also found that schools commented on unsupportive parents affecting their ability to deal with bullying. The apparent tension with parents was interesting because staff reported that parents were often an important source of information about bullying. Several of the teachers interviewed explained how parents would ring the school to say that their child is being bullied. Bearing in mind the apparent reluctance of pupils to report bullying to teachers, parental information could therefore be a useful resource to schools. A reliance on parental reports requires schools to work closely with them and maintain good relationships with them. Bullying initiatives recommend showing parents policy documents and involving them in events like INSET days (DfES, 2000, 2002; Elliot, 1992; McNamara, 1995; Sharp & Thompson, 1996). Ahmed and Braithwaite (2004) argue that interventions need to be designed to incorporate a family approach as well as a school approach. If there are tensions between staff and parents, this could impact on such 'collective' approaches to anti-bullying initiatives. It should be noted that the interviews only touched on this issue and there is a need for further investigation on the relationship between schools and parents because a positive working relationship appears to be highly important for identifying and dealing with bullying.

Additional outside influences on bullying were perceived to be general changes in society and school location. There was a notable feeling amongst several staff that schools could only have a limited impact on bullying because it was affected by factors outside their immediate control. Participants mentioned how family issues and neighbourhood problems were often brought in to school, and this was attributed to the school being part of the community with 'everyone knowing everyone else'. This made it difficult for schools because they were having to deal with problems being brought in from outside the school environment. Further to this, some respondents felt that there was a general change in attitude towards teachers with pupils perceived to challenge and argue with them in ways that were not experienced previously. This highlighted how staff perceived bullying as being affected by a

complexity of factors operating both inside and outside the school environment. As Glover *et al.* (2000) state, schools do not exist in isolation and are “bound to their communities” (2000, p.156). The possibility that these factors could reduce the duty of responsibility staff feel to manage bullying warrants investigation. There could be associated feelings of helplessness and subsequent lack of motivation if staff feel bullying is a problem outside of their control. This could have important consequences for staff commitment to school intervention programmes. Because their input is so important for effective interventions (Birkinshaw & Eslea, 1998; Menesini, *et al.*, 2002; Nicolaidis *et al.*, 2002), a lack of belief in the potential benefit of such programmes would likely impact on their success.

#### **9.4 Methodological issues**

An important issue relating to this part of the investigation was the sheer amount of data that was generated. Attempting to do justice to the detail and complexity of the data was difficult because of the fact that it was only designed to be supplementary to the rest of the research. What began as a small additional study resulted in a much larger piece of research that raised many issues about perceptions of bullying that would not otherwise have been revealed. This emphasised the benefits of using qualitative techniques to study bullying. It was already highlighted through the open-ended comments how much additional information could be achieved from using qualitative methods in conjunction with statistical data, and the findings from the semi-structured interviews reinforced this further.

There are cautionary notes to be added to this apparent enthusiasm. In particular, the use of IPA has been criticised because of its reliance on language as a representation of experience (Willig, 2001). As Willig (2001) explains, because people use words to describe their experience, the interview transcript could be argued to inform more about how they *talk* about the experience rather than how they *actually* experience it. According to discourse analysts, language operates independently to individuals and is used as a way of transforming meaning into text format through socially

constructed discourses (Parker, 1994). Therefore it could be argued that the interviews revealed how staff utilised language to describe bullying rather than describing how bullying is experienced by staff. However, this criticism is made by researchers who adopt an entirely different philosophical standpoint. Qualitative research is not a unified approach and debates exist within it as to how people should be studied (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Therefore, criticisms like this are to be expected. The primary concern for the semi-structured interviews was to investigate perceptions in more detail and there was no attempt to work within a particular research philosophy. It would certainly be interesting to examine bullying from a discourse analysis standpoint (e.g. Hepburn, 1997). In fact, the way staff used policing terminology bordered into the territory of discourse analysis. Their use of this language - a policing 'discourse' involving reference to evidence, proof, witnesses, security, detection strategies, identification and safety - implied a perceived role moving away from teaching and supervision. Further investigation of this apparent role conflict would be beneficial, and adopting a different research standpoint would add depth to the existing findings.

A further criticism of IPA refers to the way it can describe experience, but not explain it (Willig, 2001). It is not possible to understand *why* staff perceived things in certain ways and therefore the analysis could be argued to raise more questions than answers. This may be the case, but for this study it is not necessarily a negative point. What has emerged from the interviews are a series of factors that mediate staff experience of bullying in the school environment. Because these are relatively new findings, it is unsurprising that a lot more research is required to investigate these issues in more depth. Advancing the research, possibly using alternative approaches in conjunction, would yield much more data that could hopefully further understanding of the issues raised.

Aside from criticisms of IPA, it should be noted that qualitative research in general faces opposition. Denzin and Lincoln (1998) claim, "Qualitative researchers are called journalists, or soft scientists. Their work is termed unscientific, or only

exploratory, or entirely personal and full of bias,” (1998, p.7). These criticisms reflect the fact that qualitative research is viewed as an attack on traditional positivist approaches (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). The fact that the main part of this research has relied on statistical data illustrates that the positivist approach to research has not been rejected. Rather, the benefits of quantitative and qualitative techniques have been combined to foster a thorough investigation of bullying perceptions. In addition, Hayes (2000) explains that many of the criticisms of qualitative research stem from a misconception that the analysis involves an unstructured approach of researchers picking and choosing what they want from the data. However, the rigorous steps involved in many forms of qualitative analysis – including IPA – certainly do not involve only selecting data of interest (Hayes, 2000). Also, because qualitative researchers are so sensitive to biases and subjectivity, analysis often involves much re-interpretation (Hayes, 2000).

In an attempt to respond to criticisms of qualitative research, and through an acknowledgement of the need to assess the quality of their research, qualitative researchers have developed techniques for assessing quality in qualitative work (Willig, 2001). Mason (1996) explains the importance of demonstrating that “data generation and analysis have been...thorough, careful, honest and accurate,” (Mason, 1996, p.146). Including illustrative quotes from transcripts in the analysis is one technique (known as *selective plausibilisation*, Flick, 2002) allowing the reader to make their own judgements about the appropriateness of the researcher’s interpretations and ensure transparency. The analysis of the interviews therefore included a large body of direct quotations to support interpretations made. Triangulation is viewed as another way of assessing quality and is regarded as an alternative to validity (Flick, 2002). For example, methodological triangulation involves the use of multiple methods to generate data in a qualitative investigation and can include the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods (Flick, 2002, 2004). This study formed part of a wider project whereby structured questionnaires and open-ended comments were also included. It has already been explained how many of the findings from the semi-structured interviews mirrored

those reported in other parts of the investigation revealed using other techniques. This reinforces the value of the findings from the semi-structured interviews.

Reflexivity is acknowledged to be a key feature of high quality qualitative research (Burman, 1994; Mason, 1996; Willig, 2001). The researcher is actively involved in the creation of knowledge and analysing their role in the research process is an important aspect of qualitative investigation (Burman, 1994; Mason, 1996). It is important to note that the researcher in this project did not work in schools, or have involvement with teaching secondary school-aged children. Therefore, there was a degree of objectivity achieved. However, the interviews were conducted in schools that the researcher had already been involved with previously for the statistical element of the project. Anecdotal information about the schools had been collected and the possibility of personal biases and expectations shaping the qualitative data generation and analysis cannot be ignored. The wealth of raw data presented in the analysis section should allow the reader to make their own judgments about interpretation of evidence (*selective plausibilisation*, Flick, 2002), but the way the interviews were conducted may have affected the data that was generated in the first place. Prior expectations and biases may have influenced the questions asked - despite efforts made to remain neutral. Also, the researcher had personally experienced bullying at school and felt very strongly about it. It would have been very difficult to hide these feelings in an informal one-to-one interview situation.

Reflecting on the interviews afterwards raised some concerns about interview style. There were a few occasions where closed questions were asked, a format not advisable for semi-structured interviews (Mason, 1996; Willig, 2001). One reason this occurred was because sometimes participants took a few moments to respond to a question and the researcher attempted to fill in the periods of silence. This can be attributed to lack of interview experience and it should be noted that the later interviews included less examples of this. There were some occasions where several questions were asked at one time. This was largely due to the researcher re-phrasing the question to make it clearer, but often the questions were focusing on very

different topics. Participants tended to answer the last question that was asked, meaning the earlier questions were ignored. Similarly, reading the transcripts revealed several occasions where prompts and follow-up questions should have been used to investigate issues in more detail rather than moving on to the next topic. Lack of time was an issue here because the staff often only had a short period to spend discussing the issues and there were concerns about getting through all the topics. Ideally, an iterative approach to data collection would have been utilised whereby participants could have been re-interviewed on a future occasion to follow-up issues emerging in the analysis. This technique, building on the process of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, as cited in Pidgeon, 1996), would have allowed the themes identified in the analysis to be investigated in more detail. An alternative to re-interviewing the same participants would be to interview different people about the issues raised – referred to as *theoretical sampling* (Pigeon, 1996). This would certainly be an interesting angle for further research because several of the findings outlined, particularly relating to the impact of the organisational context on staff perceptions, are relatively new to the literature and would benefit from detailed study. The integration section began to reveal an underlying structure to staff experience and further investigation would develop this emerging theory (Pigeon, 1996).

Further quality checks were included in the analysis. For example, it was outlined how participants received a copy of their interview transcript and were given the opportunity to amend any details if they wished. This process of *communicative validation* (Flick, 2002) meant that participants authenticated the data set used in the investigation. If they had been led to say something they did not agree with or revealed information they had not meant to, they could have requested it to be removed. The fact that only one minor amendment was requested indicated that participants were satisfied with the information they had reported and believed it to be an accurate account of their words. Therefore, any concerns raised in the reflexive analysis about leading participants or making them uncomfortable were reduced.

An important consideration about the interviews is the fact that, in all cases, either the Head or Deputy Head in each school selected participants. They chose them based on their perceived suitability to discuss the issues of interest and also their availability at the times arranged for the interviews to take place. However, there is the possibility that participants were selected because of their interest in bullying or role in the school. For example, it was noted that many of the participants had an active role in pastoral issues. This may have resulted in a very specific sample that did not represent school staff as a whole. There may also have been the hidden agenda of schools wanting to portray a good impression. The feedback interviews conducted after schools received their Feedback Reports showed how schools were very interested to know how they compared to others. Schools are under pressure to market themselves to potential pupils, parents, society as a whole, the media and quality assurance agencies such as OFSTED. Therefore there might have been a tendency for the Deputy Heads to choose people who were actively involved with bullying in the school and were well-respected members of staff so that they would portray a positive light on the school.

A further consideration with senior management making initial contact with participants, is the possibility that the staff members may have felt obliged to take part rather than participating willingly (Mason, 1996). It is not clear what information was given to participants prior to the interviews so it is unknown whether they felt pressured to take part. Mason (1996) outlines how gaining true informed consent for qualitative interviewing can be extremely difficult. In addition, the information received in the interviews may have been affected by concerns about information being passed back, or wanting to portray a good impression about the school. Attempts were made to reassure participants about the nature of the discussions by describing the rationale and outlining what the data would be used for, but the possibility remains that some participants may have withheld information or felt under pressure. The environment where the interviews took place may have also impacted on the quality of information received. For example, many

of the interviews were conducted in the Deputy Heads' office in the schools. Although there was nobody else present, the mere fact of being in their office may have implied a channel of communication or feedback between the researcher and Deputy Head. These perceived power relations can have an impact on the interview situation (Mason, 1996).

A major drawback with the interviews was the limited time available to talk to participants. Because they were interviewed in their workplace, they were still on duty and were working to a timetable. One concern was how comfortable the participants were during the interviews. Attempts were made to establish a relaxed atmosphere and develop a friendly relationship (Hayes, 2000) but the limited time available with each participant made this difficult. Participants appeared to reveal some of the most interesting information towards the end of the discussion and it is unfortunate that time limited the length of interviews. Several interviews had to be terminated early due to a class starting, or the next participant waiting to take part. One interview took place with a lunchtime supervisor in a busy dining hall whilst she was still on duty. This was far from ideal because she was distracted several times by children misbehaving, it was noisy and there were lots of people around meaning the discussion could have been overheard. It was therefore not appropriate or possible to tape the discussion, nor was it realistically possible to make notes during the discussion. Despite detailed notes being made immediately afterwards, there is the strong possibility of meaningful information being forgotten and therefore not recorded. The same concerns apply to the other interviews that were not taped. These situations were following ethical guidelines where participants did not give consent for their interviews to be taped, but the reliability of memory to make notes can be questioned and again some information is likely to have been forgotten.

The interviews that were tape-recorded sometimes provided difficulties because there was a notable tendency for some participants to quieten their voice when discussing certain issues. For example, topics that could have been perceived as



controversial or based on individual opinion often resulted in lowered voices. Also, there was a tendency for people to speed up their talk when discussing something they were very confident about or familiar with (such as existing practice). The result of this was chunks of the tapes being inaudible. Quite often, these inaudible sections may have provided some of the most useful information. This disadvantage highlighted the need for transcription to take place as soon after the interviews as possible so that inaudible sections could be filled in from memory. Unfortunately, due to work commitments, there were several months between the interviews being conducted and the transcription taking place, meaning much of the interviews had been lost from memory. Some notes had been kept, but there was an over-reliance on the tape as the sole record of discussions (Mason, 1996). This emphasised the importance of taking notes during and after interviews in addition to taping them so that data is not lost.

Despite associated methodological difficulties, conducting the additional study was extremely beneficial because of the additional insight that was gained about staff perceptions of bullying. Importantly, many of the findings reinforced what had already emerged from the statistical analysis and open-ended comments. In addition, further interesting information was revealed that would not otherwise have been discovered. This raises implications for the combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques in psychological research. The techniques certainly appeared to be complementary rather than opposing. In fact, Hayes (2000) suggests that rather than viewing quantitative and qualitative research as dichotomous approaches, they should be viewed as approaches with a different emphasis. The use and acceptance of qualitative research has increased in recent years and more researchers are recognising the value of combining approaches (Langdrige, 2004). It is important to recognise and not dismiss the different belief systems operating in quantitative and qualitative research (Henwood, 1996), but putting philosophical standpoints aside and focusing on the practical value of different techniques is growing in acceptance. For example, Langdrige (2004) claims that making pragmatic research decisions and using a triangulation of perspectives, rather than focusing on

controversial or based on individual opinion often resulted in lowered voices. Also, there was a tendency for people to speed up their talk when discussing something they were very confident about or familiar with (such as existing practice). The result of this was chunks of the tapes being inaudible. Quite often, these inaudible sections may have provided some of the most useful information. This disadvantage highlighted the need for transcription to take place as soon after the interviews as possible so that inaudible sections could be filled in from memory. Unfortunately, due to work commitments, there were several months between the interviews being conducted and the transcription taking place, meaning much of the interviews had been lost from memory. Some notes had been kept, but there was an over-reliance on the tape as the sole record of discussions (Mason, 1996). This emphasised the importance of taking notes during and after interviews in addition to taping them so that data is not lost.

Despite associated methodological difficulties, conducting the additional study was extremely beneficial because of the additional insight that was gained about staff perceptions of bullying. Importantly, many of the findings reinforced what had already emerged from the statistical analysis and open-ended comments. In addition, further interesting information was revealed that would not otherwise have been discovered. This raises implications for the combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques in psychological research. The techniques certainly appeared to be complementary rather than opposing. In fact, Hayes (2000) suggests that rather than viewing quantitative and qualitative research as dichotomous approaches, they should be viewed as approaches with a different emphasis. The use and acceptance of qualitative research has increased in recent years and more researchers are recognising the value of combining approaches (Langdrige, 2004). It is important to recognise and not dismiss the different belief systems operating in quantitative and qualitative research (Henwood, 1996), but putting philosophical standpoints aside and focusing on the practical value of different techniques is growing in acceptance. For example, Langdrige (2004) claims that making pragmatic research decisions and using a triangulation of perspectives, rather than focusing on

philosophical arguments can achieve added depth of understanding to a topic. The focus seems to be shifting to a consideration of the most suitable method for the particular issue being investigated:

*...whether a psychologist chooses to conduct qualitative or quantitative research, or a combination of both, is entirely to do with their judgement about what that particular research topic requires, (Hayes, 2000, p.236).*

With this in mind, there seems to be enormous potential for utilising quantitative and qualitative research in the study of school bullying. Used together in this research, the techniques provided a thorough, holistic picture of perceptions of bullying.

In summary, the most important finding revealed from this additional study was the complexity of staff experience. Their working context appeared to greatly affect their experience and it seems pertinent to further examine the role of organisational factors in bullying. The variability in perceptions of bullying between schools that were revealed by the statistical analysis could be explained by the different organisational climates. The implication for this is the importance of focusing on bullying in a wider context rather than viewing it in isolation. Hastings and Bham (2003) report that it is important for interventions to address organisational aspects of teacher well-being to support them in their role. Examining the external and internal influences on the structure and functioning of schools could add considerable depth to the existing wealth of knowledge about bullying.

# **Chapter 10**

## **Overall summary and conclusions**

## **10. Overall summary and conclusions**

### **10.1 Findings about perceptions**

The combination of statistical results, open-ended comments and semi-structured interviews revealed important findings about how pupils and staff perceive bullying. There was a general tendency for indirect bullying to be perceived as being less serious than direct bullying, and there was more uncertainty expressed about whether indirect behaviours constituted bullying or not. This was the case for both pupil and staff groups. Where behaviours described in the questionnaire were defined as bullying, there appeared to be a consistent trend for participants to subsequently regard those behaviours as serious. The emerging link between 'bullying' and 'seriousness' was evident in the statistical findings and open-ended comments. Indirect behaviours tended to be heard about less often, despite the fact that pupils' self-reported rate of direct and indirect bullying did not largely differ. In the interviews, staff described how they tended to witness observable, physical behaviours involving groups of pupils rather than subtle forms - possibly explaining why indirect behaviours were heard about less often.

The questionnaires revealed that the scenarios with a female victim were perceived as slightly more serious than scenarios with a male victim. The apparent influence of gender on perceptions of bullying implied possible stereotypical views of males and females. This was further illustrated by the open-ended comments and semi-structured interviews, where generalisations were made about typical 'boy' and 'girl' behaviours. In addition, females were more likely to define behaviours as bullying than males indicating that the gender of the participants, as well as the gender of the victim affected perceptions. Year 11 pupils were more certain than Year 8 pupils about behaviours that could be regarded as bullying and there were higher self-reported rates of bullying in Year 8. Therefore, pupil perceptions of bullying appeared to be mediated by factors such as age and gender but further investigation is required before conclusions can be drawn.

The experience of working in schools was not related to staff perceptions of bullying, but the interviews suggested that life experience rather than work experience could be an important factor. Staff were more certain than pupils about the behaviours encompassed by the term bullying. They also rated bullying behaviours more seriously than pupils. Interestingly, no consistent differences emerged between the perceptions of teachers and support staff. Instead, their perceptions tended to be similar – forming a unified staff group. However, support staff appeared to be perceived differently by pupils who were more willing to talk to them because they were viewed as segregated from teachers. Therefore, despite support staff having similar perceptions of bullying to teachers, their different relationship with pupils meant they could act as a ‘bridge’ between pupils and teachers.

Despite the findings showing trends in perceptions based on factors such as group (pupil, teacher or support staff), gender and age, it should be noted that there were considerable variations in perceptions of bullying. School differences emerged consistently in the statistical analysis indicating that perceptions were not fixed and could potentially be altered by school factors. Furthermore, the qualitative data generated from the open-ended comments and semi-structured interview study revealed disparity in individual perceptions of bullying. This variation existed *within* groups and indicated that participants had their own personal view of what bullying involves. Several differences in opinion expressed by participants reflected the debates evident in the educational literature about the operational definition of bullying (e.g. Arora, 1996). This diversity suggested that perceptions of bullying were more complex than originally expected. The findings from the semi-structured interview study added insight to this complexity. Staff described how their perceptions and behaviour were mediated by school structures and the quality of communication between colleagues and management. This implied that the functioning of the school in organisational terms could affect perceptions of bullying. In addition, staff spoke about the impact of school location, media interest and societal changes on bullying – illustrating that they viewed bullying as being affected by factors that are both internal and external to the school environment.

The evidence highlighted the need to situate bullying in a wider context and not regard it as an isolated phenomenon. This has several implications for anti-bullying intervention strategies in schools.

## **10.2 Implications for intervention**

The findings showing the complexity in perceptions of bullying highlight the importance of schools spending time focusing on the definition of bullying (Arora, 1996; Birkinshaw & Eslea, 1998). In particular, indirect behaviours need to receive attention to ensure they are included in definitions of bullying in the same way as direct behaviours. Despite all schools having written definitions of bullying in their policy documents, members of the school community had their own personal views about what constituted bullying. It is vital that bullying is clearly defined by schools before intervention schemes are introduced to ensure everybody is working towards the same goal (Menesini *et al.*, 2002). All members of the school community should be included in this stage so that all views are represented (DfES, 1994, 2000, 2002; Glover *et al.*, 2000; Guerin & Hennessy, 2002). Arriving at a shared understanding of bullying is likely to involve schools taking a step back from their existing practices to re-evaluate whether pupils and staff are adopting a consistent approach to bullying.

It seems important for schools to utilise their support staff as much as possible in their bullying work (Boulton, 1996). The findings indicated that pupils perceive support staff differently to teaching staff who are regarded as authority figures. As such, support staff could provide a valuable resource for teachers by bridging the pupil-teacher gap that appears to exist. By involving them in bullying interventions and developing structured communication channels between support staff and teaching staff, they would feel more valued and supported in their role. In addition, working to improve the pupil-staff relationship in general should facilitate communication about bullying and create a cohesive school community (Menesini *et al.*, 2002).

The school differences in the statistical results showed that perceptions of bullying were variable. Also, the feedback interviews showed how schools valued the personalised nature of the Feedback Reports. Therefore, when interventions are being designed, it is important that they are tailored to the needs of individual schools (Stevens *et al.*, 2000). Crucially, these interventions need to focus on issues alongside bullying rather than treating it in isolation. The qualitative elements of this investigation highlighted how bullying was affected by many things including environmental and social factors (such as school location, societal changes, family, friends and the media). Furthermore, the organisational structure, management and systems of the school influenced staff relationships, the quality of communication between colleagues and their perceptions of pupils meaning that interventions need to address these issues also. Stevens *et al.* (2000) would confirm this because they argued that the different organisational factors operating in secondary schools explains why they have been found to be more resistant to change than primary schools (Arora, 1994). It is acknowledged that intervention schemes operating in schools tend to utilise a variety of strategies to tackle the problem (e.g. Carney & Merrell, 2001; Olweus, 1993; Whitney & Smith, 1993) but the sole focus is to address bullying and findings from this investigation indicate that such a tunnelled approach is insufficient. It has previously been acknowledged that interventions focussing on bullying in isolation without focussing on wider issues are unlikely to be effective (Jenner & Greetham, 1995; Sharp & Thompson, 1994a) – supporting the suggestions made.

In summary, the findings indicate that schools need to adapt their culture, or 'ethos' (Besag, 1989; Naylor & Cowie, 1999; Smith, 1998; Stephenson & Smith, 1989) to address the social, environmental and organisational system that bullying operates within. Such a complex strategy is likely to have far reaching implications for school staff, who are central for implementing interventions (Birkinshaw & Eslea, 1998; Menesini *et al.*, 2002; Nicolaidis *et al.*, 2002). Throughout the investigation, staff raised concerns about the lack of time they have to address bullying. Having to re-address existing policies and put in additional work would add to this pressure. As Sharp *et al.* (2000) note, "most schools will quite naturally wish to go for a minimal effort/maximum impact type



approach, only doing what is necessary to resolve any particular problem,” (2000, p.44). This is understandable given the pressure on schools and it would be expected that they might be reluctant to adopt the broad changes being recommended. Therefore, perhaps schools would benefit from additional funding to allow recruitment of specialist staff who could coordinate interventions. In support of this, Smith and Sharp (1994) found that it was important for one member of senior staff to take control of intervention strategies. Support from external sources could also be beneficial to schools (Arora, 1994). The feedback interviews showed that schools welcomed the assistance from an outside agent, and emphasised how they would like to work more in conjunction with other schools and ‘network’ strategies. External support, possibly from Educational Psychologists, could provide an objective overview and structured guidance that could then be translated by schools to make it personal and meaningful to them.

It is acknowledged that the suggestions outlined would require commitment from Government and Local Education Authorities to provide funding where necessary (Besag, 1989). With this in mind, it would seem necessary to conduct a pilot scheme to demonstrate whether the suggested interventions lead to changes in perceptions and reduced levels of bullying. Previously, interventions have been shown to take up to 2 years to have an effect (Arora, 1994) meaning that any pilot scheme would need to be designed to accommodate this.

### **10.3 Practical issues for researching school bullying**

Further to the insight that was gained about perceptions of bullying and subsequent potential for intervention strategies, the research raised several implications for researching bullying in schools. In particular, the difficulty finding schools willing to participate highlighted the importance of creating a reciprocal relationship between schools and researchers. Introducing the Feedback Reports meant that schools benefited from taking part in the project and therefore resulted in increased participation. The implication for researchers wishing to gain access to schools is to consider ways of ensuring a shared experience so that both parties benefit from the research.

It became apparent during the course of conducting the research that there was a need to be flexible and accommodating to schools' needs. Trying to enforce rigorous experimental conditions was not always appropriate and concerns about associated lack of control were outweighed by the benefits of maintaining a positive relationship with schools. It became apparent that a close working relationship between schools and the researcher was important and impacted on the quality of information received. Becoming a recognised, accepted figure in the school would help researchers develop a rapport with staff and pupils and allow more input and control over the data collection procedures. These factors reflect the need to adopt a more *ethnographic* approach to research in schools via field research (Neuman, 2003). In field research, Neuman (2003) describes the need for flexibility, acceptance and involvement – mirroring the issues arising from this research project.

The timing of the research was crucial to its' impact. With the number of internal and external pressures acting on schools, they sometimes appeared to be guided by their own agendas - often to the exclusion of everything else. For example, School 3 were undergoing an OFSTED inspection hence they had not fully engaged with the material in their Feedback Report because it was not a priority. Alternatively, School 1 had prioritised re-visiting their anti-bullying policy prior to participating in the project and they had made the most progress when the feedback interviews took place. In addition, the data collection was hindered by the pending GCSE examinations and it is important for researchers to consider the impact that school seasonal factors can have on their study procedures.

One of the most crucial findings revealed about researching bullying was the benefit of qualitative investigation. So much additional information was gained through the qualitative techniques employed and it therefore seems advisable for researchers to consider adopting qualitative approaches when studying bullying. With bullying being such a personal experience, the added insight that could be achieved through qualitative investigation is clear. However, the scale of the bullying problem and the commonalities

that have been identified also warrant quantitative study. The implication seems to be that studying bullying requires a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches.

There is growing acceptance for mixed designs (Langdridge, 2004) and several recommended approaches for combining quantitative and qualitative techniques. This research followed the *triangulation metaphor* (Kelle & Erzberger, 2004) to integrate quantitative and qualitative research whereby perceptions of bullying were examined using different methods including structured questionnaires, open-ended comments and semi-structured interviews. The *triangulation metaphor* can also involve investigating different parts of the same phenomenon (Kelle & Erzberger, 2004). In this research, the semi-structured interviews with staff investigated staff *experience* of dealing with bullying as opposed to measuring their perceptions through questionnaires. Researchers could consider adopting this model in future investigations on school bullying to gain a holistic view of the particular aspect being studied. An alternative to the *triangulation metaphor* is the *phase-model* (Kelle & Erzberger, 2004) whereby qualitative research can be used to generate hypotheses for testing using quantitative techniques. For example, the understanding of the complexity surrounding pupil and staff perceptions of bullying that was gained through the qualitative aspects of this research could aid the development of a more suitable quantitative questionnaire to measure perceptions. Ultimately, the results from quantitative and qualitative studies can converge, complement each other or diverge (Kelle & Erzberger, 2004). Each alternative can offer valuable information about the topic being investigated. This research found convergent results because the qualitative elements often reflected findings revealed in the statistical analysis. Complementary data was also achieved through integrating quantitative and qualitative techniques. The qualitative methods revealed individual variability in bullying perceptions and the complexity of factors affecting bullying that would not have been identified through quantitative methods alone. Researchers should therefore consider utilising a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches to the study of school bullying.

#### **10.4 Future research**

There are some immediately obvious lines for future research that have arisen from this investigation. Firstly, some of the open-ended comments made on the questionnaires suggested that participants found answering structured questions about their perceptions of bullying difficult. This raised implications about the suitability of using quantitative methods to study perceptions and further investigation is required to re-assess the most appropriate method to use. It is possible that the problems experienced could have been a result of using exactly the same wording for pupils and staff. Although this approach was adopted as a result of recommendations by Boulton (1997), in practice it may not have been entirely suitable. It certainly would not be practical to use the same measure with pupils and staff in primary schools because ensuring children could understand the items would make them far too simplistic for staff. However, the fact that this study was based on secondary schools means that similar studies in a primary school environment would be recommended to see if similar findings about perceptions emerge. Therefore there is a need to examine alternative ways of directly comparing pupil and staff perceptions of bullying.

Some of the specific findings that were revealed require additional research in order to understand them fully. For example, the differential perceptions of bullying based on the gender of the victim indicated stereotypical views of pupil behaviour, but this could not be assumed. Also, there seemed to be age differences in reporting bullying behaviours, with older pupils being more reluctant to admit being bullied but again this was unclear. In addition, the apparent tendency of participants to blame victims for their treatment suggested that some members of the school community viewed bullying as an understandable, justified behaviour. However, without further study it is not possible to ascertain the impact that these findings could have on school interventions.

Within the study of perceptions of bullying, it would be interesting to investigate the origins of people's perceptions. Understanding how these perceptions develop could inform the design of strategies for shaping them. The fact that the English word

'bullying' does not have an exact equivalent in other languages (Smith *et al.*, 2002; Smorti *et al.*, 2003) indicates that similar studies should be conducted abroad to see if similar trends emerge. Related to this, the design of the questionnaire meant that certain aspects of participants' perceptions could not be studied. In particular, there was no way of identifying children who bully others and subsequently investigate their perceptions of bullying. Also, although the scenarios described a variety of direct and indirect bullying behaviours, there were certain forms of bullying (such as racial, sexual or homophobic bullying) that were not included. Additional studies would be recommended to see if similar findings emerge regarding perceptions of these bullying behaviours. It would also be interesting to extend the research to include more than two year groups to investigate if similar trends emerge with pupils of different age groups.

The school differences that emerged suggest the need to find suitable methods with which to compare schools in a structured way in order to identify the roots of these differences. The apparent relationship of bullying to other factors such as organisational structure, location, family and friendship also warrants additional study. These findings emerged unexpectedly through qualitative investigation and as such were not studied in as much detail as would be required to form meaningful conclusions. It appeared that pupils viewed bullying as often occurring within friendship groups, whereas staff seemed to regard bullying and friendship as distinct entities that do not overlap. If this division of opinion exists it could have far reaching consequences for the identification of incidents, reporting of bullying and subsequent intervention. However, findings at this stage are speculative and there is a need to further investigate the perceived links between bullying and friendship. Similarly, the perceived tension between teachers and parents revealed in the semi-structured interviews needs studying because teachers claimed to rely on parental reports to find out about bullying. Positive teacher-parent relationships are therefore very important for schools and suitable ways of facilitating this relationship require investigation. Also, investigating parental perceptions of bullying is recommended because their reporting of incidents to schools is likely to be affected by their own definition of bullying and also whether they have shared understanding of bullying with their child (Smorti *et al.*, 2003).

The experience of staff in terms of time conflicts and stress certainly warrants further study. Increasing the complexity of intervention strategies increases the burden on staff who have already reported to be under enormous time pressures. A large proportion of bullying research to this point has understandably been focused on pupils but this research has highlighted the need to broaden the investigation to staff and organisational systems. The quality of the staff working environment was shown to influence how they deal with bullying and therefore it is necessary to consider ways of assessing the organisational climate of a school so that areas of concern can be identified. The School Organisational Health Questionnaire (Hart, Wearing, Conn, Carter & Dingle, 2000), for example, could be considered as a possible measurement tool. It has already been outlined how interventions need to focus on wider issues such as organisational factors, but how this could be practically addressed remains unclear. The need to adopt a more organisational approach to researching school bullying is a relatively new direction in the existing research and therefore there is huge potential for further study.

Finally, the lack of qualitative research on bullying is surprising considering how beneficial it was found to be in this investigation. A recommendation as a result of this research would be to develop the use of qualitative techniques to add insight into the issue of bullying. These techniques ideally would be used in conjunction with quantitative approaches rather than as an alternative. There is a need for researchers to adopt the most *appropriate* research strategies for the issue they are studying rather than being restricted by long-standing and unresolved philosophical assumptions (Langdrige, 2004).

# References

## References

- Abikoff, H., Courtney, M., Pelham Jr, W. E. & Koplewicz, H. S. (1993). Teachers' ratings of disruptive behaviours: The influence of halo effects. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 21(5), 519-533.
- Ahmad, Y., Whitney, I. & Smith, P. K. (1991). A survey service for schools on bully/victim problems. In P. K. Smith & R. Thompson (Eds.) *Practical Approaches to Bullying*. London: David Fulton Publishers.
- Ahmed, E. & Braithwaite, V. (2004). Bullying and victimization: cause for concern for both families and schools. *Social Psychology of Education*, 7, 35-54.
- Andershed, H., Kerr, M. & Stattin, H. (2001). Bullying in school and violence on the streets: Are the same people involved? *Journal of Scandinavian Studies in Criminology and Crime Prevention*, 2(1), 31-49.
- Andreou, E. (2001). Bully/Victim problems and their association with coping behaviour in the conflictual peer interactions among school-age children. *Educational Psychology*, 21(1), 59-66.
- Araki, T. (2002). How do victims of childhood bullying cope with current interpersonal stressors? Preliminary findings. *Tohoku Psychologica Folia*, 61, 55-61.
- Arora, C. M. J. (1989). Bullying: Action and Intervention. *Pastoral Care in Education*, Sep, 44-47.
- Arora, C. M. J. (1994). Is there any point trying to reduce bullying in secondary schools? *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 10(3), 155-162.



Arora, C. M. J. (1996). Defining Bullying: Towards a clearer understanding and more effective intervention strategies. *School Psychology International*, 17, 317-329.

Arora, T. (1999). Levels of bullying measured by British schools using the 'Life in School' checklist: A case for benchmarking? *Pastoral Care, March*, 17-22.

Arsenio, W. F. & Kramer, R. (1992). Victimizers and their victims: Children's conceptions of the mixed emotional consequences of moral transgressions. *Child Development*, 63, 915-927.

Asher, S. R., Singleton, L. C., Tinsley, B. R. & Hymel, S. (1979). A reliable sociometric measure for preschool children. *Developmental Psychology*, 15(4), 443-444.

Asher, S. R. & Dodge, K. A. (1986). Identifying children who are rejected by their peers. *Developmental Psychology*, 22(4), 444-449.

Austin, S. & Joseph, S. (1996). Assessment of bully/victim problems in 8 to 11 year-olds. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 66, 447-456.

Baldry, A. C. & Farrington, D. P. (1998). Parenting influences on bullying and victimization. *Legal and Criminological Psychology*, 3, 237-254.

Baldry, A. C. & Farrington, D. P. (1999). Types of bullying among Italian school children. *Journal of Adolescence*, 22, 423-426.

Baldry, A. C. (2003). Bullying in schools and exposure to domestic violence. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 27(7), 713-732.

- Begotti, T. & Bonino, S. (2003). Bullying at school: The narratives of children. *Eta-evolutiva*, 74(1), 84-91.
- Berndt, T. J. (1982). The features and effects of friendship in early adolescence. *Child Development*, 53, 1447-1460
- Berthold, K. A. & Hoover, J. H. (2000). Correlates of bullying and victimization among intermediate students in the Midwestern USA. *School Psychology International*, 21(1), 65-78.
- Besag, V. (1989). *Bullies and Victims in Schools: A Guide to Understanding and Management*. Buckingham: OU Press.
- Besag, V. (1992). The Playground. In M. Elliot (Ed.) *Bullying: A practical guide to coping for schools*. Essex: Longman.
- Besag, V. & Packer, A. (1992). From awareness to action: One school's approach to INSET on bullying. *Pastoral Care*, Dec, 38-42.
- Birkinshaw, S. & Eslea, M. (1998, September). *Teachers' attitudes and actions toward boy vs girl and girl vs boy bullying*. Paper presented at The Annual Conference of the Developmental Section of the British Psychological Society, Lancaster University, UK.
- Birleson, P. (1981). The validity of depressive disorder in childhood and the development of a self-rating scale: A research report. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 22, 73-88.
- Björkqvist, K. L., Lagerspetz, K. M. J. & Kaukianen, A. (1992). Do girls manipulate and boys fight? Developmental trends in regard to direct and indirect aggression. *Aggressive Behaviour*, 18, 117-127.

Boivin, M. & Bégin, G. (1989). Peer status and self-perception among early elementary school children: The case of the rejected children. *Child Development*, 60, 591-596.

Boivin, M., Hymel, S. & Bukowski, W. M. (1995). The roles of social withdrawal, peer rejection, and victimization by peers in predicting loneliness and depressed mood in childhood. *Development and Psychopathology*, 7, 765-785.

Bolstad, O. D. & Johnson, S. M. (1977). The relationship between teachers' assessment of students and the students' actual behaviour in the classroom. *Child Development*, 48, 570-578.

Bond, L., Carlin, J. B., Thomas, L., Rubin, K. & Patton, G. (2001). Does bullying cause emotional problems? A prospective study of young teenagers. *British Medical Journal*, 323(7311), 480-484.

Borg, M. G. & Falzon, J. M. (1989). Primary School Teachers' Perceptions of Pupils' Undesirable Behaviours. *Educational Studies*, 15(3), 251-260.

Borg, M. A. (1990). Occupational Stress in British Educational Settings. *Educational Psychology*, 10(2), 103-126.

Borg, M. G. & Falzon, J. M. (1990). Teachers' perceptions of primary schoolchildren's undesirable behaviours: The effects of teaching experience, pupil's age and ability stream. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 60, 220-226.

Borg, M. G., Riding, R. J. & Falzon, J. M. (1991). Stress in Teaching: a study of occupational stress and its determinants, job satisfaction and career commitment among primary schoolteachers. *Educational Psychology*, 11(1), 59-75.

Borg, M. G. & Falzon, J. M. (1993). A factor analytic study of teachers' perception of pupils' undesirable behaviours: a rejoinder to Langfeldt (1992). *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 63, 513-518.

Borg, M. G. (1998a). Secondary teachers' perceptions of pupils' undesirable behaviours. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 68, 67-79.

Borg, M. G. (1998b). The emotional reactions of school bullies and their victims. *Educational Psychology*, 18(4), 433-444.

Borg, M. G. (1999). The extent and nature of bullying among primary and secondary schoolchildren. *Educational Research*, 41(2), 137-153.

Boulton, M. J. (1992). Participation in playground activities at middle school. *Educational Research*, 34(3), 167-182.

Boulton, M. J. & Underwood, K. (1992). Bully/victim problems among middle school children. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 62, 73-87.

Boulton, M. J. (1993a). A comparison of adults' and children's' abilities to distinguish between aggressive and playful fighting in middle school pupils: Implications for playground supervision and behaviour management. *Educational Studies*, 19(2), 193-203.

Boulton, M. J. (1993b). Children's abilities to distinguish between playful and aggressive fighting: A developmental perspective. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 11, 249-263.

Boulton, M. J. & Smith, P. K. (1994). Bully/victim problems in middle-school children: Stability, self-perceived competence, peer perceptions and peer acceptance. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 12, 315-329.

Boulton, M. J. (1995). Playground behaviour and peer interaction patterns of primary school boys classified as bullies, victims and not involved. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 65, 165-177.

Boulton, M. J. (1996). Lunchtime supervisors' attitudes towards playful fighting and ability to differentiate between playful and aggressive fighting: an intervention study. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 66, 367-381.

Boulton, M. J. (1997). Teachers' views on bullying: definitions, attitudes and ability to cope. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 67, 223-233.

Boulton, M. J. (1999). Concurrent and longitudinal relations between children's playground behaviour and social preference, victimization, and bullying. *Child Development*, 70(4), 944-954.

Boulton, M. J., Bucci, E. & Hawker, D. S. (1999). Swedish and English secondary school pupils' attitudes towards, and conceptions of, bullying: Concurrent links with bully/victim involvement. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, 40, 277-284.

Boulton, M. J., Trueman, M., Chau, C., Whitehand, C. & Amatya, K. (1999). Concurrent and longitudinal links between friendship and peer victimization: implications for befriending interventions. *Journal of Adolescence*, 22, 461-466.

Boulton, M. J., Karellou, I., Lanitis, I., Manoussou, V. & Lemoni, O. (2001). Bullying and victimization in Greek primary school pupils. *Psychology: The Journal of the Hellenic Psychological Society*, 8(1), 12-29.

Boulton, M. J., Trueman, M. & Flemington, I. (2002). Associations between secondary school pupils' definitions of bullying, attitudes towards bullying, and tendencies to engage in bullying: age and sex differences. *Educational Studies*, 28(4), 353-370.

Bowers L., Smith, P. K. & Binney, V. (1994). Perceived family relationships of bullies, victims and bully/victims in middle childhood. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 11*, 215-232.

Bradford Brown, B., Eicher, S. A. & Petrie, S. (1986). The importance of peer group ("crowd") affiliation in adolescence. *Journal of Adolescence, 9*, 73-96.

Branwhite, T. (1994). Bullying and student distress: beneath the tip of the iceberg. *Educational Psychology, 14(1)*, 59-71.

Burman, E. (1994). Interviewing. In P. Banister, E. Burman, I. Parker, M. Taylor & C. Tindall (Eds.) *Qualitative Methods in Psychology: A Research Guide*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Byrne, B. (1999). Ireland. In P.K. Smith, Y. Morita, J. Junger-Tas, D. Olweus, R. Catalano & P. Slee (Eds.) *The nature of school bullying: A cross-national perspective*. London: Routledge.

Callaghan, S. & Joseph, S. (1995). Self-concept and peer victimization among schoolchildren. *Personality and Individual Differences, 18(1)*, 161-163.

Camodeca, M., Goossens, F. A., Meerum-Terwogt, M. & Schuengel, C. (2002). Bullying and victimization among school-age children: Stability and links to proactive and reactive aggression. *Social Development, 11(3)*, 332-345.

Carney, A. G. & Merrell, K. W. (2001). Bullying in Schools: Perspectives on understanding and preventing an International problem. *School Psychology International, 22(3)*, 364-382.

Carlson, N. R., Martin, G. N. & Buskist, W. (2004). *Psychology* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edn). London: Pearson Education.

Cartwright, N., Glover, D., Gough, G., Gleeson, D., Johnson, M., Miller, D. & Taylor, M. (1997). *Anti-Bullying in Action: A report into the impact of anti-bullying policies in the schools of the Partnership, investigated during the Summer Term 1996*. Keele: Keele University.

Cassidy, J. & Asher, S. R. (1992). Loneliness and peer rejection in young children. *Child Development, 63*, 350-365.

Center, D. B. & Wascom, A. M. (1987). Teacher perceptions of social behaviour in behaviourally disordered and socially normal children and youth. *Behavioural Disorders, May*, 200-206.

Chazan, M. & Jackson, S. (1974). Behaviour problems in the infant school: changes over two years. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 15*, 33-46.

Chawla, N. (2003). Self-blame and external attributions for relational victimization in preadolescent children. *Dissertation Abstracts International Section B: The Sciences and Engineering, 63(10B)*, 4893.

Chuanhua, G. & Wenxin, Z. (2003). A survey on the relations of the bullying problem among primary schoolchildren to their personality. *Acta Psychologica Sinica, 35(1)*, 101-105.

Coie, J. D. & Dodge, K. (1988). Multiple sources of data on social behaviour and social status in the school: A cross-age comparison. *Child Development, 59*, 815-829.

Condry, J. C. & Ross, D. F. (1985). Sex and aggression: The influence of gender label on the perception of aggression in children. *Child Development, 56*, 225-233.

Connolly, J. & Doyle, A. (1981). Assessment of social competence in preschoolers: teachers versus peers. *Developmental Psychology*, 17(4), 454-462.

Connolly, I. & O'Moore, M. (2003). Personality and family relations of children who bully. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 35(3), 559-567.

Cortina, J. M. & Nouri, H. (2000). *Effect size for ANOVA designs*. London: Sage.

Cowie, H. & Sharp, S. (1992). Students themselves tackle the problem of bullying. *Pastoral Care in Education*, Dec, 31-37.

Cowie, H. & Sharp, S. (1994). How to tackle bullying through the curriculum. In S. Sharp, P. K. Smith (Eds.) *Tackling Bullying in Your School: A Practical Handbook for Teachers*. London: Routledge.

Cowie, H. & Olafsson, R. (2000). The role of peer support in helping the victims of bullying in a school with high levels of aggression. *School Psychology International*, 21(1), 79-95.

Craig, W. & Pepler, D. (1997). Observations of bullying and victimization in the schoolyard. *Canadian Journal of School Psychology*, 2, 41-60.

Craig, W. (1998). The relationship among bullying, victimization, depression, anxiety and aggression in elementary school children. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 24(1), 123-130.

Craig, W. M., Henderson, K. & Murphy, J. G. (2000). Prospective teacher' attitudes toward bullying and victimization. *School Psychology International*, 21(1), 5-21.

Cranham, J. & Carroll, A. (2003). Dynamics within the bully/victim paradigm: a qualitative analysis. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 19(2), 113-132.



Crick, N. & Grotpeter, J. (1996). Children's treatment by peers: Victims of relational and overt aggression. *Development and Psychopathology*, 8, 367-380.

Crick, N. R. & Nelson, D. R. (2002). Relational and physical victimization within friendships: Nobody told me there'd be friends like these. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 30(6), 599-607.

Crozier, W. R. & Dimmock, P. S. (1999). Name-calling and nicknames in a sample of primary school children. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 69, 505-516.

Cullingford, C. (1993). Children's Attitudes to Bullying. *Education 3-13*, 54-60.

Dawkins, J. (1995). Bullying in schools: doctors' responsibilities. *British Medical Journal*, 310, 274-275.

Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (1998). *The Landscape of Qualitative Research: Theories and Issues*. London: Sage.

Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (2003). *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edn). London: Sage.

DfES. (1994). *Bullying: Don't Suffer in Silence. An anti-bullying pack for schools*. London: HMSO.

DfES. (2000). *Bullying: Don't Suffer in Silence. An anti-bullying pack for schools*. London: HMSO.

DfES. (2002). *Bullying: Don't Suffer in Silence. An anti-bullying pack for schools*. London: HMSO.

Drop in bullying claims against schools. (2004, 17 February). Guardian Education, Retrieved 8 March 2004 from

<http://education.guardian.co.uk/classroomviolence/story/0,12388,1150165,00.html>

Egan, S. K. & Perry, D. G. (1998). Does Low Self-Regard Invite Victimization? *Developmental Psychology*, 34(2), 299-309.

Elliot, M. (1992). A whole-school approach to bullying. In M. Elliot (Ed.) *Bullying: A practical guide to coping for schools*. Essex: Longman.

Elton, L. (1989). *Discipline in Schools (The Elton Report)*. London: HMSO.

Engert, P. A. (2002). Self-perceptions of bullies, victims, and other participants in bullying and victimization interactions of middle school students. *Dissertation Abstracts International Section B: The Sciences and Engineering*, 63(3B), 1560.

Eslea, M. (1998). Nasty names. *Managing Schools Today*. Oct, 4-5.

Eslea, M. & Smith, P. K. (1998). The long-term effectiveness of anti-bullying work in primary schools. *Educational Research*, 40(2), 203-218.

Eslea, M. & Mukhtar, K. (2000). Bullying and racism among Asian school children in Britain. *Educational Research*, 42(2), 207-217.

Eslea, M. & Smith, P. K. (2000). Pupil and parent attitudes towards bullying in primary schools. *European Journal of Education*, 15(2), 207-219.

Eysenck, H. J. & Eysenck, S. B. G. (1975). *Manual of the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

Farrington, D. P. (1993). Understanding and preventing bullying. In M. Tonry (Ed.) *Crime and Justice*, 12, 381-458. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Field, A. (2000). *Discovering Statistics using SPSS for Windows*. London: Sage.

Flick, U. (2002). *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.

Flick, U. (2004). Triangulation in Qualitative Research. In U. Flick, E. von Kardorff & I. Steinke (Eds.) *A Companion to Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.

Forero, R., McLellan, L., Rissel, C. & Bauman, A. (1999). Bullying behaviour and psychosocial health among school students in New South Wales, Australia: Cross sectional survey. *British Medical Journal*, 319, 345-348.

Foster, P., Arora, T. & Thompson, D. (1990). A Whole-school Approach to Bullying. *Pastoral Care*, Sep, 13-17.

Franzoi, S. L. (2000). *Social Psychology* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edn). London: McGraw Hill.

Garner, E. (2003). A study of the perceptions of teachers, counsellors, and administrators regarding their knowledge of the social, psychological, and academic effects of student bullying in middle schools in three urban school districts in Texas. *Dissertation Abstracts International Section A: Humanities and Social Sciences*, 64(4A), 1212.

Gamliel, T., Hoover, J. H., Daugherty, D. W. & Imbra, C. M. (2003). A qualitative investigation on bullying: The perspectives of fifth, sixth and seventh graders in a USA parochial school. *School Psychology International*, 24(4), 405-420.

Gavin, L. A. & Furman, W. (1989). Age differences in adolescents' perceptions of their peer groups. *Developmental Psychology*, 25(5), 827-834.

Gini, G. (2004). Bullying in Italian schools: An overview of intervention programmes. *School Psychology International*, 25(1), 106-116.

Glover, D., Cartwright, N., Gough, G. & Johnson, M. (1998). Introduction of anti-bullying policies; do policies help in the management of change? *School Leadership and Management*, 18(1), 89-105.

Glover, D., Gough, G., Johnson, M. & Cartwright, N. (2000). Bullying in 25 secondary schools: incidence, impact and intervention. *Educational Research*, 42(2), 141-156.

Graham, S. & Juvonen, J. (1998). Self-Blame and Peer Victimization in Middle School: An attributional analysis. *Developmental Psychology*, 34(3), 587-599.

Guerin, S. & Hennessy, E. (2002). Pupils' definitions of bullying. *European Journal of Psychology of Education*, 17(3), 249-261.

Gumpel, T. P. & Meadan, H. (2000). Children's perceptions of school-based violence. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 70, 391-404.

Hanish, L. D. & Guerra, N. G. (2002). A longitudinal analysis of patterns of adjustment following peer victimization. *Development and Psychopathology*, 14(1), 69-89.

Hanson, R. A. & Mullis, R. L. (1985). Age and gender differences in empathy and moral reasoning among adolescents. *Child Study Journal*, 15(3), 181-188.

Hara, H. (2002). Justifications for bullying among Japanese schoolchildren. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*, 5(3), 197-204.

Hart, P. M., Wearing, A. J. & Conn, M. (1995). Conventional wisdom is a poor predictor of the relationship between discipline policy, student misbehaviour and teacher stress. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 65, 27-48.

Hart, P. M., Wearing, A. J., Conn, M., Carter, N. L. & Dingle, R. K. (2000). Development of the School Organisational Health Questionnaire: A measure for assessing teacher morale and school organisational climate. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 70, 211-228.

Harter, S. (1985). *The Self-Perception Profile for Children: Revised of the Perceived Competence Scale for Children*. Manual. Denver, CO: University of Denver.

Hartley, D. (1979). Sex Differences in Classroom Behaviour of Infants: The views of teachers and pupils. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 49, 188-193.

Hastings, R. P. & Bham, M. S. (2003). The relationship between student behaviour patterns and teacher burnout. *School Psychology International*, 24(1), 115-127.

Hawker, D. S. J. & Boulton, M. J. (2003). Twenty years' research on peer victimization and psychological maladjustment: A meta-analytic review of cross-sectional studies. In M. E. Hertzog & E. A. Farber (Eds.) *Annual progress in child psychiatry and child development: 2000-2001*. New York: Brunner-Routledge.

Hayes, N. (2000). *Doing psychological research: Gathering and analysing data*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Hayvren, M. & Hymel, S. (1984). Ethical issues in sociometric testing: Impact of sociometric measures of interaction behaviour. *Developmental Psychology*, 20(5), 844-849.

Hazler, R. J., Carney, J. V., Green, S., Powell, R. & Jolly, L. S. (1997). Areas of expert agreement on identification of school bullies and victims. *School Psychology International*, 18, 5-14.

Hazler, R. J., Miller, D. L., Carney, J. V. & Green, S. (2001). Adult recognition of school bullying situations. *Educational Research*, 43(2), 133-146.

Henwood, K. (1996) Qualitative inquiry: perspectives, methods and psychology. In J. T. E. Richardson. (Ed.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods for Psychology and the Social Sciences*. Leicester: The British Psychological Society.

Hepburn, A. (1997). Teachers and secondary school bullying: a postmodern discourse analysis. *Discourse and Society*, 8(1), 27-48.

Hodges, E. V. E., Malone, M. J. & Perry, D. G. (1997). Individual risk and social risk as interacting determinants of victimization in the peer group. *Developmental Psychology*, 33(6), 1032-1039.

Hodges, E. V. E. & Perry, D. G. (1999). Personal and interpersonal antecedents and consequences of victimization by peers. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 76(4), 677-685.

Houndoumadi, A. & Peteraki, L. (2001). Bullying and Bullies in Greek Elementary Schools: Pupils' attitudes and teachers'/parents' awareness. *Educational Review*, 53(1), 19-26.

Howell, D. C. (2002). *Statistical Methods for Psychology* (5<sup>th</sup> Edn). UK: Thomson Learning

Hudley, C. A. (1993). Comparing Teacher and Peer Perceptions of Aggression: An Ecological Approach. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 85(2), 377-384.

Humphreys, A. P. & Smith, P. K. (1987). Rough and tumble, friendship, and dominance in schoolchildren: Evidence for continuity and change with age. *Child Development, 58*, 201-212.

Hunter, S. C. & Boyle, J. M. E. (2004). Appraisal and coping strategy use in victims of school bullying. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 74*, 83-107.

Jaeger, E. L. (2003). A comparison of student-reported incidents and teachers' perceptions of bullying behaviours at the middle school level. *Dissertation Abstracts International Section A: Humanities and Social Sciences, 63(8A)*, 2791.

Jerome, L. & Segal, A. (2003). Bullying by internet. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 42(7)*, 751.

Jenner, S., & Greetham, C. (1995). Forming a Whole-School Anti-Bullying Policy. *Pastoral Care in Education, Sep*, 6-13.

Johnson, H. R., Thompson, M. J., Wilkinson, S., Walsh, L., Balding, J. & Wright, V. (2002). Vulnerability to bullying: Teacher-reported conduct and emotional problems, hyperactivity, peer relationship difficulties, and prosocial behaviour in primary school children. *Educational Psychology, 22(5)*, 553-556.

Johnson, R. A. & Wichern, D. W. (1998). *Applied Multivariate Statistical Analysis* (4<sup>th</sup> Edn). London: Prentice-Hall.

Jones, P. (1994). 'Boys will be boys'. Does this explain pupils' experience of bullying in a mixed comprehensive school? *Pastoral Care in Education, Sep*, 3-10.

Kaltiala-Heino, R., Rimpelä, M., Marttunen, M., Rimpelä, A. & Rantanen, P. (1999). Bullying, depression, and suicidal ideation in Finnish adolescents: school survey. *British Medical Journal, 319*, 348-351.

Kaltiala-Heino, R., Rimpelä, M., Rantanen, P. & Rimpelä, A. (2000). Bullying at school: an indicator of adolescents at risk for mental disorders. *Journal of Adolescence*, 23(6), 661-674.

Karatizias, A., Power, K. G. & Swanson, V. (2002). Bullying and victimisation in Scottish secondary schools: Same or separate entities? *Aggressive Behaviour*, 2, 45-61.

Kaukiainen, A., Salmivalli, C., Lagerspetz, K., Tamminen, M., Vauras, M., Maeki, H. & Poskiparta, E. (2002). Learning difficulties, social intelligence and self-concept: Connections to bully-victim problems. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, 43(3), 269-278.

Kaukinen, C. (2002). Adolescent victimization and problem drinking. *Violence and Victims*, 17(6), 669-689.

Keise, C. (1992). *Sugar and Spice? Bullying in Single-Sex Schools*. Trentham Books.

Kelle, U. & Erzberger, C. (2004). Quantitative and Qualitative Methods: Not in Opposition. In U. Flick, E. von Kardorff & I. Steinke (Eds.) *A Companion to Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.

Kikkawa, M. (1987). Teachers' opinions and treatments for bully/victim problems among students in their junior and senior high schools: Results of a fact-finding survey. *Journal of Human Development*, 23, 25-30.

Kirk, R. E. (1999). *Statistics: An Introduction* (4<sup>th</sup> Edn). London: Harcourt Brace.

Kline, P. (1993). *The Handbook of Psychological Testing*. London: Routledge



Kochenderfer, B. J. & Ladd, G. W. (1996). Peer victimization: Cause or consequence of school maladjustment? *Child Development, 67*, 1305-1317.

Kochenderfer, B. J. & Ladd, G. W. (1997). Victimized children's responses to peers' aggression: Behaviours associated with reduced versus continued victimization. *Development and Psychopathology, 9*, 59-73.

Kumpulainen, K., Räsänen, E., Henttonen, I., Almqvist, F., Kresanov, K., Linna, S., Moilanen, I., Piha, J., Puura, K. & Tamminen, T. (1998). Bullying and psychiatric symptoms among elementary school-age children. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 22(7)*, 705-715.

Kumpulainen, K., Räsänen, E. & Henttonen, I. (1999). Children involved in bullying: Psychological disturbance and the persistence of the involvement. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 23(12)*, 1253-1262.

Kyriacou, C. (1987). Teacher stress and burnout: an international review. *Educational Research, 29(2)*, 146-152.

Kyriacou, C. & Roe, H. (1988). Teachers' perceptions of pupils' behaviour problems at a comprehensive school. *British Educational Research Journal, 14(2)*, 167-173.

Kyriacou, C. (2001). Teacher stress: directions for future research. *Educational Review, 53(1)*, 27-35.

Ladd, G. W. & Profilet, S. M. (1996). The child behaviour scale: A teacher-report measure of young children's aggressive, withdrawn and prosocial behaviours. *Developmental Psychology, 32(6)*, 1008-1024.

La Fontaine, J. (1991). *Bullying - The child's view: An analysis of telephone calls to ChildLine about bullying*. London: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

Land, D. (2003). Teasing apart secondary students' conceptualisations of peer teasing, bullying and sexual harassment. *School Psychology International*, 24(2), 147-165.

Langdrige, D. (2004). *Introduction to Research Methods and Data Analysis in Psychology*. London: Pearson.

Langfeldt, H. (1992). Teachers' perceptions of problem behaviour: A cross-cultural study between Germany and South Korea. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 62, 217-224.

Ledingham, J. E., Younger, A., Schwartzman, A. & Bergeron, G. (1982). Agreement Among Teacher, Peer and Self-Ratings of Children's Aggression, Withdrawal and Likeability. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 10(3), 363-372.

Leff, S. S., Kupersmidt, J. B., Patterson, C. J. & Power, T. J. (1999). Factors Influencing Teacher Identification of Peer Bullies and Victims. *School Psychology Review*, 28(3), 505-517.

Leff, S. S., Power, T. J., Costigan, T. E. & Manz, P. H. (2003). Assessing the climate of the playground and lunchroom: Implications for bullying prevention programming. *School Psychology Review*, 32(3), 418-430.

Lines, D. (1999). Secondary pupils' experience of name-calling behaviour. *Pastoral Care, March*, 23-31.

Lowenstein, L. F. (1978a). The bullied and non-bullied child. *Bulletin of the British Psychological Society*, 31, 316-318.

Lowenstein, L. F. (1978b). Who is the bully? *Bulletin of the British Psychological Society*, 31, 147-149.

Loewenthal, K. M. (2001). *An Introduction to Psychological Tests and Scales* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edn). Sussex: Psychology Press.

Madsen, K. (1996). Differing perceptions of bullying and their practical implications. *Educational and Child Psychology, 13*(2), 14-22.

Mahdavi, J. & Smith, P. K. (2002). The operation of a bully court and perceptions of its success. *School Psychology International, 23*(3), 327-341.

Maines, B. & Robinson, G. (1991). *Stamp out bullying*. Bristol: Lane Duck Publishing.

Maines, B. & Robinson, G. (1992). *Michael's story: The 'no blame' approach*. Lane Duck Publishing.

Marr, N. & Field, T. (2001). *Bullicide: Death a playtime (An exposé of child suicide caused by bullying)*. Success Unlimited.

Mason, J. (1996). *Qualitative Researching*. London: Sage.

Matsui, T., Kakuyama, T., Tsuzuki, Y. & Onglatco, M. (1996). Long-term outcomes of early victimization by peers among Japanese male university students: a model of a vicious cycle. *Psychological Reports, 79*, 711-720.

McDougall, L. (1999). A study of bullying in Further Education. *Pastoral Care, June*, 31-37.

McNamara, C. (1995). A school policy about bullying: Evolution not invention. *Pastoral Care, Sep*, 3-5.

Mellor, A. (1994, September). *Just flavour of the month? Scottish action against bullying*. Paper presented at 'Bullying in Childhood' Conference, Birmingham, UK.

Mellor, A. (1999). Scotland. In P.K. Smith, Y. Morita, J. Junger-Tas, D. Olweus, R. Catalano, P. Slee (Eds.) *The nature of school bullying: A cross-national perspective*. London: Routledge.

Merrett, F. & Wheldall, K. (1984). Classroom behaviour problems which junior school teachers find most troublesome. *Educational Studies*, 10(2), 87-92.

Merrett, F. & Wheldall, K. (1993). How do teachers learn to manage classroom behaviour? A study of teachers' opinions about their initial training with special reference to classroom behaviour management. *Educational Studies*, 19(1), 91-106.

Menesini, E., Codecasa, E., Benelli, B. & Cowie, H. (2003). Enhancing children's responsibility to take action against bullying: Evaluation of a befriending intervention in Italian middle schools. *Aggressive Behaviour*, 29(1), 10-14.

Menesini, E., Eslea, M., Smith, P. K., Giannetti, G. E., Fonzi, A. & Costabile, A. (1997). Cross-national comparison of children's attitudes towards bully/victim problems in school. *Aggressive Behaviour*, 23, 245-257.

Menesini, E., Fonzi, A. & Smith, P. K. (2002). Attributions of meanings to terms related to bullying: A comparison between teachers' and pupils' perspectives in Italy. *European Journal of Psychology of Education*, 17(4), 393-406.

Menesini, E. & Fonzi, A. (2003). Pupils' and teachers' definition of bullying. *Eta-evolutiva*, 74(1), 68-75.

Moran, S., Smith, P. K., Thompson, D. & Whitney, I. (1993). Ethnic differences in experiences of bullying: Asian and white children. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 63, 431-440.

Munthe, E. (1989). Scandinavia. In E. Munthe, E. Roland (Eds.) *Bullying: An International Perspective*. London: David Fulton Publishers.

Mynard, H. & Joseph, S. (1997). Bully/victim problems and their association with Eysenck's personality dimensions in 8 to 13 year-olds. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 67, 51-54.

Mynard, H., Joseph, S. & Alexander, J. (2000). Peer-victimisation and posttraumatic stress in adolescents. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 29, 815-821.

Nabuzoka, D. (2003). Teacher ratings and peer nominations of bullying and other behaviours of children with and without learning difficulties. *Educational Psychology*, 23(3), 307-321.

Natvig, G. K., Albrektsen, G. & Qvarnstrom, U. (2001). Psychosomatic symptoms among victims of school bullying. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 6(4), 365-377.

Naylor, P. & Cowie, H. (1999). The effectiveness of peer support systems in challenging school bullying: the perspectives and experiences of teachers and pupils. *Journal of Adolescence*, 22, 467-479.

Neary, A. & Joseph, S. (1994). Peer victimization and its relationship to self-concept and depression among schoolgirls. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 16(1), 183-186.

Neuman, W. L. (2003). *Social Research Methods: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches* (5<sup>th</sup> Edn). London: Allyn & Bacon.

Nicolaides, S., Toda, Y. & Smith, P. K. (2002). Knowledge and attitudes about school bullying in trainee teachers. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 72(1), 105-118.

O'Connell, P., Pepler, D. & Craig, W. (1999). Peer involvement in bullying: insights and challenges for intervention. *Journal of Adolescence*, 22, 437-452.

Oliver, C. & Candappa, M. (2003). *Tackling Bullying: Listening to the views of children and young people*. Research Brief 400. Institute of Education: Thomas Coram Research Unit.

Olweus, D. (1978). *Aggression in the Schools: Bullies and Whipping Boys*. Washington, DC: Hemisphere.

Olweus, D. (1992). Victimization by Peers: Antecedents and long-term outcomes. In K. H. Rubin & J. B. Asendorf (Eds.) *Social Withdrawal, Inhibition and Shyness in Childhood*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Olweus, D. (1993). *Bullying at school: What we know and what we can do*. London: Blackwell.

Olweus, D. (1995). Bullying or peer abuse at school: Facts and intervention. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 4(6), 196-200.

O'Moore, A. (1989). Bullying in Britain and Ireland: An overview. In E. Munthe & E. Roland (Eds.) *Bullying: An International Perspective*. London: David Fulton Publishers.

O'Moore, A. & Hillery, B. (1992). What do teachers need to know. In M. Elliot (Ed.) *Bullying: A practical guide to coping for schools*. Essex: Longman.

O'Moore, A. (1995). Bullying behaviour in children and adolescents in Ireland. *Children and Society, 9*(2), 54-72.

O'Moore, M. (2000). Critical Issues for Teacher Training to Counter Bullying and Victimization in Ireland. *Aggressive Behaviour, 26*, 99-111.

O'Moore, M. & Kirkham, C. (2001). Self-esteem and its relationship to bullying behaviour. *Aggressive Behaviour, 27*(4), 269-283.

Owens, L., Slee, P. & Shute, R. (2000). 'It hurts a hell of a lot': The effects of indirect aggression on teenage girls. *School Psychology International, 21*(4), 359-376.

Pakaslahti, L. & Keltikangas-Jarvinen, L. (2000). Comparison of peer, teacher and self-assessments on adolescent direct and indirect aggression. *Educational Psychology, 20*(2), 177-190.

Parekh, B. (1999). From ethnic groups to new Britons. *Connections, Winter 1999/2000*, 6-9.

Parker, I. (1994). Discourse Analysis. In P. Banister, E. Burman, I. Parker, M. Taylor & C. Tindall (Eds.) *Qualitative Methods in Psychology: A Research Guide*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Parker, J. G. & Asher, S. R. (1987). Peer relations and later personal adjustment: Are low-accepted children at risk? *Psychological Bulletin, 102*(3), 357-389.

Parker, J. G. & Asher, S. R. (1993). Friendship and friendship quality in middle childhood: Links with peer group acceptance and feelings of loneliness and social dissatisfaction. *Developmental Psychology, 29*(4), 611-621.

Parry, G. (1994). Bullying in schools: Some legal issues. *Management in Education*, 8(4), 12-13.

Pateraki, L. & Houndoumadi, A. (2001). Bullying among primary school children in Athens, Greece. *Educational Psychology*, 21(2), 167-175.

Pellegrini, A. D. & Long, J. D. (2002). A longitudinal study of bullying, dominance, and victimization during the transition from primary school through secondary school. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 20, 259-280.

Pepler, D. J. & Craig, W. M. (1995). A peek behind the fence: Naturalistic observations of aggressive children with remote audiovisual recording. *Developmental Psychology*, 31(4), 548-553.

Perry, D. G., Kusel, S. J. & Perry, L. C. (1988). Victims of Peer Aggression. *Developmental Psychology*, 24(6), 807-814.

Perry, D. G., Williard, J. C. & Perry, L. C. (1990). Peers' perceptions of the consequences that victimized children provide aggressors. *Child Development*, 61, 1310-1325.

Pervin, K. & Turner, A. (1994). An investigation into staff and pupils' knowledge, attitudes and beliefs about bullying in an Inner City school. *Pastoral Care*, Sep, 16-24.

Pervin, K. (1995). Parental attitudes and beliefs about bullying: An investigation into parents whose children attend an Inner-City school. *Pastoral Care*, Sep, 14-18.

Peterson, L. & Rigby, K. (1999). Countering bullying at an Australian Secondary school with students as helpers. *Journal of Adolescence*, 22, 481-492.



Pidgeon, N. (1996). Grounded theory: theoretical background. In J. T. E. Richardson. (Ed.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods for Psychology and the Social Sciences*. Leicester: The British Psychological Society.

Pikas, A. (1989). The common concern method for the treatment of mobbing. In E. Roland & E. Munthe (Eds.) *Bullying: An International Perspective*. London: David Fulton Publishers.

Plutchik, R. (1983). *Foundations of Experimental Research* (3<sup>rd</sup> Edn). London: Harper & Row.

Price, S. & Jones, R. A. (2001). Reflections on anti-bullying peer counselling in a comprehensive school. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 17(1), 35-40.

Priest, S. (1989). Some practical approaches to bullying. In E. Roland & E. Munthe (Eds.) *Bullying: An International Perspective*. London: David Fulton Publishers.

Reid, K. (1989). Bullying and persistent school absenteeism. In D. P. Tattum & D. A. Lane (Eds.) *Bullying in Schools*. Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books.

Renshaw, P. D. & Brown, P. J. (1993). Loneliness and middle childhood: Concurrent and longitudinal predictors. *Child Development*, 64, 1271-1284.

Rigby, K. & Bagshaw, D. (2003). Prospects of adolescent students collaborating with teachers in addressing issues of bullying and conflict in schools. *Educational Psychology*, 23(5), 535-546.

Rigby, K. & Slee, P. T. (1990). Victims and bullies in school communities. *Journal of the Australasian Society of Victimology*, 1, 23-28.

Rigby, K. & Slee, P. T. (1991). Bullying among Australian school children: Reported behaviour and attitudes toward victims. *The Journal of Social Psychology, 13*(5), 615-627.

Rigby, K. & Slee, P. T. (1992). Dimensions of interpersonal relation among Australian children and implications for psychological well-being. *The Journal of Social Psychology, 133*(1), 33-42.

Rigby, K. & Cox, I. (1996). The contribution of bullying at school and low self-esteem to acts of delinquency among Australian teenagers. *Personality and Individual Differences, 21*(4), 609-612.

Rigby, K., Cox, I. & Black, G. (1997). Cooperativeness and bully/victim problems among Australian school children. *The Journal of Social Psychology, 137*(3), 357-368.

Rigby, K. (1997). Attitudes and beliefs about bullying among Australian school children. *The Irish Journal of Psychology, 18*(2), 202-220.

Rigby, K. (1998). The relationship between reported health and involvement in bully/victim problems among male and female secondary schoolchildren. *Journal of Health Psychology, 3*(4), 465-476.

Rigby, K. (1999). Peer victimization at school and the health of secondary school students. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 69*, 95-104.

Rigby, K. (2000). Effects of peer victimization in schools and perceive social support on adolescent well-being. *Journal of Adolescence, 23*, 57-68.

Rivers, I. & Smith, P. K. (1994). Types of bullying behaviour and their correlates. *Aggressive Behaviour, 20*, 359-368.

Rivers, I. (2001). Retrospective reports of school bullying: Stability of recall and its implications for research. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 19, 129-142.

Roland, E. (2002). Bullying, depressive symptoms and suicidal thoughts. *Educational Research*, 44(1), 55-67.

Roland, E. & Galloway, D. (2002). Classroom influences on bullying. *Educational Research*, 44(3), 299-312.

Rubin, H. J. & Rubin, I. S. (1995). *Qualitative Interviewing: The art of hearing data*. London: Sage.

Salmivalli, C. (1999). Participant role approach to school bullying: implications for interventions. *Journal of Adolescence*, 22, 453-459.

Salmivalli, C. (2002). Is there an age decline in victimization by peers at school? *Educational Research*, 44(3), 269-277.

Salmivalli, C. & Nieminen, E. (2002). Proactive and reactive aggression among school bullies, victims and bully-victims. *Aggressive Behaviour*, 28, 30-44.

Salmon, G., James, A. & Smith, D. M. (1998). Bullying in schools: Self-reported anxiety, depression and self-esteem in secondary school children. *British Medical Journal*, 317, 924-925.

Schäfer, M. & Smith, P. K. (1996). Teachers' perceptions of play fighting and real fighting in primary school. *Educational Research*, 38(2), 173-181.

Schools face anti-bullying assessment. (2003, 19 November). *The Guardian Education*. Retrieved 8 March 2004 from

<http://education.guardian.co.uk/schools/story/0,5500,1088469,00.html>

Schwartz, D., Dodge, K. A. & Coie, J. D. (1993). The emergence of chronic peer victimization in boys' play groups. *Child Development*, 64, 1755-1772.

Schwartz, D., Dodge, K. A., Petit, G. S. & Bates, J. E. (1997). The early socialization of aggressive victims of bullying. *Child Development*, 68(4), 665-675.

Seibert, S. M. & Ramanaiah, N. V. (1978). On the convergent and discriminant validity of selected measures of aggression in children. *Child Development*, 49, 1274-1276.

Sharp, S., Sellars, A. & Cowie, H. (1994). Time to listen: Setting up a peer-counselling service to help tackle the problem of bullying in schools. *Pastoral Care*, June, 3-6.

Sharp, S. & Smith, P. K. (1994). Understanding Bullying. In S. Sharp, S & P. K. Smith (Eds.) *Tackling Bullying in Your School: A Practical Handbook for Teachers*. London: Routledge.

Sharp, S. & Smith, P. K. (1996). How to tackle school bullying. *Topic*, 16, 1-6.

Sharp, S., Arora, T., Smith, P. K. & Whitney, I. (1994). How to measure bullying in your school. In S. Sharp & P. K. Smith (Eds.) *Tackling Bullying in Your School: A Practical Handbook for Teachers*. London: Routledge.

Sharp, S. & Thompson, D. (1992). Sources of stress: A contrast between pupil perspective and pastoral teachers' perceptions. *School Psychology International*, 13, 229-242.

Sharp, S. & Thompson, D. (1994a). How to establish a whole-school anti-bullying policy. In S. Sharp & P. K. Smith (Eds.) *Tackling Bullying in Your School: A Practical Handbook for Teachers*. London: Routledge.

Sharp, S. & Thompson, D. A. (1994b). The role in whole-school policies in tackling bullying behaviour in schools. In P. K. Smith & S. Sharp (Eds.) *School behaviour and how to cope with it*. London: Routledge.

Sharp, S., Thompson, D & Arora, T. (2000). How long before it hurts? An investigation into long-term bullying. *School Psychology International*, 21(1), 37-46.

Shields, A. & Cicchetti, D. (2001). Parental maltreatment and emotion dysregulation as risk factors for bullying and victimization in middle childhood. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 30(3), 349-363.

Siann, G., Callaghan, M., Lockhart, R. & Rawson, L. (1993). Bullying: teachers' views and school effects. *Educational Studies*, 19(3), 307-321.

Siann, G., Callaghan, M., Glissov, P., Lockhart, R. & Rawson, L. (1994). Who gets bullied? The effect of school, gender and ethnic group. *Educational Research*, 36(2), 123-134.

Singh, G. (2000). Testing times for racial equality. *Connections*, Summer, 6-7.

Slee, P. T. & Rigby, K. (1992). Australian School Children's Self Appraisal of Interpersonal Relations: The Bullying Experience. *Child Psychology and Human Development*, 23(4), 273-282.

Slee, P. T. & Rigby, K. (1993a). Australian school children's self appraisal of interpersonal relations: The bullying experience. *Child Psychiatry and Human Development*, 23(4), 273-282.

Slee P. T. & Rigby, K. (1993b). The relationship of Eysenck's personality factors and self-esteem to bully-victim behaviour in Australian schoolboys. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 14(2), 371-373.

Slee, P. T. (1995a). Bullying in the playground: The impact of inter-personal violence on Australian children's perceptions of their play environment. *Children's Environments*, 12(3), 320-327.

Slee, P. T. (1995b). Peer victimization and its relationship to depression among Australian primary school students. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 18(1), 57-62.

Smith, D. (1998). School ethos: A process for eliciting the views of pupils. *Pastoral Care, March*, 3-7.

Smith, J. A. (1995). Semi-structured interviewing and qualitative analysis. In J. A. Smith., R. Harrè & L. Van Langenhove (Eds.) *Rethinking Methods in Psychology*. London: Sage.

Smith, J. A. (2003). *Qualitative Psychology: A Practical Guide to Research Methods*. London: Sage.

Smith, J. A., Jarman, M. & Osborn, M. (1999). Doing Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis. In M. Murray & K. Chamberlain (Eds.) *Qualitative Health Psychology*. London: Sage.

Smith, P. K. (1991). The Silent Nightmare: Bullying and Victimization in School Peer Groups. *The Psychologist*, 4, 243-248.

Smith, P. K. & Ananiadou, K. (2003). The nature of school bullying and the effectiveness of school-based interventions. *Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies*, 5(2), 189-209.

Smith, P. K. & Levan, S. (1995). Perceptions and experiences of bullying in younger pupils. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 65, 489-500.

Smith, P. K. & Thompson, D. (1991). Dealing with bully/victim problems in the UK. In P. K. Smith & D. Thompson (Eds.) *Practical Approaches to Bullying*. London: David Fulton Publishers.

Smith, P. K. & Sharp, S. (1994). The problem of school bullying. In P. K. Smith & S. Sharp (Eds.) *School Bullying: Insights and Perspectives*. London: Routledge.

Smith, P. K. (1997). Bullying in schools: The UK experience and the Sheffield Anti-Bullying Project. *The Irish Journal of Psychology*, 18(2), 191-201.

Smith, P. K. & Madsen, K. (1997). *A follow-up survey of the DFE Anti-Bullying Pack for schools: Its use, and the development of anti-bullying work in schools*. Norwich: HMSO.

Smith, P. K. & Myron-Wilson, R. (1998). Parenting and school bullying. *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 3(3), 405-417.

Smith, P. K. (1999). England and Wales. In P. K. Smith, Y. Morita, J. Junger-Tas, D. Olweus, R. Catalano & P. Slee (Eds.) *The nature of school bullying: A cross-national perspective*. London: Routledge.

Smith, P. K., Madsen, K. C. & Moody, J. C. (1999). What causes the age decline in reports of being bullied at school? Towards a developmental analysis of risks of being bullied. *Educational Research, 41*(3), 267-285.

Smith P. K. & Brain, P. (2000). Bullying in schools: Lessons from two decades of research. *Aggressive Behaviour, 26*, 1-9.

Smith, P. K. & Shu, S. (2000). What good schools can do about bullying: Findings from a survey in English schools after a decade of research and action. *Childhood, 7*(2), 193-212.

Smith, P. K. (2001). Should we blame the bullies? *The Psychologist, 14*(2), 61.

Smith, P. K., Cowie, H., Olafsson, R. F. & Liefoghe, A. P. D. (2002). Definitions of bullying: A comparison of terms used, and age and gender differences in a fourteen-country international comparison. *Child Development, 73*(4), 1119-1133.

Smith, P. K. & Samara, M. (2003). *Evaluation of the DfES anti-bullying pack*. London: DfES.

Smith, P. K., Singer, M., Hoel, H. & Cooper, C. L. (2003). Victimization in the school and the workplace: Are there any links? *British Journal of Psychology, 94*(2), 175-188.

Smorti, A., Menesini, E. & Smith, P. K. (2003). Parents' definitions of children's bullying in a five-country comparison. *Journal of Cross Cultural Psychology, 34*(4), 417-432)

Solberg, M. E. & Olweus, D. (2003). Prevalence estimation of school bullying with the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire. *Aggressive Behaviour, 29*, 239-268.



Sourander, A., Helstelä, L., Helenius, H. & Piha, J. (2000). Persistence of bullying from childhood to adolescence – a longitudinal 8-year follow-up study. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 24(7), 873-881.

Soutter, A. & McKenzie, A. (2000). The use and effects of anti-bullying and anti-harassment policies in Australian schools. *School Psychology International*, 21(1), 96-105.

Stanley, L. & Arora, T. (1998). Social exclusion amongst adolescent girls: Their self-esteem and coping strategies. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 14(2), 94-100.

Stein, H. L. (1997). Gender differences in emotional empathy of clinical psychology graduate students. *Dissertation Abstracts International: Section B: The Sciences and Engineering*, 57(8B), 5345.

Stephenson, P. & Smith, D. (1989). Bullying in the junior school. In D. A. Tattum & D. A. Lane (Eds.) *Bullying in Schools*. Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books.

Stephenson, P. & Smith, D. (1992). Why some schools don't have bullies. In M. Elliot (Ed.) *Bullying: A practical guide to coping for schools*. Essex: Longman.

Stevens, V., De Bourdeauhuji, I. & Van Oost, P. (2000). Bullying in Flemish schools: An evaluation of anti-bullying intervention in primary and secondary schools. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 70, 195-210.

Stevens, V., De Bourdeauhuji, I. & Van Oost, P. (2002). Relationship of the family environment to children's involvement in bully/victim problems at school. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 31(6), 419-428.

Stockdale, M. S., Hangaduambo, S., Duys, D., Larson, K. & Sarvela, P. D. (2002). Rural Elementary students', parents', and teachers' perceptions of bullying. *American Journal of Health Behaviour, 26(4)*, 266-277.

Storch, E. A., Brassard, M. R. & Masia-Warner, C. L. (2003). The relationship of peer victimization to social anxiety and loneliness in adolescence. *Child Study Journal, 33(1)*, 1-18.

Storch, E. A. & Esposito, L. E. (2003). Peer victimization and posttraumatic stress among children. *Child Study Journal, 33(2)*, 91-98.

Strauss, A. & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*. London: Sage.

Suicide boy's mother blames bullies. (2003, 3 July). *BBC News*. Retrieved 8 March, 2004 from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/merseyside/3041756.stm>

Sutton, J., Smith, P. K. & Swettenham, J. (1999). Social cognition and bullying: Social inadequacy or skilled manipulation? *British Journal of Developmental Psychology, 17*, 435-450.

Sutton, J. & Keogh, E. (2000). Social competition in school: Relationships with bullying, Machiavellianism and personality. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 70*, 443-456.

Sutton, J. & Smith, P. K. (1999). Bullying as a group process: An adaptation of the participant role approach. *Aggressive Behaviour, 25*, 97-111.

Sutton, J. (2001). Bullies: Thugs or thinkers? *The Psychologist, 14(10)*, 530-534.

Sutton, J. (2003). ToM goes to school: Social cognition and social values in bullying. In B. Repacholi & V. Slaughter (Eds.) *Individual differences in theory of mind: Implications for typical and atypical development*. New York: Psychology Press.

Swain, J. (1998). What does bullying really mean? *Educational Research*, 40(3), 358-364.

Tabachnick, B. G. & Fidell, L. S. (2001). *Using Multivariate Statistics* (4<sup>th</sup> Edn). London: Allyn and Bacon.

Tani, F., Greenman, P. S., Schneider, B. H. & Fregoso, M. (2003). Bullying and the Big Five: A study of childhood personality and participant roles in bullying incidents. *School Psychology International*, 24(2), 131-146.

Tattum, D. (1989). Bullying – a problem crying out for attention. *Pastoral Care*, June, 21-25.

Terry, R. & Coie, D. (1991). A comparison of methods for defining sociometric status among children. *Developmental Psychology*, 27(5), 867-880.

Terry, A. A. (1998). Teachers as targets of bullying by their pupils: a study to investigate incidence. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 68, 255-268.

Text message bullies face expulsion. (2002, 12 August). *BBC News*. Retrieved 8 March 2004 from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/2188136.stm>

Thompson, D. & Smith, P. K. (1991). Effective action against bullying – the key problems. In P. K. Smith & D. Thompson (Eds.) *Practical Approaches to Bullying*. London: David Fulton Publishers.

Thompson, D., Whitney, I. & Smith, P. K. (1994). Bullying on children with special needs in mainstream schools. *Support for Learning*, 9(3), 103-106.

Tyler, K. (1998). A comparison of the no-blame approach to bullying and the ecosystemic approach to changing problem behaviour in schools. *Pastoral Care*, March, 26-32.

Van der Meulen, K., Soriano, L., Granizo, L., del Barrio, C. & Korn, S. (2003). Remembering school bullying: Consequences and influences on teachers' performance. *Infancia-y-Aprendizaje*, 26(1), 49-62.

West, A. & Salmon, G. (2000). Bullying and depression: A Case Report. *International Journal of Psychiatry in Clinical Practice*, 4, 73-75.

Whitney, I. & Smith, P. K. (1993). A survey of the nature and extent of bullying in junior/middle and secondary schools. *Educational Research*, 35(1), 3-25.

Whitney, I., Rivers, I., Smith, P. K. & Sharp, S. (1994). The Sheffield Project: methodology and findings. In S. Sharp & P. K. Smith (Eds.) *Tackling Bullying in Your School: A Practical Handbook for Teachers*. London: Routledge.

Williams, K., Chambers, M., Logan, S. & Robinson, D. (1996). Association of common health symptoms with bullying in primary school children. *British Medical Journal*, 313, 17-19.

Willig, C. (2001). *Introducing qualitative research in psychology: Adventures in theory and method*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Woods, S. & Wolke, D. (2003). Does to content of anti-bullying policies inform us about the prevalence of direct and relational bullying behaviour in primary schools? *Educational Psychology*, 23(4), 381-401.

Woolfson, R. (1989). Bullying at school: Part 1 – The nature and extent of the problem. *Health at School*, 4, 152-154.

Yates, C. & Smith, P. K. (1989). Bullying in two English Comprehensive Schools. In E. Munthe & E. Roland (Eds.) *Bullying: An International Perspective*. London: David Fulton Publishers.

Zeedyk, M. S., Gallacher, J., Henderson, M., Hope, G., Husband, B. & Lindsay, K. (2003). Negotiating the transition from primary to secondary school: Perceptions of pupils, parents and teachers. *School Psychology International*, 24(1), 67-79.

Zhang, W., Gong, X., Wang, L., Wu, J. & Zhang, K. (2002). A study of children's attitudes towards bullying. *Psychological Science China*, 25(2), 226-227.

Ziv, A. (1970). Children's behaviour problems as viewed by teachers, psychologists, and children. *Child Development*, 41, 871-879.