Pupil voice - exploring the educational journeys experienced by pupils labelled with Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD)

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I would like to dedicate this piece of work to my Gran, who is the bravest woman I know and has been a constant source of inspiration throughout my life.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ADHD – Attention Deficient Hyperactivity Disorder

ATP – Alternative Training Providers

BESD – Behavioural Emotional and Social Difficulties

CPD – Continued Professional Development

DCSF – Department for Children, Schools and Families

DfE – Department for Education

DfEE – Department for Education and Employment

DfES – Department for Education and Skills

EWO – Educational Welfare Officers

EBD – Emotional Behaviour Difficulties

FAP – Fair Access Protocol

ITT – Initial Teacher Training

KS – Key Stage

LA – Local Authority

LEA – Local Education Authority

OFSTED – Office for Standards in Education

PGCE – Post Graduate Certificate of Education

PRU – Pupil Referral Unit

QTS – Qualified Teacher Status

SA – School Action

SA+ - School Action Plus

SEN – Special Educational Needs

TDA – Training and Development Agency for Schools

TTA – Teacher Training Agency

ABSTRACT

The study aimed to develop innovative and exploratory research strategies for harnessing the pupil voice amongst young people who have received the Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) label. As such the study sought to locate the pupil at the heart of the data collection and to examine how specific turning points can impact upon the educational experiences of young people labelled with BESD. The study attempted to move away from traditional research methods which have worked to silence the voices of this group of young people. In order to achieve this aim the researcher set out on a journey of discovery alongside the pupils to develop participatory and engaging methods of data collection. The study aimed to track the educational journeys experienced by young people who have received the BESD label. In addition to being a vehicle for the voice of the young person the thesis draws together the perspectives of the adults surrounding the pupil namely their parents and teachers.

The results revealed the BESD label to be complex and difficult to operationalise. The current education system continues to remove these "challenging" pupils and this leads to them experiencing extremely chaotic educational journeys. The findings indicate that the current system is not working from the perspective of the pupil, parent or teacher. Encouragingly pupils were able to offer intelligent and insightful responses to the antecedents to BESD development. The study therefore advocates the importance of "hearing" the pupil voice.

It is questionable however the extent to which the study achieved its aim of "true participation". This is due to the position occupied by young people both within society and the confines of their educational journey. The study critically reflects on the challenge of unleashing the pupil voice. It is hoped the findings will provide recommendations for educational professionals and research practitioners engaging and supporting this group of young people.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The study seeks to track the educational journeys experienced by young people who have received the Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) label within the confines of the English education system. The study aims to move away from traditional research methods which have worked to silence the voices of this group of pupils and to develop innovative and novel methods of data collection which will unleash the pupil voice. In addition to hearing the experiences of pupils the study will obtain the perspective of their parents and teachers to gain a grand narrative of the young person's educational journey. The purpose of the following chapter is to introduce the concepts that will be critically explored within the study and provide an overview of the context of the research.

1.1 Background to the study

The number of young people identified as having BESD is continually growing (Cooper, 2006). The debate relating to what constitutes BESD, how young people labelled with BESD should be educated and, indeed, where these young people should be educated is still a cause for intense debate amongst researchers (see Cole et al., 1998; Daniels & Cole, 2002; Cole & Visser, 1999). Since 1944 the terminology employed within Government publications to describe young people with behavioural difficulties has included: maladjusted, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (EBD) and BESD (Frederickson & Cline, 2009). A conspectus of the current literature base also highlights that BESD is an imprecise term and one that has evolved and altered overtime (Cole & Visser, 2005).

The literature suggests that the causal factors of BESD are unclear and it appears that a number of factors, such as home, school and societal issues could be operating to cause BESD. Research has indicated that teachers consider parents and home circumstances to be the major cause of pupil misbehaviour in schools (Croll & Moses, 1985; DfES, 1989; Maras, 1996; Miller, 1995). The literature also highlights that parents agree with teachers in that certain adverse home circumstances can be a major cause of difficult pupil behaviour in schools. However parents also felt that certain features of teachers' behaviour, especially perceptions of unfairness, are an equally major cause of pupil disruption (Miller et al., 2002). Through the process of labelling young people as "challenging" the teacher can be seen to be exacerbating the way pupils act and in extreme cases this can lead to problems of disaffection and disrespect amongst this population (Riley, 2004). Teachers therefore appear

to act as a catalyst to the development of BESD in some young people. This results in leading them to become disenfranchised from the education system (Riley, 2004).

Within the literature a consistent theme that is evident is the difficulties Government, local authorities and schools face in identifying and providing effective interventions (Ofsted, 1999). Research suggests that mainstream schools are becoming increasingly reluctant to admit young people who have received the BESD label (Farrell & Polat, 2003). Questions have also been raised as to where such young people are best placed and what will happen to them if they become disengaged from education (Ofsted, 2007). Schools it would seem are adopting a utilitarian approach to the problem of dealing with the "challenging" pupil (Ellis, Tod & Graham-Matheson, 2008). Here they can be seen to be justifying the removal of the disruptive pupil for the greater good of the school. This has led to pupils experiencing extremely chaotic educational journeys, involving them encountering an ad hoc mixture of educational provisions (Gazaley, 2010; Pirrie et al., 2011). In addition, the literature suggests that young people labelled with BESD are more likely to be excluded from school (Jull, 2008) and are more likely to go missing from education (Visser et al., 2005). A significant aspect of the study will be to highlight the experiences of young people labelled with BESD in terms of provision and support. The thesis will examine the position occupied by this group of pupils within the confines of their educational journey. It seeks to highlight that within all these processes the voices of young people are being ignored. Young people are seldom afforded the opportunity to contribute to discussions surrounding their educational journey despite the introduction of the children's rights agenda (UNCRC, 1989).

Since the late 1980s there has been an increasing interest in listening to what children and young people have to say (O'Kane, 2008). In recent years pupil voice has been employed widely within education literature and its key principles of promoting pupil consultation and participation are evident in official policy and guidance throughout the UK (Flutter, 2007). Schools have been encouraged to consult pupils in both organisational and pedagogic decision making. Although such projects are common in many mainstream schools these initiatives are much more challenging to put into practice in a provision for pupils who have received the BESD label (Sellman, 2009).

Despite Government rhetoric and a growing concern about young people at risk of becoming excluded from education these pupils are given few if any opportunities to actually join this debate. They are not being given the opportunity to express their views on what the education system should provide them with (Thomas, 2007). Ruddock et al. (1996) would suggest that in a situation such as this it is vital that all voices should be heard, not just those

of the able and articulate. It is anticipated, therefore, that the current study will be vital in providing young people labelled with BESD an opportunity to express their views and to discuss their educational experiences. The study will also enable a voice to be given to parents and professionals with regard to the issues surrounding BESD.

1.2 Overview of the study

The study seeks to place the pupil at the heart of the research process. Traditionally research within this field has tended to be based on the adult agenda and for many years young people have been considered to be objects of the research process (Brownlie, 2009; Bagnoli & Clark, 2010). Within this world it is adults who determine what questions will be asked and how they are to be answered. Encouragingly there is a growing interest in the employment of participatory methods and consulting young people (Coad & Lewis, 2004; Dockett & Perry, 2007; O'Kane, 2008). Studies have demonstrated that these young people do have a desire to be heard (Fielding, 2001; Ruddock & Flutter, 2004; Wise, 1997; Davies, 2005). In light of this during the initial stages of the thesis a considerable amount of time was spent listening to pupils. Discussions were held with a range of young people to determine how they would like to be heard and the topics they would like to explore. Throughout the study an array of potential research methods were critically explored with the pupils. It was intended that the researcher would go on a journey of discovery alongside the young people. It was therefore considered essential for the approach adopted to be flexible to enable the pupil voice to dominate over the voice of the researcher.

However mindful of the position young people occupy, both within their educational journeys and wider society there is a need to be cautious. Indeed researchers acknowledge there are a number of mechanisms that can work to silence the pupil voice such as gatekeepers (David et al. 2001; Denscombe & Aubrook, 1992; James, 1993; Mayall, 1996; Pole et al., 1999). In many ways despite the rhetoric of voice and participation within both research and Government legislation adults continue to make decisions on behalf of the young person (May, 2005). In light of these concerns, the notions of pupil voice and participation will be critically explored throughout the thesis.

1.3 Aims of the research

The aims of the study are to:
- Critically examine how BESD are defined, identified and operationalised for young people within the English education system;
- Explore the perceptions of young people who have been identified as having BESD by employing novel and innovation data collection techniques;

- Produce peer-generated research with young people who have been identified as having BESD;
- Identify models of good practice and effective provision for young people labelled with BESD by seeking the perspectives of teachers, parents and pupils and;
- Explore and map the antecedents of "challenging" behaviour from the perspective of the pupil, the parent and the teacher.

1.4 Key concepts

It has been determined that four key concepts have relevance for the study. These are detailed below;

The BESD label

The study seeks to critically examine how the BESD label is operationalised within the education system. The literature makes it clear that the employment of labels is a complex and contentious issue (Frederickson & Cline, 2002).

For the purposes of the current study it is considered important to refer to these pupils as "labelled with BESD" and "challenging". This is due to the uncertainties surrounding this label. It is not an officially recognised medical diagnosis and it would seem it can be attached to a wide variety of young people based simply on the subjective judgments of the teacher (Grieve, 2009; Visser & Stokes, 2003, Male, 2003). In addition, it is evident that these pupils are considered to present a "challenge" to educators. The study explores the position of the pupil, parent and teacher within this labelling process to compare the experiences of those who pursue the label to those who deny the existence of a "problem".

Educational journeys

A key aspect of the study is to critically explore the educational journeys experienced by this group of pupils. Analysis of the research base indicates that these pupils are subject to an education system which seeks to remove them (Armstrong, 2005; Tomlinson, 2005; Adams, 2008). Despite the notion of inclusion being a consistent feature of the education system for over 40 years, these young people remain on the periphery of mainstream schooling (Armstrong, 2005; Tomlinson, 2005; Adams, 2008). It is hoped that by examining the educational trajectories of pupils labelled with BESD the study will be able to identify specific turning points which have impacted on their educational experiences. The study will critically examine the range of provision available to this group of young people to identify models of good practice.

Emerging culture of blame

An overriding theme throughout the study will be the emerging culture of blame. It has been asserted that the labels we attach to this group of pupils are in a constant state of flux (Frederickson & Cline, 2009). It would seem that as the labels evolve so does the placement of blame. The study will demonstrate that there has been a constant shifting of blame which began with the child. This then moved to explore the family and school environment and now includes wider societal issues. The study aims to critically explore what pupils, parents and teachers consider to be the main antecedents leading to young people displaying "challenging" behaviour.

Pupil voice

As with the BESD label, the notion of pupil voice is a complex and multifaceted concept. The study will critically reflect on the researcher's experiences of adopting this approach. (As will become clear within the following chapters conducting pupil voice research is by no means a straight-forward nor an easy task.) Researchers adopting this approach will need to critically reflect on a range of ethical issues including the level of participation they are affording young people (Hart, 1992), the location of the study (Wise, 1998), the pupils right to say no (Groundwater-Smith, 2007), the power imbalance that occurs between the adult and the young person and issues around confidentiality and anonymity (Groundwater-Smith, 2007). All of these issues will be critically explored throughout the thesis. The study seeks to redress some of the inherent power imbalances within pupil voice research to ensure the voice of the young person is heard.

The chapter now turns to detail how the key concepts outlined above will be explored and defined within the study.

1.5 Overview of chapters

The following section provides an overview of the layout of the thesis and further details the themes which will be critically explored;

Chapter Two: From maladjusted to BESD

This chapter seeks to critically explore the employment of labels to define and categorise this group of young people. The Review will critically reflect on how these labels have evolved throughout the history of education. To demonstrate this evolution, the chapter will be divided into three key phases of educational history. Within this chapter the emerging

culture of blame will also be introduced. Seemingly as the labels employed change so does the placement of blame. It will be argued however that in reality very little changes. Rather, this is simply the recycling of the same issues that have been with us for well over a century (Kaufmann, 2001).

Chapter Three: Educating the "challenging" pupil

The chapter will critically reflect on the position occupied by the pupil, parent and teacher within the confines of the current English education system. A major consideration of the study is to track the educational journeys experienced by pupils who have received the BESD label. It will be argued the system works to remove these pupils (Armstrong, 2005; Tomlinson, 2005; Adams, 2008). Here schools can be seen to be adopting a utilitarian approach by removing a "challenging" pupil for the greater good of the school (Ellis, Tod & Graham-Matheson, 2008). Once removed from a mainstream setting the pupils will experience one of two potential pathways. They will either be, segregated through the Special Educational Needs (SEN) statementing process and placed in a special school or, a "dump and hope" model will be employed where young people will be placed in a variety of alternative provisions (Booth, 1996).

Evidence from the literature indicates that parents continue to be placed in position of blame and will even be punished for their child's behaviour in the classroom (Sheppard, 2011; Blacktop and Blyth, 1999; Zhang, 2004). In addition, it will be argued throughout the study that teachers will be constrained by external pressures placed upon them such as the Government agenda and how this can inhibit their ability to support this group of young people (Cooper, 2004; Hodkinson, 2011).

Chapter Four: Are we listening? The reality and rhetoric of pupil voice

The purpose of the study is to provide opportunities for young people to be heard. Therefore it was considered essential to examine the experiences of young people in terms of having a voice. This chapter will critically review how the concept of pupil voice has been translated into educational policy and legislation. The position of young people is observed to be changing with growing emphasis being placed on children's rights (UNCRC, 1989). However due to the position occupied by young people it is questionable what impact this will have on the lived experiences of pupils. In addition, the chapter will critically reflect on how the concept of pupil voice is operationalised within BESD studies. Finally this chapter will critically examine some of the contentions surrounding the concept of pupil voice.

Chapter Five: Methodology

This chapter provides an overview of the methodological approaches employed for the purposes of the study. It will detail the researcher's journey of discovery into the realm of pupil voice research. The chapter will also critically reflect on the data collection techniques adopted and the methods of analysis employed to unleash the pupil voice.

The results section of the study will be divided into three chapters. Each chapter will place pupils at the heart of the research findings with the voices of parents and teachers interwoven to build the grand narrative. To reflect the importance being placed on the pupil's voice all the quotes provided by the pupils will be in bold print.

Chapter Six: The BESD label

The first chapter in the results section examines how pupils, parents and teachers experience the labelling process. It was found that teachers do not have a shared understanding of the BESD label. The teachers discuss the dilemmas they encounter in determining whether a pupil has BESD or is simply being naughty.

The pupils and parents generally fell into two categories those who pursued the BESD label and those who denied they had a "problem". Worryingly evidence from the study suggests that the SEN system is no longer fit for purpose which means that pupils are not having their educational needs met. The chapter also reflects on the medicalisation of behaviour.

Chapter Seven: From pillar to post

This chapter provides an insight into the educational journeys experienced by this group of pupils. The findings support the claims made within the literature that these pupils do provide a "challenge" to educators. All but one of the pupils had been removed from a mainstream setting through the process of exclusion. This led to the majority of pupils experiencing an ad hoc mixture of provision. The chapter compares the two pathways likely to be experienced by pupils; that of segregation and the alternative "dump and hope" model. In addition, the findings suggest that schools will adopt a utilitarian approach to the "challenging" pupil and will employ a variety of mechanisms (sometimes illegal) to remove these "unwanted" pupils.

Chapter Eight: Culture of blame

The final chapter of the results portion critically examines the emerging culture of blame to explore what pupils, parents and teachers consider being the main antecedents to the development of BESD. It was found that teachers blame parent ineptitude and parents

blame teachers for not understanding their child's needs. This suggests that the cycle of mutual blame remains a prominent feature of the education system (Miller, 1994). In addition, both teachers and parents suggest that young people were to blame as there remains a stigma attached to the BESD label. It was suggested that pupils can control their behaviour and rather than having a "problem" will simply push the boundaries for fun.

Within this emerging culture of blame there also appears to be a backlash towards the children's rights agenda. Interestingly and of great significance for a study of this nature was the finding that pupils were willing and able to reflect on the behaviours they display unlike the adults surrounding them. The pupils were willing to take responsibility for their actions rather than shifting the placement of blame.

Chapter Nine: Conclusions and recommendations

The final chapter will draw together the main conclusions from the study to provide an overview of the key concepts and how these have developed throughout the thesis. Within this chapter key recommendations will be made. Finally the chapter will advocate the importance of listening to young people as they are able to offer powerful insights into their own educational journeys.

In summary, it is evident that BESD is a fluid concept and one that is difficult to define. The numbers of young people identified as having BESD is continually growing and it is clear that both societal and cultural factors seem to have an impact on this (Cooper, 2006). Despite the continued rhetoric of inclusion these pupils remain on the outskirts of mainstream schooling (Armstrong, 2005; Tomlinson, 2005; Adams, 2008). It is clear that pupils who have received the BESD label do present a "challenge" to educators. A consistent theme throughout the history of education has been the shifting of blame and the cycle of mutual blame (Miller, 1994) remains a prominent feature of the education system. It is suggested that within all these processes the voice of the pupil will be silenced. This issue highlights the need for a study which strives to be different by developing novel and innovative methods of data collection to unleash the pupil voice. The study begins however with a critical examination of the labelling process. It is intended that the following chapter will provide a background to the current study.

CHAPTER TWO: FROM MALADJUSTED TO BESD

The concept of Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) is by no means a new phenomenon. It has been suggested that 'current issues and trends seem only to be a recycling of those that have been with us for well over a century' (Kauffman, 2001, p. 96). Concerns about "unruly and difficult" young people have always been an aspect of the human condition therefore a detailed analysis of this topic could begin almost anywhere in recorded time (Cooper, 1999). Indeed, it may be observed that in the early Victorian era young people were presenting with such behaviours within society and a range of provision was being made available (Cole, 1989). For the purposes of the study however the 1944 Education Act will provide the departure point for a critical exploration of the literature base. This point is chosen because this Act placed a duty on Local Authorities (LAs) to ensure educational provision was made available for "difficult" pupils (Galloway & Goodwin, 1987). This group of pupils have been a consistent feature of the classroom throughout educational history. However our understanding of "challenging" pupils has continually evolved. The Review then, will critically examine the employment of labels to describe young people identified as having a behaviour problem. It will be argued that these labels will reflect adult ideology and as such are framed within the political agenda of the day. The Review will be divided into three key phases of the history of education. Within each of these sections the policy context will be outlined, the terms employed to describe young people will be critically defined and finally the position of blame will be critically explored.

One of the main aims of the study is to consider the perceptions of the pupil's teachers and parents. In light of this, the review will seek to demonstrate how BESD are defined, identified and operationalised for young people within the English education system. The Review will focus on three key periods of educational history to demonstrate how these labels are in a constant state of flux and mirror the common adult ideology. The Review seeks to demonstrate how there is a culture of blame emerging which started with the young person and has moved to include a young person's family background, school environment and more recently wider societal factors, such as poverty. The Review will begin by critically examining the employment of labels to highlight how this process impacts on a young person's educational experience.

2.1 BESD – what is in a name?

The use of labels to describe young people deemed to have BESD has been a focus of concern and interest for many educational researchers (Kelly & Norwich, 2004; Thomas

2005; Tobbell & Lawthom, 2005). The BESD label highlights within its subtext that behavioural difficulties 'lie in deficit and deviance in the child' (Thomas, 2005, p. 61). It has been suggested that having a label "explains away" the problem, which can lead to teachers, parents and others believing that there is nothing they can do or could have done to prevent the young person developing BESD (Lauchlan & Boyle, 2007). If the teacher feels it is out of their control they will not change the pupil's educational environment (Lauchlan & Boyle, 2007). Educational professionals have a longstanding history of categorising their pupils (Cooper, 1997). The review will consider why pupils, parents and teachers continue to pursue the BESD label and the potential implications of receiving the label.

Despite numerous authors (such as Thomas, 2005; Lauchlan & Boyle, 2007) highlighting the negative impact of labelling young people with BESD, there are perceived benefits to receiving this label. One of the major "conditions" associated with BESD is ADHD, with manifestations of ADHD being closely linked to forms of persistent disruptive behaviour (for example BESD) (Watling, 2004). Adams (2008) suggests that both parents and teachers will actively seek some form of diagnosis for "problem" children. For parents it provides the extenuating circumstances which guarantees acceptance to the right educational provision and allows teachers to reconcile the increasing tensions between performance and inclusion (Adams, 2008). The literature on "ADHD" frequently acknowledges that one of the main benefits for parents of receiving a formal diagnosis for their child is they are less likely to feel blamed by the school for their child's actions and behaviours (Cooper, 2005). For a parent whose child is deemed "challengingf" they will often feel responsible. When this occurs the diagnosis can be seen as a 'label of forgiveness' (Lloyd & Norris, 1999). There are also potential benefits to receiving a label for young people themselves. For example when a young person is identified as having BESD they become entitled to legal rights bestowed by legislation for pupils with SEN (Visser & Stokes, 2003).

Notwithstanding the alleged benefits outlined above, some researchers have expressed concerns regarding the labelling of young people. Amongst these concerns is the notion of the stigma that is attached to young people once they have been given this label (Galloway et al., 1994; Jones, 2003). This is especially true for pupils identified as having behavioural difficulties. As it has been suggested these young people will be stigmatised in a way those who have "learning difficulties" are not (Clough et al., 2005). "Blame" will not be bestowed upon those who have Down's Syndrome or cerebral palsy yet for those pupils identified with BESD considerable assumptions will be made about them (Clough et al., 2005). They are viewed as 'manipulative, capable of controlling their actions and unwilling to comply with the work orientation of the school' (Clough et al., 2005, p. 11). As will become clear in the following chapter the terms that surround challenging behaviour are unclear, not least

because BESD is not an officially recognised medical diagnosis. The ambiguous nature of the "condition" may lead to it being perceived as having less status than other learning difficulties.

Once a young person has been identified as having BESD they are taken down a path that separates them, they become trapped in a "cocoon of professional help" (Thomas, 2005, p. 67). There is the danger that having a label may lead to teachers having lowered expectations of the pupil's educational ability (Lauchlan & Boyle, 2007). Thus labels can have a detrimental impact on young people in terms of how they are perceived and treated by adults. Within the process of a pupil receiving the BESD label, they are silenced by adults who consider them to be "helpless" and in need of support (Thomas, 2005). Rarely will the perspectives of the young person themselves be taken into account. This is further illustrated by Thomas (2005, p. 71) in the following quote;

> The process of understanding children to be not only irrational but also emotionally disturbed effectively condemns them to voicelessness. Being seen as irrational (rather than simply stupid) is particularly damning, for it means that you are deemed unworthy even of consultation about what is in your best interests.

Professionals, then, it would seem construct perceptions of how young people labelled with BESD are to be understood. The young person is inevitably marginalised as they became deemed unfit to socialise with their peers (Tobbell & Lawthom, 2005; Sutcliffe & Simons, 1993; Gillman; Heyman & Swain, 2000). The study recognises that "challenging" pupils will be removed from mainstream educational settings due to the behaviours they display in the classroom. These pupils are deemed to simply not fit with the educational agenda and despite the rhetoric of inclusion remain on the outskirts of mainstream education. Chapter three (see pg. 41) will critically examine the position of these pupils within the current education system. Here it will be argued that the labels we attach to young people will determine their educational trajectory. It is adults who will be responsible for determining how these young people will be understood. It can be argued therefore the support young people receive will to some extent depend on the teacher and the ethos of the school they attend.

Seemingly labels are somewhat of a double-edged sword, young people require the label in order to access specialist support however once they have obtained the BESD label some adults will have negative perceptions of them. This can lead to them being removed from mainstream education (Tobbell & Lawthom, 2005; Sutcliffe & Simons, 1993; Gillman, Heyman & Swain, 2000). Worryingly, pupils may obtain the label yet they are not able to access additional educational support (Lauchlan & Boyle, 2007). The labels that will be

attached to this group of pupils have continually evolved throughout the history of education. The next section moves to analyse how the labels are framed in terms of definitions and where emphasis has been placed in relation to blame. The review will demonstrate how the labels employed have been in a constant state of flux and this reflects the political agenda of the day. In view of the study's defined departure point the review now turns to consider the term "maladjusted" as designated in the 1944 Education Act (DfE, 1944).

2.2 Maladjusted 1944 – 1978

"Maladjusted" was one of the earliest labels attached to this group of pupils. Young people who received this label were deemed to be "different". As such these young people were segregated and placed in special forms of educational provision as they did not fit with what was considered "normal". At this time a significant historical event occurred, the Second World War, this led to a change in how young people were to be perceived.

2.2.1 Policy Context - segregation

The 1944 Education Act was one of a number of measures aimed at reducing the social and economic deprivation which had been brought about by the Second World War (Cooper, 1999). This "reconstructivist" policy hoped to modernise society through education (Bartlett & Burton, 2012). The act placed responsibility on Local Authorities (LAs) to provide education which reflected the pupil's age, ability and aptitude (Hodkinson & Vickerman, 2009). Furthermore the Act observed pupils as individuals with children being in the care of the school during the day. Here schools were to be responsible for making provision for hot school meals and medical inspections. To some extent the state was observed to be in loco parentis (Gray, 2007). The meaning of this term is "in place of parent" this highlights the importance placed upon the role of the education system in providing support to young people. The Act observed as a "great political moment" (Bartlett & Burton, 2007, p.195) also ushered in a period where people who were considered to be impaired were labelled as handicapped and singled out within the new education system. Through this Act 11 categories of handicap were established which included the term "maladjusted". At this time, then, young people who displayed behaviour difficulties would receive this label. These categories led to young people being labelled and enrolled in special schools. Unfortunately once this had occurred they did not have the opportunity to be re-integrated into mainstream schools (Cole, 2005). Once a young person had been identified as being "maladjusted" it

was difficult if not impossible for a child to lose this label (Hodkinson & Vickerman, 2009). The Review seeks to now demonstrate how these young people were to be understood.

2.2.2 Definition

The 1944 Education Act (DfE, 1944) introduced the term "maladjusted" to describe young people who demonstrated evidence of "psychological disturbance or emotional instability". More specifically "The Handicapped Pupils and School Health Service Regulations" (Ministry of Education, 1945) described maladjusted pupils as those "who require special educational treatment in order to affect their personal, social and educational maladjustment" (p. 15).

The definitions have been criticised by Galloway et al. (1982) for being unhelpful since the terms "emotional instability" and "psychiatric disturbance" need as much explanation as the term "maladjustment". Within this context the term "maladjusted" suggests that a young person is insufficiently adapted to meet the demands placed upon them within the school environment (Bowers, 2005). The implication here is that it is the young person who has the "problem". The inclusion of "maladjusted" pupils within this Act observes the introduction of the medical model (see section 2.2.3) into educational policy. At this time if a pupil was designated as being "maladjusted" it became a clinical decision whether they were deemed fit to attend school and "treatment" would be based on therapeutic rather than educational needs (Jones, 2003). Here, then, emphasis would be placed on "treating" the pupil as it was believed possible to change the behaviours displayed by young people.

2.2.3 Blame – Within Child

Traditionally, special education has adopted a medical view of difference which has been based on a diagnosis of individual defect (Carrington, 1999). Within this difference will be defined as deviance from the "norm" (Rogers, 2003). The medical model has had a long and influential history within BESD literature (Hodkinson & Vickerman, 2009). Within this framework disruptive or challenging behaviour was observed as having an underlying psychopathology, which meant that in practical terms the child was referred or enrolled in a special school which provided a therapeutic environment (Jones, 2003). It is the young person who is cited as being the "problem". Little or no consideration is given to the impact wider social factors could have in being the catalyst which led to them displaying inappropriate behaviour. This perspective then 'derives from an interpretative stance toward

the human condition that is devoid of any consideration of the context in which the symptoms occur' (Levine, 1997, p. 199).

As highlighted above the definitions employed to describe "maladjusted" young people are unclear. The 1955 Underwood Report (HMSO, 1955, p. 22) acknowledged the confusion that surrounded this term and as such offered the following alternative definition;

> a child may be regarded as maladjusted who is developing in ways that have a bad effect on himself or his fellows, and cannot without help be remedied by his parents, teachers and the other adults ordinarily in contact with him

This definition demonstrates a growing awareness of the role adults can play in supporting young people who present with challenging behaviour. During this time there was also a growing recognition of the importance of a young person's educational placement and ensuring this was carefully matched to meet their needs. Unfortunately however this was seldom to be achieved with the majority of schools for those identified as being maladjusted having to respond to a diverse and ill-defined client group (Cole, 2005).

Despite the increasing concern regarding the impact a pupil's social environment can have on the development of behaviour problems it was not until the late 1960s that the orthodoxy of segregation created by the 1944 Act was subject to radical challenge (Hodkinson & Vickerman, 2009). Throughout the 1970s there was growing pressure on the Government from both parents and educational professionals to investigate the standards of provision for children with additional needs (Gibson and Blandford, 2005). Strong criticisms of the medical model of maladjustment were raised in the 1970s (Laslett, 1983). Amongst these criticisms was the belief that the term "maladjustment" was used as a mechanism for removing "disturbing" pupils from the mainstream school on the pretext or misconception that these young people were "disturbed" (Galloway & Goodwin, 1987). These major criticisms were crystallised within the Warnock Report (DfEE, 1978) which moved away from the medical model of "maladjustment" which the committee felt could "stigmatise a child unnecessarily" (p. 44). They also stressed the importance of considering the child's circumstances, for example "the underlying problems may derive from or be influenced by the regime and relationships in schools and many children may simply be reacting to those" (p. 221). A survey by Rutter et al. (1979) supports this argument. This study claimed to discover school differences in the incidence of disruptive behaviour which could only be put down to the ethos of the school. It became evident then that there was a need to move away from focussing on the young person and examine the wider social factors which impact upon pupil behaviour. Mindful of the changes that were occurring within wider society the Government sought to review how challenging behaviour was defined within the context of

educational policy. There was to be a growing emphasis on the wider circumstances surrounding the pupil including their home environment and educational setting.

2.3 Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (EBD) 1978 – 2001

The late 20th Century observed a radical reconceptualisation of how "difficult" young people were to be understood. As outlined earlier in the review this process began with the intervention of Mary Warnock in 1978. Prior to the ideology introduced in the Warnock Report (DfEE, 1978), the policy towards disruptive pupils had been one of segregation. It is during this time that we see the emergence of the inclusion versus exclusion debate.

2.3.1 Policy Context – Inclusion vs. Exclusion

2.3.1(i) Warnock Report 1978

During the early 1970s there was a growing concern for the "handicapped" population within Britain (Karagianis & Nesbit, 1981). In response to this pressure the Government established a committee under the chair of Mary Warnock to examine educational provision for children with additional needs (Evans, 1995; Hodkinson, 2010). The central argument of the Report being that young people who have physical or other disabilities (including maladjusted children) should wherever possible be educated in mainstream schools (Cooper, 1999). The Report did however stipulate that children with severe emotional or behavioural disorders should be educated in special schools (Karagianis & Nesbit, 1981). It is interesting to pause to consider this last point as it demonstrates that at this time pupils who displayed challenging behaviours continued to be perceived differently and thus are deemed unworthy of inclusion. Within the Report the pathologising categorical system (Cooper, 1999; Karagianis & Nesbit, 1981) was replaced with SEN. The "maladjusted" label came under the broad category of "handicapped". However at this time the term "handicapped" was more commonly associated with physical disabilities rather than learning difficulties. Furthermore with regard to this group of young people the term "handicapped" was to be replaced by the term "children with learning difficulties". This was to be used to describe both children who were categorised as "educationally subnormal" and those who presented with a variety of educational difficulties (Karagianis & Nesbit, 1981). The Report warned against the employment of labels such as "maladjusted" to describe pupils as it was felt this could lead to a young person being stigmatised. However it is important to note that it took over three years to operationalise some of the findings of the Report into educational policy.

Furthermore although it was suggested that labels of any kind should be avoided, the term "maladjusted" was simply replaced by another label namely; Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (EBD) (Norwich, 1999).

During the 1970s positive moves forward were made in terms of the perception of the "challenging" pupil. However with the introduction of Margaret Thatcher's New Right administration there was to be a return to these young people being deemed "undesirable". Initiated perhaps by the 1988 Educational Reform Act (DfE, 1988) it was the needs of industry that were placed at the heart of the education process. This was often to be at the expense of the needs of individual pupils (Weiner, 1997). In stark contrast to the 1944 Education Act which concerned itself with building a personal and social approach to education, the 1988 Act was grounded in neoliberal political ideology (Gray, 2007). The 1988 Education Reform Act introduced a National Curriculum and subsequent League Tables which compared the academic results of schools. These initiatives left schools under increasing pressure to follow a more prescribed curriculum and improve academic results (Gray, 2007). Emphasis was now to be placed on external audiences rather than the pupil (Gray, 2007). This rationalist approach, it seemed had the potential to contribute to a reduced tolerance of "problem behaviour" in school (Adams, 2008; Tobbell & Lawthom, 2005). The Government needed to reconsider how the disruptive pupil was to be educated.

3.1.4 Elton Report 1989

Responding to both public and professional concerns the Government of the day commissioned the Elton Report (1989) to explore how the training of teachers could be improved so that they might be better prepared to tackle the challenging behaviour of pupils in the classroom (Hanko, 1989; Pumfrey, 2000). The Report also highlighted the need for partnership between staff and students. This was considered a major shift in the dominant paradigm underlying school discipline as pupil behaviour was seemingly no longer to be an issue of control (Rowe, 2006).

Careful examination of the literature makes clear that the ideology set out in Government legislation simply did not come to fruition. The Elton Report highlighted the same lack of teacher training opportunities that had been evidenced by Warnock over 10 years previously. Focus continued to be placed on academic results which left little room for the integration of young people labelled with EBD (Hanko, 2003). This highlights how perceptions and attitudes towards "inappropriate" behaviour were a reflection of the political agenda of the day. A school's willingness to engage the challenging pupils would to some

extent become dependent on the ethos of the head teacher (Hanko, 2003). The study will argue that the external pressures placed on teachers continue to inhibit their ability to support "challenging" pupils (see chapter three, pg. 41). With this in mind the review turns to critically explore the impact the change in Government that occurred in 1997 had on the educational journey of the "challenging" pupil.

3.1.6 New Labour

New Labour inherited an education system which was based on a market forces agenda. The ideal of equality of opportunity was again consigned to mere rhetoric as New Labour policy sought the commodification of education. With focus placed on performance and league tables schools were encouraged to compete to recruit students. They concentrated on attracting the "easiest" and "cheapest" to teach (Ball, 2004, p. 6). Indeed it is suggested that pre-1997 exclusionary practices remained largely untouched and unmodified (Ball, 1999). Within this framework the pupil who had received the BESD label continued to be removed from mainstream settings as they were deemed as "undesirable".

The greater good of the economy continued to be perceived as being more important than the needs of the individual. The effect of this being the "learner" effectively becomes a "worker in waiting" acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully participate in the commercial world (Tomlinson, 2001). Those who do not fit in with this agenda such as pupils who display challenging behaviour were rejected or removed as they potentially offer the school no financial or exam performance gain (Adams, 2008). For schools emphasis continued to be placed on the production of "docile bodies" that conformed to expected disciplinary norms (Foucault, 1979). Under the provider-client split, schools and teachers were encouraged to view pupils as objects of the education system which led them to be valued according to their commercial worth (Gewirtz, 2002). Within New Labour's social exclusion agenda (DfEE, 1997a) emphasis continued to be placed upon the improvement of "standards" and the accountability of school. Those pupils designated as having a behavioural problem were just not considered a priority. The focus was placed upon failing schools rather than the individual needs of the pupil (Armstrong, 2005). Evidently, despite the policy seeking to develop more inclusive practices those labelled as "challenging" continued to be removed. In addition, there remained a focus on deficiencies lying within the pupil. It was the pupil who continued to be identified as the "problem". By attributing blame to the young person the school alleviates themselves of any responsibility as it is the pupil who is failing rather than the school system failing the pupil.

2.3.2 Definition

The Review will now consider the impact the political agenda had on how this group of pupils was to be defined. The study seeks to demonstrate that how these young people will be perceived will be determined by adult ideology. The section above has highlighted the evolving political agenda towards pupils who had been labelled with EBD. Clearly, this group of pupils were not considered a priority for either the Conservative or Labour Governments which may explain why it took over 10 years for the labels employed to describe this group of pupils to be reviewed. After Warnock's reconceptualisation the categorisation of young people with behaviour difficulties was revisited within the Elton Report 1989 (DES, 1989). Here young people were identified as having EBD when they showed "severe and persistent behaviour problems as a result of emotional, psychological or neurological disturbance such that their needs cannot be met in an ordinary school" (p. 42). This definition is of interest as for the first time the notion of emotional difficulties was added to the symptomology of this condition. Problematically, however, although the Elton Report made many recommendations as to the education of young people labelled with EBD its defining characteristics as well as many of its recommendations were ignored (Hanko, 2003). It is interesting to note that the Elton Committee (DES, 1989) also commissioned research which aimed to explore pupil behaviour in the classroom. Despite the researchers having numerous opportunities to engage with both the teachers and the pupils emotions, they only touched on the observable behaviours which teachers found "difficult" to deal with such as pupils interrupting lessons and verbally abusing other pupils. It has been suggested that this report focused on the "B" not the "E" of EBD (Bowers, 2005).

Within the SEN Code of Practice (DfES, 2001) young people who present with EBD are regarded as having learning difficulties in that they are deemed to be experiencing barriers which lead them to have considerably increased difficulty in learning when compared to other pupils of their age (Frederickson & Cline, 2002). Although there has been a change in the name, there continues to be little consideration given to the young person's environment and the impact this can have (Wearmouth, 1999). An example of how young people were to be defined was provided by the Code of Practice (DfES, 2001, p. 83). Although it does not give a clear definition of EBD it suggests these are indicated by;

> Clear, recorded examples of withdrawn or disruptive behaviour; a marked and persistent inability to concentrate; signs that the child experiences considerable frustration or distress in relation to their learning difficulties; difficulties in establishing and maintaining balanced relationships with their fellow pupils or with adults; and any other evidence of a significant delay in the development of life and social skills.

As with the "maladjusted" definition, the majority of the terms included in this definition lack clarification, for example "persistent inability" (Evans et al., 2004), and will therefore be open to interpretation. The literature base has indicated that teachers did not have a shared understanding of what the term EBD meant therefore the concept of inappropriate behaviour became socially constructed (Grieve, 2009; Visser & Stokes, 2003, Male, 2003). Teachers were responsible for identifying young people with EBD and different teachers would have different views on what constituted a behaviour problem (Emerson et al. 1998). The analysis of the literature will draw out that home and school are both considered catalysts which leads to pupils displaying "challenging" behaviour. It would seem important that the study considers the impact of these two factors in the development of EBD.

3.3 Blame – Home and School (mutual blaming)

The following section will critically focus on the link between the home and school in terms of the development of EBD. The analysis seeks to highlight what the study names here as a consensus of "mutual blaming" between the home and school. Within this "consensus" teachers claim "inappropriate" behaviour will be learnt in the home whereas parents believe teachers will attach unfair labels to pupils based on subjective judgements and this leads to the exacerbation of pupil behaviour.

3.3.1 School

With the publications of the Warnock Report (1978) and Elton Report (1989) there was a rapid growth in understanding that schools and individual teachers can play a major role in the development of behaviour problems in school (Garner, 2009). Indeed researchers have indicated that parents feel that features of teacher behaviour, especially perceptions of unfair labelling, are equally a major cause of pupil disruption (Miller et al., 2002). Teachers it would seem attach labels to pupils who present with "difficult behaviour" based upon their notions of sensibility. Research suggests that teachers contribute to the development of EBD and this in turn leads young people to become disenfranchised from the education system (Riley, 2004).

Teaching pupils who display challenging behaviours can be exceptionally demanding, both in terms of the professional skills required to deliver lessons and the emotional energy needed to deal with disruptive behaviour (MacBeath et al. 2004; OFSTED, 2005; Swinson & Knight, 2007; Adams, 2008). Both the Warnock Report (DES, 1978) and the Elton Report

(DES, 1989) highlighted a distinct lack of specialist training opportunities for teachers. This has been identified as a significant barrier to the successful implementation of SEN strategies and could be viewed as a barrier to the integration of all young people within mainstream schools (Hodkinson, 2009). Researchers who have sought the perspectives of young people with EBD found that these pupils often believed their acts of "inappropriate" behaviour were reasonable and justifiable responses to poor teaching (Reid, 1985; Cronk, 1987).

The teaching and learning of pupils labelled with EBD is also not enhanced by Government policies which are laden with contradictions between inclusion and exclusion (Burton et al, 2009; Lloyd Bennett, 2006). On the one hand schools are expected to be able to support young people with EBD and on the other teachers face pressure to raise attainment. Teachers therefore will be constrained by the political agenda of the day. This is clearly an issue which requires further exploration. Chapter Three (see section 3.3, pg.62) will critically examine the position of the teacher within the confines of the current English education system. In terms of placing blame apart from deficiencies within the child, parental ineptitude is also considered the major causal factor in the development of behavioural problems (McCord, 1979; Wilson, 1980; Riley & Shaw, 1985).

3.3.2 Home

It has been argued that one of the major causes of poor behaviour in young people is the lack of a stable and secure family relationship (Winkley, 1996). There is also evidence to suggest that lack of love and recognition in childhood can lead to feelings of insecurity and low self-worth which may in turn lead to difficulties in forming interpersonal relationships (Bowlby, 1988). Poor parental control has been linked to causing the development of problem behaviour in children (McCord, 1979; Wilson, 1980; Riley & Shaw, 1985).

Government reports from Plowden to Warnock have highlighted the need for consultation between parents and professionals (Beveridge, 2005). Indeed a major section of the Warnock Report was headed "Parents as Partners" (DfEE, 1978). The importance of these partnerships was a central theme in all of the Report's recommendations. An array of publications emphasising the important role parents will play in their child's development have been published (DfE, 1981; DfE, 1988; DfES, 2004). Research indicates that teachers will often blame poor behaviour on home circumstances (Croll & Moses, 1985; DfES, 1989; Maras, 1996; Miller, 1995) yet evidence suggests that parents feel teachers and school environment are the main cause of behavioural difficulties (Miller et al., 2002). Here a cycle

of mutual blaming seems to be emerging (see figure 2.1 below). Parents will often feel blamed which may lead them to feel intimidated by the school. This in turn can lead to schools believing parents to be uncooperative in supporting their child through their educational journey (Fell & Coombs, 1994). The negative view of teachers towards parents of young people who have received the EBD label is highlighted in the Elton Report (DES, 1989, p. 133);

> Our evidence suggests that teachers' picture of parents is generally very negative. Many teachers feel that parents are to blame for much misbehaviour in schools. We consider that, while this picture contains an element of truth, it is distorted.

Teachers appear to want parents to take responsibility for their child's behaviour yet parents feel it is part of the teacher's role to discipline the pupils in their class. This can lead to a self-perpetuating cycle of mutual blame between the home and school (Miller, 1994).

Figure 2.1: Cycle of Mutual Blaming

Class teacher feels pupil's behaviour could be improved if only his mother would accept the problem and thus makes sure that each incident, however minor, is reported home

Mother feels that teacher makes a fuss about the smallest things and is 'picking on' her son, responds by suggesting that the problem is of the teacher's own making
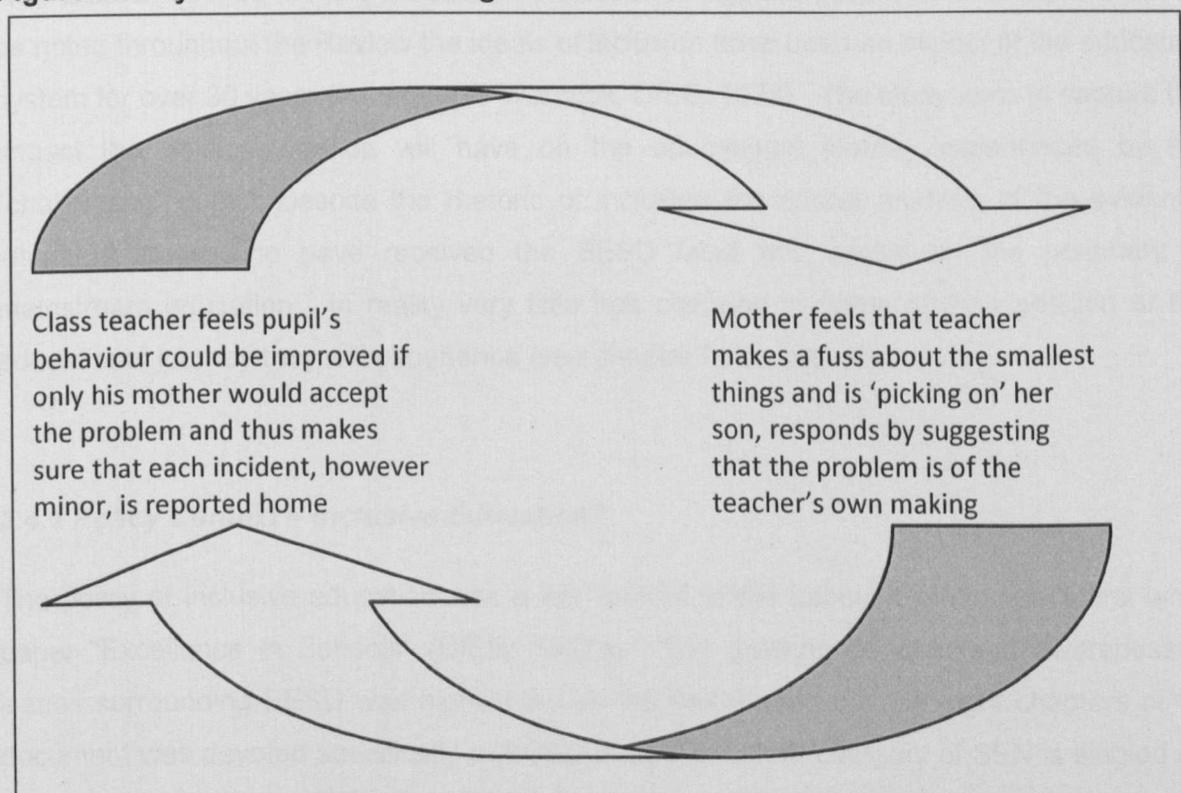
For the purposes of the study it appears that this consensus of mutual blame needs careful analysis. Here the teacher clearly feels it is parent ineptitude which causes the pupil to act inappropriately on the other hand the parent feels the teacher has unfairly labelled their child as problematic leading them to be treated differently to their peers.

Despite increased recognition of the impact of the home and school environment very little changed in terms of how the pupil was to be defined and the placement of blame. In addition, albeit there had been calls to move away from the employment of labels (Warnock,

1978) these pupils continue to be categorised according to the behaviours they display in the classroom. The categorisation of young people continued throughout New Labour's time in office. Here again the label is broadened to include "social difficulties" and this group of pupils are now to be referred to as having BESD. As will become clear within the following section although the names we employ are evolving the position occupied by this group of young people remains the same. New Labour heralded education as a key priority as they believed it could be a mechanism to address social inequalities (Hills & Stewart, 2005). However for those who had received the BESD label they continued to be deemed unworthy of inclusion in mainstream settings.

2.4 Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) 2001 – present

New Labour claimed to have introduced the inclusive agenda (Hodkinson, 2012). However, as noted throughout the Review the ideals of inclusion have been an aspect of the education system for over 30 years (for example Warnock, DfEE, 1978). The study aims to capture the impact the political agenda will have on the educational journey experienced by the "challenging" pupil. Despite the rhetoric of inclusion the critical analysis of the evidence intimates those who have received the BESD label will remain on the periphery of mainstream education. In reality very little has changed in terms of their position or the educational journey they will experience (see chapter three, pg. 42).

2.4.1 Policy Context – Inclusive Education?

The policy of inclusive education was a key feature of the Labour Government's first white paper "Excellence in Schools" (DfEE, 1997a). The growing concern and awareness of issues surrounding BESD was highlighted by the fact that one of the eight chapters of the document was devoted specifically to BESD issues; no other category of SEN is singled out in this way (Cooper, 1999). During their time in office the Labour Government were responsible for introducing several Government initiatives aimed at improving behaviour in school, they included Behaviour Improvement Programmes (DfES, 2005a), Primary National Behaviour Strategy (DfES, 2004) and Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (DfES, 2007). There was also a focus within Government policy (The Children's Act, 2004; Every Child Matters, 2003) on the responsibility placed on schools to promote the emotional well-being of all pupils and to also address the specific needs of children exhibiting signs of emotional and behavioural disturbance (Seth-Smith et al., 2010). These initiatives came

about as a result of the growing concern over the number of pupils being excluded from school and the inadequacy of alternative provision available to young people outside of the school system (Gray & Panter, 2000). At this time there was also a developing view that exclusion from school could result in exclusion from society (Blyth & Milner, 1993). It was believed this would only lead to negative outcomes not only for the pupils themselves but also for society at large (Daniels & Cole, 2010; Parsons & Castle, 1999; McAra, 2004).

As noted earlier in the chapter, how teachers view young people labelled with BESD is informed by their personal value positions (Grieve, 2009; Visser & Stokes, 2003; Male, 2003), however it was also noted they will be a reflection of wider policy perspectives and pressures (Adams, 2008). Traditionally, education has sought to remove those who provided a "challenge" such as pupils who have received the BESD label (Carrington, 1999). Analysis of the evidence (Armstrong, 2005; Tomlinson, 2005; Adams, 2008) suggests that this continues to be the position today.

An examination of the literature base has demonstrated that to be educated within the contemporary English education system "troublesome" pupils require a means to be managed. The literature (Adams, 2008) seems to indicate that those who present with BESD may not be deemed worthy. These issues will be critically explored in more detail within chapter three (pg. 42) which will examine current policies and practices in terms of the provisions experienced by young people labelled with BESD. The review now turns to explore how perceptions have changed towards "challenging" pupils and how they are now to be understood.

2.4.2 Definition

At this juncture the review returns to the notion of labels and definitions employed within the landscape of BESD. This analysis seeks to locate how in the "modern" political and educational climate these young people are to be understood and defined. As determined earlier the terminology employed to describe young people who present with challenging behaviours are problematic and constantly evolving. This leads to a situation whereby educational professionals are faced with dilemmas in reaching a consensus as to what constitutes "inappropriate" behaviour (Grieve, 2009; Visser & Stokes, 2003; Male, 2003). It is within the 2001 Code of Practice (DfES, 2001) that the term EBD is broadened again to include problems in the development of social skills leading to a new term Behavioural Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) being introduced (Bowers, 2005). Guidance on

recording pupils' needs in the Pupil Level Annual Schools Census (DfES, 2005b, p. 7) has provided the following definition of BESD;

> Pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties cover the full range of ability and a continuum of severity. Their behaviours present a barrier to learning and persist despite the implementation of an effective school behaviour policy and personal/social curriculum. They may be withdrawn or isolated, disruptive and disturbing, hyperactive and lack concentration, have immature social skills or present challenging behaviours. Pupils with a range of difficulties, including emotional disorders such as depression and eating disorders, conduct disorders such as oppositional defiance disorder (ODD); hyperkinetic disorders including attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADD/ADHD); and syndromes such as Tourette's, should be recorded as BESD if additional or different educational arrangements are being made to support them.

Here we may observe that definitions are seemingly moving the internal factors highlighted earlier in this review to those which encompass more external factors such as the pupil's social environment. The term BESD covers a wide range of disorders which now includes social difficulties for example young people presenting with immature social skills. It has been suggested however that the "S" has merely been bolted on along the way (Bowers, 2005). Furthermore there continues to be a lack of clarity surrounding this term and this is likely to impact on educational professionals mainly teachers who are responsible for identifying young people with BESD (Grieve, 2009; Visser & Stokes, 2003, Male, 2003). An analysis of the literature base details that the term BESD is difficult to define, leading to teachers facing difficulties in determining whether a pupil should receive this label.

As at other times in educational history the term employed to categorise this group of pupils has no statutory basis and no agreed definition. The difficulty that remains then is how teachers are to arrive at a consensus of what particular behaviours define BESD (Clough et al., 2005). What is apparent is that this term exists on a continuum ranging from those who are occasionally disruptive and as such are deemed to have only relatively short term difficulties to those presenting with extremely challenging behaviour or who have serious psychological problems (Hamill & Boyd, 2002). In terms of the study's analysis it appears to be the case that as the definition widens to encompass more "difficulties" so does the attribution of blame.

2.4.3 Blame – Emerging culture of blame

Like Kauffman (2001) this review details how within the development of BESD we see the recycling of the same issues that have been with us for well over a century. Indeed very little has changed in terms of how these young people are to be perceived within schools. The literature strongly indicates that BESD is observed to be a "problem" within pupils and that for many teachers "blame" for disruptive behaviour lies with young people and their parents. However, the study now seeks to analyse the evidence base to determine what, if any "responsibility" schools, teachers and the education system should take for causing pupils to display challenging behaviours.

2.4.3 (i) School

For over 30 years now there have been calls placed on schools to consider the impact they have on the development of BESD (DfEE, 1978; DES, 1989), yet these pleas appear to have been ignored. This group of pupils remain somewhat of a quandary to educators as they struggle with where these young people should be placed. Indeed the exclusion versus inclusion debate continues to dominate educational policy. Evidently very little has changed despite the introduction of the inclusive agenda with regard to the position of both the pupil and the teacher.

Clearly there is a continued lack of recognition of the role of the teacher as a catalyst to BESD development within educational policy. However there is an increasing interest within educational research in examining the relationships between these "challenging" pupils and their teachers. In a study which explored the experiences of disaffected pupils there appeared to be frustration and mistrust between disaffected students and their teachers and between the parents of those pupils and teachers (Riley and Rustique-forrester, 2002). Teachers, it would seem, will attach labels to young people who present with behaviour difficulties and this can exacerbate the way young people act, leading to problems of disaffection and disrespect. It is important for teachers to consider the role they have in their pupil's inappropriate behaviour. In a recent study conducted by Gibbs and Gardiner (2008) they found that teachers acknowledged that their own behaviour can have a major influence on their pupil's behaviour. This clearly illustrates that behaviour problems can be a product of social interactions. Teachers therefore seemingly play an integral role in contributing to the development of BESD in young people (Riley, 2004). Analysis of the literature demonstrates that teachers are considered to be catalysts yet evidence also indicates that

teachers remain reluctant to take responsibility instead they continue to shift the placement of blame onto parents.

2.4.3 (ii) Home

Although during their time in office New Labour pushed for more parental involvement in schools and emphasised the crucial role parents play in their child's development (DfES, 2004) previous research studies have identified potential barriers which may prevent parents from engaging with their child's school. The review will consider some of the potential influences that can prevent parents from engaging with their child's school. For example Bridges (1987) conducted interviews with parents who had become disengaged from the school. Interestingly the most recurring theme was one of "dread" of the school – this could often be linked back to their own experiences in school. There is evidence to suggest that parents of young people who have BESD may also have faced difficulties in their school life (Boreham et al., 1995; Galloway, Armstrong & Tomlinson, 1994). This may lead them to feel uncomfortable in the presence of educational professionals who they perceive to hold positions of power over them and their children (Farrell & Polat, 2003). Social and economic factors may also have prevented parents from fully participating in schooling (Harris and Goodall, 2008). In 2004 the Labour Government produced a document entitled "Barriers to Achievement" (DfES, 2004) which again highlights the significance of parents in their child's development and education. Although the document recognises the challenges faced by parents in accessing services for young people labelled with BESD, there is still an overwhelming sense that parents are responsible for what happens to their child in terms of the education they receive. The experiences of parents whose child has received the BESD label will be further explored within chapter three (section 3.2, pg. 58).

Evidence suggests that parental engagement in schooling positively influences pupil achievement and attainment (Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003). For example, in a recent study by Harris and Goodall (2008), which explored the relationship between parental engagement and pupil achievement, the data suggested that parental engagement can have a direct and beneficial impact on pupil behaviour. The literature indicates that although parents are aware of the impact home life can have on the development of BESD, it also highlights the impact both the school and teachers can have in contributing to such difficulties (Miller, Ferguson & Moore, 2002). The study will therefore critically examine the experiences of the education system that parents of young people with BESD have had. Despite growing awareness of the impact home and school can have on the development of BESD, in many cases the focus remains on "treating" the young person.

2.4.3 (iii) Within Child

As highlighted earlier within the subtext of the BESD label, there is the implication that these difficulties of behaviour lie solely within the child (Thomas, 2005). Although there have been calls for a shift away from the medical model (Laslett, 1983; Jones, 1995), for a large proportion of young people labelled with BESD some form of "intervention" will be offered. Here emphasis will be placed on treating the young person, with the implication being that it is the pupil who needs to change rather than the school and social environment. It has been suggested that given the history of the terms employed to describe pupils who present with challenging behaviour, such as "maladjusted", EBD and now BESD, it is not surprising that approaches have been framed in psychological or medical terms (Wearmouth, 1999).

The strategies used then have tended to focus on "treating" the pupil to modify their behaviour. These approaches do not account for the possibility that "difficult" behaviour might be a reaction to stressful circumstances (Wearmouth, 1999). Pupils may experience "competing values and expectations stemming from internal idiosyncratic processes or from differing family and sub-cultural values" (Ravenette, 1984, p. 23). The behaviours that young people learn at home may not necessarily meet the expectations set out by the school (Evans et al., 2004). Critiques of the medical model (Laslett, 1983; Jones, 1995; Wearmouth, 1999) advocate critically examining the impact a pupil's wider social environment can have on the development of BESD. Mindful of this suggestion the review will move to explore the potential impact societal factors can have on the behaviours displayed by young people.

2.5.3 (iv) Societal Issues

An examination of the literature also suggests that the causation of BESD is located within social and cultural factors. For example, Cooper (2006a: p. 7) suggests that it is not surprising in a culture where self-seeking behaviour and "self-actualisation through material consumption" is highly valued that an increasing number of young people have become disillusioned. They perceive a gap between what they are told they can achieve and the reality of their situation with regard to what is actually available to them. There has been a shift in the way children are viewed by society. Whilst earlier efforts to ensure the welfare of children focused on issues of protection, or the securement of certain welfare rights, the most recent developments in this area (for example UNCRC, 1989) have stressed the importance of the children's own perspective on their needs, conditions and grievances (Davie, Upton and Varma, 1996; Hendrick, 1997). In addition, children and young people are now considered by advertisers as a distinctive group separate from their parents

(Cooper, 1999). Through the mass media children are being made aware, more so than ever before, of the possibilities of material and other forms of success in society. However Rutter and Smith (1995) warn that along with such promise often comes disappointment. Interestingly, within this consumer driven aspirational culture evidence suggests that many young people labelled with BESD are more likely to come from a lower social class background. The review will now critically evaluate such evidence to determine whether it might be the case that a determinant of BESD is the pupil's social background.

Statistics on pupil characteristics provided by the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) provide evidence that pupils who have received the BESD label come disproportionately from families who experience socio-economic disadvantage. According to DCSF (2009a), known eligibility for free school meals (widely used as a measure of poverty) for pupils labelled with BESD at School Action Plus is 30.6%. This is higher than for any other type of SEN (DCSF, 2009a) and is disproportionate to the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals overall, currently 15% (DCSF, 2009b). A similar pattern emerges for pupils who have been labelled with BESD who have a statement of SEN, 19.4% of whom are entitled to free school meals thus constituting the second highest percentage of free school meal entitlement among all statemented SEN pupils (exceeded only by moderate learning difficulties: DCSF, 2009a). The social status of these young people is likely to result in frustration amongst this population as they may be limited to what they can have in terms of material goods. They can become locked in cycle of deprivation and see no way out. They may also be disillusioned with what education can offer them and the benefits of achieving in school. The study will investigate how these young people experience their position within the confines of their educational journey and the impact this will have on their perceived future prospects.

The literature reviewed (see Avramidis, 2005; Croll & Moses, 1985; Miller, 1995 & Cooper, 2006) highlights the importance of the impact of medical, school, home and societal factors in the development of BESD in young people. It is argued however that poor behaviour in school is likely to be as a result of a combination of all of these factors (Riding & Fairhurst, 2001). This is further supported by Cooper (1997) who argues that the path to "deviance" will be influenced by a combination of individual characteristics and the social and political environment that young people will encounter in school and the wider community. As such there now appears to be a firm consensus that BESD is a product of a holistic set of factors (Garner, 2009). The identified causation factors will be subject to further examination throughout the study.

In summary the literature observes that BESD is a rather fluid concept which has been subject to evolution over time (Frederickson & Cline, 2002). Furthermore this term is shrouded in ambiguities. The official definitions employed to describe BESD are confusing, leading to teachers making subjective judgements based on limited knowledge and understanding of the issues surrounding BESD (Grieve, 2009; Visser & Stokes, 2003, Male, 2003). A major factor in this dilemma is detailed to be due to a lack of training (Hodkinson, 2009). Teachers have indicated a need for specialist training on labels associated with BESD and an understanding of each of these conditions (Goodman & Burton, 2010). These issues make it difficult for educational professionals to arrive at a consensus as to whether a pupil has BESD. The BESD label can be a powerful tool in terms of getting extra support, however this will be dependent on teachers identifying young people for assessment and the support being available (Lauchlan & Boyle, 2007). Although categories officially ceased to exist following the Warnock Report within the English education system for all intents and purposes BESD is of categorisation. This it is argued demonstrates the resilience of this label (Thomas, 2005).

The review has highlighted that the concepts surrounding the term BESD are complex and difficult to operationalise. With regard to the root causes of BESD, there appears to be a complex interplay between a number of different factors including within the child, home background and school environment. It would seem that to some extent there is a recycling of the same issues which surround the development of BESD. However what has not been conclusively proved is the teacher's assertion that causation is rooted in home circumstances. In light of this finding the study will seek to critically explore this emergent cycle of blame.

What is made clear is that in this world it is adults who are responsible for constructing what is deemed "inappropriate" and "appropriate" pupil behaviour. They are also responsible for determining what happens to these young people throughout their educational careers. The ramifications of these decisions for young people are manifold and serious (Tobbell & Lawthom, 2005). The following chapter examines these ramifications by tracing the educational journey experienced by this group of pupils within the context of the current English education system once they have received the BESD label.

CHAPTER THREE: EDUCATING THE "CHALLENGING" PUPIL

This chapter will critically explore what happens to young people who have received the BESD label. One of the main aims of the study is to track the educational journeys taken by this group of young people. This will involve an examination of the different provisions experienced by these pupils. This chapter will provide a critical overview of the current education system from the perspectives of the pupil, the parent and the teacher. The analysis will highlight, that despite the rhetoric of inclusion pupils labelled with BESD continue to be removed from mainstream education through the mechanisms of exclusion (Adams, 2008) and the Special Educational Need (SEN) statementing process.

Within the preceding chapter the concept of blame evolving throughout educational history was tracked and critically discussed. Seemingly, the pupil, the parent and the teacher have all been named as a catalyst leading to the development of BESD. It was argued that how the pupil is to be understood will be determined by the political agenda of the day. The argument forwarded then is that in many respects it is also the Government that are equally complicit in shaping the pupil's educational journey. The chapter though will evidence that the Government's approach to meeting the needs of these, often vulnerable young people, no longer remains fit for purpose. The argument forwarded is that in reality; despite Government rhetoric of social justice it is the labels we attach to pupils which will define what happens to them. The chapter will critically examine what happens to those pupils who have obtained an SEN Statement compared to the pupils who receive a label of categorisation but who do not fulfil the criteria to access specialist support. By examining the different and differing educational trajectories the review seeks to evidence how labels will determine where these young people are to be placed. The purpose of this chapter then is to highlight the complex processes which form part of the young person labelled with BESD's educational journey. The chapter will also critically reflect on the position of the pupil's parents and teachers. First, though there is a need to set the scene and examine the context of the pupil who has been labelled with BESD.

3.1 The "challenging" pupil

This section is premised by the belief that pupils deemed to be "challenging" are subject to an education system which has been determined by adults. This system works to remove the pupil from mainstream education through a process of segregation, where they will be placed in special schools, or through exclusion, where they will be placed in an alternative provision (Booth, 1996; DfE, 2010). The literature makes plain that for these young people

their placement into educational settings is observed to be difficult (Ofsted, 1999). In addition to this these pupils often face chaotic educational journeys in which they will encounter and experience a wide range of educational provisions (Gazaley, 2010; Pirrie et al., 2011; Pirrie & Macleod, 2009). The review will build on the findings from the preceding chapter to demonstrate how the labels attached to young people will determine the pupil's educational journey.

3.1.1 Political agenda – removal

The review analyses the current position of pupils who have received the BESD label. The following chapter contends that what these young people experience is a utilitarian approach to education which is centred on the target setting agenda which was evidenced in the preceding chapter (Adams, 2008). What the review seeks to illustrate is that despite the rhetoric and moves to more inclusive practices it is again demonstrated that little room exists for those deemed "challenging" (Carrington, 1999). It will be argued that the adoption of this utilitarian approach leads to "undesirable" pupils being excluded for the greater good of the school. The review also seeks to highlight how in addition to employing formal mechanisms of exclusions that schools have also found unofficial (often illegal) methods to remove this group of young people.

To begin with the review will provide an overview of how the methods of removal are operated and how "challenging" pupils are excluded. Schools will adopt a variety of approaches to remove "unwanted" pupils depending on the level of the behaviours displayed. Exclusions can vary in the degree of severity from pupils who are excluded from just a lesson to those who are permanently removed from school (Daniels & Cole, 2010). First though we need to pause to consider evidence from official statistics and the manipulation of such to remove "challenging" pupils whilst protecting the school's reputation. The official data indicates that there has recently been a reduction in the number of permanent exclusions (DfE, 2010). This is said to be due to sanctions introduced by the Government, such as the "six day rule". In the case of permanent exclusions the local authority must arrange full-time, supervised education from the sixth day onwards (DCSF, 2008). Clearly, there are legal procedures in place to ensure pupils receive adequate educational input, unfortunately evidence points to schools not adhering to these rules. Research conducted by Ofsted (2009) found that nearly half of the local authorities were not complying with the requirements to; 'provide full-time and suitable education from day six of a permanent exclusion' (Ofsted, 2009, p. 7). This highlights the need to be cautious when

examining official data in terms of what it is telling us. The evidence from the previous chapter suggests that schools will be driven to exclude due to examination pressure (Adams, 2008). Here schools are observed to be employing a utilitarian approach to education as a way of justifying the removal of "undesirable" pupils. Emphasis would be placed on the greater good of the school and ensuring they are able to meet with external pressures. As schools become under increasing pressure to reduce the number of permanent exclusions, they will turn to alternative forms of removing problematic young people. One of the informal mechanisms employed by schools to remove unwanted pupils is often referred to as unofficial exclusion.

Stirling (1992, 1996) coined the term unofficial or informal exclusion to describe methods employed by schools to discourage pupils from attending school without actually having to go through the procedures of fixed term or permanent exclusion. These unofficial exclusions will come under a number of euphemisms such as "extended study leave" or "reduced timetable" (Evans, 2010). Despite this form of exclusion being illegal, previous research has found numerous examples of schools unofficially removing unwanted pupils (Gordon, 2001; Stirling, 1992, 1996; Gazeley, 2010). As these exclusions are illegal they cannot be appealed, there is no requirement to send work home and the absent pupils do not appear on official records (Evans, 2010). Families will often not challenge these exclusions because they may not understand how to question school authority (Evans, 2010). This leaves parents and their children in an extremely vulnerable situation where they are dependent on educational professionals. This perceived imbalance of power leaves pupils and parents effectively silenced. The study seeks to redress this apparent inequity by "hearing" the voice of these two vulnerable groups.

It has been well established within the preceding chapter that both educationalists and researchers are wary of the inclusion agenda adopted by the Labour Government (Warnock, 2010; Ellis, Tod & Graham-Matheson, 2008). The review will now critically reflect on one of the major concerns raised namely, the impact these pupils will have on their peers. Research indicates that those labelled with BESD are less likely to be accepted by their peers due to the behaviours they display in the classroom (Tobbell & Lawthom, 2005). These pupils are considered to be the problem rather than having a problem (Heary & Hennessey, 2005). Young people then will be removed due to educators adopting a utilitarianism approach. This is supported by Ellis, Tod & Graham-Matheson (2008, p. 130) who state that;

> There is a continued tension between the needs of the one and the needs of the many within debates on inclusion. The debate is probably nowhere more sharply focused than in the area of the inclusion of children with BESD.

Educators are required to put the needs of the majority first resulting in the more challenging pupil being removed from the class, ignored by the teacher and subsequently excluded from the school. Evidently, recent emphasis on measurement of performance as a central preoccupation in schools (Cassen & Kingdon, 2007; Gillborn & Youdell, 2000; Torrence, 2002) has had a damaging impact on the educational journey of young people who have received the BESD label.

Within the literature reviewed it is clear that these pupils are simply not wanted. However it is considered important to briefly pause here to critically reflect on the position of the teacher in this apparent ethical dilemma. Despite the rhetoric of inclusion this notion was never truly embraced by the New Labour Government. The continued emphasis placed on targets and academic results prohibited teachers from ever really being able to cater for the "challenging" pupil (Hodkinson, 2012). (The position of the teacher will be more fully considered within section 3.3 (pg. 62) of the review.) The study asserts that the removal of this group of pupils is likely to have a detrimental impact on their educational journey. There is a plethora of research which supports this claim and highlights the negative impact exclusion can have on the future outcomes of young people (Pirrie et al, 2011; Daniels & Cole, 2010; Reed, 2005; McAra, 2004; Berridge et al., 2001). The literature intimates the outcomes for young people who are excluded from education can be extremely damaging. In the long term persistent truants and those who are excluded from school tend to have lower status occupations, less stable career patterns and greater unemployment in comparison with their peers (Hibbert & Fogelman, 1990). Strikingly in a study by Galloway (1985) he found that 76% of the permanently excluded pupils were two or more years behind their age group in reading. Hayden and Dunne (2001) also acknowledge the difficulties with learning encountered by these disaffected young people. With 80% of parents in their study listing difficulties with work set and problems with learning as issues leading to their child's exclusion. Worryingly it would appear that very little has changed within the last ten years. The Taylor Report (2012) has claimed that the academic outcomes for pupils who have been removed from mainstream educational settings are poor.

Despite these concerns it has been argued that exclusion can in some circumstances be a positive experience for young people. Evans (2010) recognises that some young people are very challenging to manage in a mainstream setting and sometimes all that is needed is breathing space in an alternative setting with one-to-one learning and social support to reengage them in mainstream education. Furthermore a study conducted by Daniels and Cole (2010) which explored the experiences of pupils who were permanently excluded from

school, found 24 (19%) believed exclusion had a positive effect on their lives, sometimes actually increasing life opportunities. It would seem then that exclusion may provide some pupils with the opportunity for a fresh start. Notwithstanding these findings, the overriding theme within the literature on exclusion is the negative impact this has on not only the individual but society as a whole. For example, Parsons and Castle (1999) found that the process of exclusion provides time in unstructured and unsupervised environments where young people may become involved in crime and, in so doing, become a cost to the public purse. The behaviours displayed by these pupils and their subsequent removal will impact on their parents, teachers and the school as a whole.

During the process of the study there was a change in Government. It is the Government who will be responsible for determining where young people are to be educated as they formulate the education system. The Conservatives policy commitments prior to election in 2010 included curtailing the right of appeal and ending the financial penalty on schools for excluding, as well as ending behaviour partnerships between schools and the requirement to arrange alternative provision from the sixth day of exclusion (Conservative Party April 2008). The charity Barnardos has expressed concerns that these measures could lead to an increase in the number of permanent exclusions (Evans, 2010). A white paper produced by the New Coalition Government (DfE, 2010, p. 32) emphasises the importance of discipline in school and empowering teachers. In terms of behaviour the paper states the Government will 'increase the authority to pilot a new approach to permanent exclusions by giving schools the power, money and responsibility to secure alternative provision for excluded pupils'. This chapter has demonstrated the vulnerable position pupils labelled with BESD are placed in. By increasing the powers of educational professionals this is likely to have a detrimental impact on these young people. The approach adopted will be to a great extent dependent on the ethos of the school and whether they are willing to engage with challenging pupils or simply remove them. In addition, evidence detailed in the preceding chapter (pg 34) demonstrated that teachers are not being adequately prepared to support this group of pupils. Within this white paper there is little mention of training. Instead focus remains on exclusion. It would seem that the new Government rather than embracing the notion of inclusive education are reverting back to past methods of tackling the "problem" pupil by removing them from mainstream education.

Once removed the literature intimates that these young people will be provided for in a wide variety of educational settings (Gazely 2010; Pirrie et al., 2011). Previous researchers (such as Gazaley, 2010; Pirrie et al., 2011; Pirrie & Macleod, 2009) have highlighted the potential difficulties in capturing their educational journeys. As stated in the beginning of the chapter tracking the educational journeys experienced by this group of pupils will be a significant

aspect of the study. It was therefore considered necessary to review the literature to critically examine where these pupils are likely to be placed.

3.1.2 From pillar to post

Previous researchers (Gazeley, 2010; Pirrie et al., 2011; Pirrie & Macleod, 2009) who have attempted to track the educational journeys of young people labelled with BESD have encountered difficulties piecing together their often chaotic trajectories. This is due to individual young people experiencing severely disrupted educational pathways which include a wide range of educational provisions, often for only a relatively short period of time (Gazeley, 2010; Pirrie et al. 2011). These challenges are further exacerbated by the fact that many of these pupils are likely to have particularly complex and unstable patterns of school attendance (Gazeley, 2010). The pupil's disrupted educational pathways and poor attendance are likely to have a detrimental impact on a pupil's pre-existing learning and social difficulties (Pirrie et al, 2011).

The literature also indicates that young people labelled with BESD are more likely to go missing from education (Visser et al., 2005; NARCO, 2003; Barber, 1997). Visser et al. (2005) argues that the characteristics of disaffection, lack of progression and dispossession are frequently found in young people who have "achieved" the BESD label. As noted throughout the study these young people are also more likely to go missing in a competitive education system because they offer little in terms of academic achievement (Barber, 1997). This means that schools are not adequately meeting the needs of these young people leading to them experiencing long periods out of education.

Pirrie et al. (2011) study found that some young people had not been in receipt of any form of education for extended periods, often at more than one point in their educational history. In addition to the difficulties encountered throughout their education these young people will often be raised in extremely challenging home circumstances including family breakdown (Pirrie et al., 2011). As noted in chapter two (section 2.5.3 (iv) pg. 40) pupils labelled as having BESD come disproportionately from families who experience socio-economic disadvantage (DCSF, 2009). These pupils will experience the additional challenges of chaotic educational journeys which leaves little opportunity to obtain qualifications needed to successfully progress into adulthood. Education, or rather lack of, can be an important factor in predicting future outcomes for young people. With the unemployment total for 16-24 year olds hitting a record high of nearly a million young people, a jobless rate of 21.3% (BBC News, 12.10.11) pupils labelled with BESD may become disillusioned. The effect of this

may lead to pupils voting with their feet as they feel that school has little or nothing to offer them (O'Keefe, 1994; Parson, 1999). Such young people perceive a gap between what they are told they can achieve and the reality of their situation with regard to what is actually available to them (Cooper, 2006).

A major consideration of the study is to map out the educational journeys experienced by this group of young people. Following an examination of the literature and conversations with pupils, parents and teachers, the study proposes that the diagram below (fig 3.1) sets out the potential educational journeys of pupils who have been given the BESD label. This chapter will critically evaluate the educational provisions experienced by this group of young people.

Figure 3.1: "Challenging" pupil's potential educational journey

Pupil receives BESD label

Series of minor disruptive incidents

One serious incident e.g. assault

Exclusion from school

Unofficial exclusion

Fixed Term Exclusion

Negotiated Transfer

Permanent Exclusion

Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP)

School Action

School Action Plus

SEN Statement

Placement in special school

Missing from education

Return to mainstream school

Fair Access Panel (FAP)

Support Centre (12 week assessment)

Mainstream school

Alternative provision

3.1.3 Educational provision for "challenging" pupils

Traditionally young people who presented with challenging behaviour would have been placed in segregated educational institutions which would have included asylums (Garner, 2009). It is the position of the current study that despite the inclusion agenda little has changed as these pupils continue to be removed from mainstream settings. The literature intimates that there has recently been an increase in the number of pupils placed in special schools (Rustmeier & Vaughan, 2005) and therefore segregated. In addition the impact of removing pupils from mainstream education has led to a "dump and hope" model being developed with young people being placed in a range of alternative provision. The following section will critically explore where they go and provide an overview of provisions experienced by this group of pupils.

The prevailing theme in current literature is how best to educate these pupils and what happens to them if they become disengaged from education (Ofsted, 2007). The preceding chapter (pg. 21) highlighted the difficulties encountered by Governments in determining where young people labelled with BESD are best placed. Since the Education Act 1981 (DfE, 1981) the placement of such young people has been the subject of considerable debate. There are those who advocate that special schools represent a denial of the right of pupils who have received the BESD label to fully participate in society (Oliver, 1996) verses those who contend the quest for "full inclusion" is a dogma which cannot be applied to all pupils (Garner, 2009; Warnock, 2005).

Macleod (2006) has expressed concerns regarding the inclusion agenda and the assumption that anything other than mainstream schooling is "bad". She argues that this has led to alternative educational setting such as special schools becoming stigmatised (Macleod, 2006). A major concern put forward by those who are against special school placement is the lack of opportunities available to pupils who attend this form of provision, specifically the quality of education that is offered (Macleod, 2006). For some special school placement is viewed as a "last resort" for young people labelled with BESD (Lawrence, Steed & Young, 1984; Priestly, 1987). Yet despite these concerns some authors such as Cooper (1993) have gone so far as to argue that mainstream is not always the most suitable placement for pupils labelled with BESD. In this study Cooper (1993) found strong evidence to suggest that, during their period of residence at the schools, 'many of the pupils had experienced improvements in their levels of self-esteem, as well as an improved sense of control over areas of their lives which had appeared before to be out of their control' (Cooper, 1993. p. 4). It was also noted earlier in the review that for pupils who were finding it difficult to cope in mainstream settings being placed in a specialist provision provided them with "breathing

space" and the level of support they required to successfully progress through the education system (Evans, 2010). In spite of this strong evidence in support of special schools for pupils labelled with BESD there are concerns regarding the impact placement within these environments can have on individual pupils. These include moving the child away from their family home (Piling et al. 2007) and parental concerns in terms of placing challenging pupils together and the impact this can have on their child's behaviour (Harris et al., 2008). These issues are critically explored below.

3.1.3.i Segregation (special school)

Special schools are separate settings which have been established for children and young people who (usually) have a statutory statement of SEN. They can either be maintained by a local authority, or be an independent institution established by a charity, individual benefactor or commercial "non-for-profit" organisations (Garner, 2009). Historically young people who displayed difficult behaviour within an educational setting were isolated from mainstream society in "asylums" or other institutions (Garner, 2009). Ordinary schooling was just not considered an option for them (Frederickson and Cline, 2009). This position remained the same until the publication of the Warnock Report (DES, 1978) and the Education Acts (1980 and 1981). These established in law the responsibility of education authorities to provide pupils who have been identified as having SEN access to mainstream educational settings wherever possible (Cooper, 1993).

Over the last decade however there has been an increase in the number of pupils being placed in special provision (Rustmeier & Vaughan, 2005). As noted earlier in the chapter (see pg. 44) some researchers are becoming increasingly critical of the inclusive model. Even those who had previously argued of the need for more inclusive practices are now advocating the removal of "challenging" pupils. For example Mary Warnock (2010, p. 35) has recently stated that;

> ...there is the large number of children who for emotional, behavioural or more strictly cognitive reasons are genuinely unable to learn in a regular classroom, and who distract other children from learning if they are placed there.

It has been argued throughout the study that young people labelled with BESD are among those for whom inclusion is not always considered the best option. Those who are against the inclusive model strongly advocate the need for specialist provision and highlight the perceived benefits of special school placement. Emerson et al. (1996) and Robertson et al. (1996) retrospectively reviewed the progress made by children who attended Beech Tree

School (a residential school based in the North of England). The study combined a review of written records with parental interviews and found evidence of significant improvements in self-care, communication and reduction in challenging behaviour during the child's stay, which were largely maintained after leaving the school. Notably the authors of this paper do not seek the perspective of the young person. Instead they chose to focus on what adults perceived to be the main benefits of special school placement. As with much of the research in this area emphasis is placed on adult perspectives at the expense of the young person. Those who have employed pupil voice such as Cooper (1993, p. 4) have reported that pupils attending two residential special schools believed that the schools had helped to improve their confidence, self-esteem, academic ability, behaviour, and their ability to relate to others.

Harris et al (2008) conducted research which aimed to explore the perspectives of a range of stakeholders regarding the benefits and disadvantages of attendance at a residential school for pupils labelled with BESD. All of the participants believed that placement at the school had had a positive and often substantial impact on the emotional and behavioural development of the pupils. Interestingly for the purposes of the current study the authors acknowledge a series of limitations encountered throughout their study. This included concerns regarding the selection of participants for the study. With some of the pupils being selected on the basis of their perceived ability to respond during the interview. This obviously leads to questions regarding how representative the sample was of the school and those who are deemed to be "challenging". It is clear that researchers employing pupil voice methodology will need to be aware of such issues. These issues will be critically discussed throughout chapter five (see pg. 89).

The above studies highlight the positive impact residential school can have on young people with behavioural difficulties. However there are issues regarding this form of provision. There is a perceived stigma of being placed in a special school (Farrell & Polat, 2003). Parents have also expressed concerns regarding putting disruptive pupils together with peers who may potentially negatively influence behaviour (Harris et al. 2008). However if they remain in mainstream settings there is concern they will have poorer outcomes when compared to their mainstream peers, they are also more likely to be victims of bullying (Frederickson et al., 2007).

Only those who have obtained a Statement of SEN should be placed within a special school (DfES, 2001). Yet evidence suggests that pupils will receive the BESD label but due to flaws in the current system will not be able to acquire the necessary paperwork (SEN Statement). This has led to pupils being given the BESD label with no SEN Statement and no access to additional educational support - so what happens to these pupils? In a study by Daniels,

Cole, Sellman, Visser and Bedward (2003) a number of LEAs expressed concerns that alternative provisions were being used inappropriately for young people who in the past had, in their view, been better served by attending local BESD schools, designed for long term provision. The following section will provide an overview of the alternative educational provisions experienced by this group of young people.

3.1.3.ii Dump and Hope (Alternative provision)

Alternative provision caters for a wide range of young people. A total of 89% of pupils in alternative provision are of secondary age (11 – 16), and 73% are male (DfE, 2010). Therefore the majority of pupils in alternative provision are teenage boys. Young people are required to attend alternative provision for a variety of reasons including being excluded. However around half are there for different reasons for example those who have been bullied and are too scared to attend school, children who are ill and teenage mothers (DfE, 2011). Most local authorities either run a range of specialist or alternative provisions, or fund access to facilities provided by other local authorities or the charitable sector. Alternative provision can be found in three institutional forms, these are discussed below;

Pupil Referral Units

Commonly known as PRUs, they are LA controlled and funded schools set up specifically to provide for excluded children. LAs have a duty under section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996 to provide education, which states:

> Each local authority shall make arrangements for the provision of suitable education at school or otherwise than at school for those children of compulsory school age who, by reason of illness, exclusion from school or otherwise, may not for any period receive suitable education unless such arrangements are made for them.

The SEN Code of Practice (2001) states that although sometimes, children and young people labelled with BESD are placed in pupil referral units or other alternative provision these placements should not be viewed as part of the range of SEN provision. This makes clear that these young people should not be permanently placed within alternative education. However the evidence suggests that young people who have been removed from mainstream education are sometimes experiencing long periods in PRUs (Atkinson et al., 2004).

PRUs are inspected by Ofsted, and are perhaps the most established form of alternative provision. PRUs generally have a bad reputation, and this is often with some justification. In their 2006/07 annual report, Ofsted noted that PRUs 'lack a clear vision for their pupils and offer an uninspiring curriculum' (Ofsted, 2007a, pg. 25). As a result, they fail to improve the pupils' attendance or reduce days lost through exclusion. There have been worries that PRUs are seen as 'sin bins' or 'dumping grounds' and that enforced association with anti-social peers may exacerbate rather than improve behavioural problems. PRUs have developed a reputation as 'holding units' as opposed to educational centres (Goodall, 2005). In addition large numbers of pupils in PRUs do not go on to achieve meaningful qualifications. In 2010 only 3.1% of pupils in PRU achieved 5 A* - C GCSEs.

The main function of a PRU is to integrate pupils back into mainstream education. There is evidence to suggest that sometimes all that is needed is breathing space in an alternative setting with one-to-one learning and social support to re-engage them in mainstream education (Evans, 2010). However Atkinson et al (2004) suggest that, because of their past behaviour, there is little motivation to bring these pupils back to school, and this causes a backlog of pupils within alternative provision. These difficulties are further exacerbated by communication problems between the school and off-site centres (Kitching, 2001). As with special schools there is a stigma attached to this form of provision because it is perceived to have secondary status within the education system (Briggs, 2010).

Colleges of Further Education

Rather than just providing mainstream school for everyone, the notion of having a variety of settings for the education of 14-to-16 year olds is recognised by the Government as an important tool (Cooper, 2001) in maintaining engagement with education. The numbers of young people of school age who attend colleges of further education is increasing (Orr, 2010). Government policy highlights placing young people labelled with BESD in further education is probably a propitious venture (DfEE, 1997b, 1999a, 1999b; DfES, 2004). Throughout the last two decades the Government has increasingly made requests for further education colleges to work with young people who are outside traditional mainstream school, as well as those still attending the mainstream (Macnab et al., 2008; Orr. 2010).

In their study Macnab et al. (2008) found that staff based within further education settings believed that colleges were used as an easy option to place "unwanted", "hard to manage" young people. These members of staff felt that they had chosen to work in further education to focus on adult education, specifically post-16 students who "wanted to be there". Instead

they work with young people labelled with BESD who have no real alternative, who they felt did not want to be there. Daniels et al. (2003) found that the nature of staff attitudes to disaffected young people in further education was negative, with many staff accustomed to teaching mature young people, who were motivated easily and over 16 years of age. Re-engaging young people, especially those perceived as 'disaffected', through the adoption of a work-based, vocational education path may be stalled by staff who have no desire to teach these pupils. For example evidence from a survey carried out by the Institute of Education and teachers' trade union, NATFHE, in 2004 cited by Harkin (2005) found that only 40% of staff were positive about teaching younger students. It would seem from an analysis of the literature base that it might be the case that Government policy has observed FE colleges becoming a "dumping ground" for those who become disaffected with mainstream education. Clearly, there are concerns regarding all alternative forms of provision specifically in terms of how they are perceived by pupils and their parents.

Independent Alternative Providers (IAP)

The third type of alternative provision is supplied by independent projects, which may be charities, limited companies, or community interest companies. They receive indirect public funding, in that the IAP will charge a per-pupil fee which is paid by a publicly funded institution, such as a mainstream school or PRU. Although technically, these projects are required to register as independent schools, in practice very few in fact are registered. When not registered as independent schools, IAPs are not inspected by Ofsted, and are not required to follow the national curriculum (Ogg & Kaill, 2010). Therefore will not be subject to the same educational regulations schools are required to follow.

Similarly to both PRU's and colleges of further education, there are concerns regarding this form of provision. Interestingly the same anxieties seem to be recurring. For example research has found that the type of provision offered to children may not match their aspirations and interests, further driving pupil disengagement. In a recent research study conducted by Thomson and Russell (2007) on behalf of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation two local authorities were found to have poor "academic" provision for excluded pupils with only seven out of around 180 types of provision offering academic courses. The rest were vocational, despite widespread academic aspirations among many students. Their findings suggest despite some very good local practices there is a lack of coordinated data about which programmes exist and who attends. There are a proliferation of programmes with varying funding sources, costs, entry practices and qualifications. The authors argue this situation bodes poorly for monitoring and for ensuring the entitlement to education and

training of those young people who are most marginalised by and through their schooling (Thomson & Russell, 2007).

When compared to mainstream the education provided to pupils who have been permanently excluded, has been given comparatively little attention by central Government (Ogg & Kaill, 2010). The latest Government figures estimate a cost of £15,000 a year for full time PRU placement. This compares with around £4,000 for mainstream secondary schools (DCSF, 2008b). Towards the end of their last term in office the Labour Government published a White Paper "Back on Track" (2008b). The aim of this paper was to improve accountability and responsiveness to school's needs. It set out to put in place minimum standards for alternative provision, however these did not materialise. The Coalition Government have made clear their plans for mainstream education. Now schools are responsible for their budgets it is questionable how many of them will be willing to part with a substantial portion of their funding to ensure young people labelled with BESD are provided with an adequate education. Unfortunately for some young people it could be a case of out of sight out of mind.

The evidence detailed above proves to highlight the chaotic educational journeys that young people labelled with BESD are likely to experience (Pirrie et al. 2011; Gazeley 2010). They are being catered for in a wide range of educational settings (Ofsted, 1999). There is a concern that within all these mechanisms the pupil voice is silenced by adults who make decisions on behalf of these young people. The position of pupils labelled with BESD in terms of voice will be critically explored throughout chapter four (pg. 68) however it was considered important to provide a brief overview within the context of the current chapter. The purpose of the chapter is to critically examine the position of the pupil, specifically how they experience their educational journey. Thus, it is necessary to examine the literature to review the procedures in place to enable pupils to have their voice heard.

3.1.4 Pupil Voice

A major aim of the study was to capture the educational journeys experienced by young people who have been labelled with BESD. Historically, Government legislation has highlighted the importance of seeking the pupil's perspective. The SEN Code of Practice (DfES, 2001, p. 27) stresses the need for a commitment to ensuring the long-term involvement of children in their school life;

> Children and young people with special educational needs have a unique knowledge of their own needs and circumstances and their own views about what sort of help

they would like to help them make the most of their education. They should, where possible, participate in all the decision-making processes that occur in education including the setting of learning targets and contributing to Individual Education Plan (IEPs), discussions about choice of schools, contributing to the assessment of their needs and to the annual review and transition processes.

The above quote acknowledges the powerful insights young people can provide into their educational experiences. The extent to which young people have a voice will be dependent on professionals' subjective judgements as to whether young people are capable of contributing to a discussion of their needs. As will be demonstrated throughout the study researchers have highlighted that this does not always happen in practice (Galloway & Goodwin, 1987). The suggestion here is that pupil voice is mere Government rhetoric and is being employed as a means for achieving school improvement and higher standards of attainment (Thomson & Gunter, 2006) rather than a tool to empower young people. This notion of pupil voice becoming mere rhetoric will be central to the study, as the study seeks to critically examine the reality for young people of being heard.

In addition professionals are often wary of the concept of pupil voice fearing that too much emphasis will be placed on the perspectives of the young person. Indeed some have argued that young people's participation in decision-making has the potential to "undermine authority and de-stabilise" school structures (Lundy, 2007, p. 929). Unfortunately the impact of this has led to "participation in major decisions being removed from those most affected by the decisions" (Freeman, 2004, p. 48). Young people are being denied their right to participate in decisions regarding their education (Bryson, 2010). This highlights the importance of a study which seeks to obtain the perceptions of young people and provide them with the opportunity to have their voice heard.

Although there is research to suggest that many teachers, psychologists and LA's do involve young people in their assessments (Gersch, 2001), little attention has been paid to the extent and nature of pupil involvement concerning SEN provision (Soar et al., 2006). Research does indicate that when young people's views are sought this is achieved through second hand methods such as parents, SENCo's/school staff and educational psychologists (Soar et al., 2004). In a more recent study Soar at al. (2006) focused on parental perspectives of pupil involvement in SEN disagreement resolution. Their findings suggest that children did not appear to be involved directly in the disagreement resolution meetings or at any stage of the process. Furthermore in the majority of cases, children were not approached by professionals to have their voices heard. It is important to acknowledge that these findings are only based on the experiences of ten parents. Young people themselves were not consulted during the research on whether they want the opportunity to have their

voices heard and if they do how they feel this can be best achieved. Despite Government rhetoric then do we ever really listen to young people's wishes when it comes to their education? The evidence which will be reviewed in chapter four suggests that vulnerable young people are not being provided with opportunities to have their voices heard (Sellman, 2009; Davies, 2005).

With the voices of pupils being ignored who speaks on their behalf? The newly published green paper on SEN by the Coalition Government (DfE, 2011) makes no mention of pupil voice. Here emphasis is instead placed on the role of the parents. The following section of the chapter will provide an overview of the position of the parent. Previous research has explored the position of parents with regard to support (McDonald & Thomas, 2003) and experiences of provision (Harris et al., 2008). In terms of their child's education it is questionable how much of a say they really have. Within chapter two it was asserted that parents and parenting behaviour will often be attributed to the development of BESD. For decades the Government have sought to address problems with behaviour in school by targeting the parents (Casen and Kingdon, 2007; Gewirtz, 2001). The study will now turn to critically examine how parents experience their position.

3.2 The parent of the "challenging" pupil

Within chapter two it was argued that the causation of BESD is complex and multifaceted. For many however it is the parent who is perceived to be the catalyst in the development to such unacceptable behaviour. Indeed teachers will often claim challenging behaviours displayed in the classroom will be the result of parental ineptitude. This is yet more evidence to support the existence of a cycle of mutual blame (Miller, 1994, pg. 34). It would seem important at this juncture to analyse how parents experience the mechanisms which have been put in place to address their perceived ineptitude and teach them how to be good parents.

3.2.1 Political agenda – blame

As noted throughout chapter two (section 2.3.3, pg. 31 and section 2.4.2, pg. 37) parents will often be blamed for their child's behaviour (McCord, 1979; Wilson, 1980; Riley & Shaw, 1985). This has led to parents of excluded pupils sometimes feeling they are judged as unworthy parents (McDonald & Thomas, 2003). These feelings are further exacerbated by a

policy discourse (for example Barriers to Achievement, 2004) which has tended to emphasise the impact of family background on educational outcomes (Gazaley, 2010). Here there is an underlying assumption that it is the aspirations and behaviours of working-class parents which need to change, rather than an education system that is unsuccessful at addressing pre-existing social inequalities (Casen and Kingdon, 2007; Gewirtz, 2001). Gewirtz (2001, p. 365) has attacked what is described as 'New labour's programme for re-socialisation of working class parents' as individualistic and parent blaming (Broadhurst et al., 2005). This leaves parents effectively silenced as they do not feel worthy and confident to have their voices heard. This means that in addition to young people themselves being ignored those designated to speak on their behalf are also pushed to the side-lines (Mcdonald & Thomas, 2003).

Previous legislation has focused on punishing parents through initiatives such as parenting orders (Crime and Disorder Act, 1998). However there is no published evidence to show that prosecuting parents for their children's non-attendance improves attendance in young people (Sheppard, 2011; Blacktop and Blyth, 1999; Zhang, 2004). For many families whose lives are characterised by trauma and enduring disadvantage such policies are likely to compound the problems. For such families, Broadhurst et al. (2005) argue a far more comprehensive strategy is required, that addresses parental need and facilitates participation. For over four decades the Government's approach to tackling parent ineptitude has been based on the notion of parent partnerships.

3.2.2 Parent partnership

The concept of developing parent partnerships was introduced as a mechanism for building relationships between the home and the school. Despite the best intentions of the Government evidence suggests that these services are simply a further tier of bureaucracy that can prevent parents from accessing the "real" decision makers (Todd, 2003). Studies such as McDonald and Thomas (2003) have found that parents see themselves as voiceless and powerless in the discourses that surround their child's educational journey. Difficulties can arise from the unequal power relationships between the parent and the professional (Paige-smith, 1997). Education policy and practice restrict the rights of parents to participate in decision-making about SEN and choice of provision. This is supported by Frederickson and Cline (2009, p. 22) who state that "...professionals and LEAs have generally been slow to embrace partnership in so far as it requires active sharing of information and control". The literature suggests that it is not only young people who are silenced but also their parents.

This clearly has significance for a study which seeks to gain the perspectives of parents and highlights the need to be critical of the position of parents within these processes.

Wolfendale and Bryans (2002) have argued that most parents do not have experience of SEN and so find themselves in an "information vacuum" at various stages of their child's life. The prevailing theme within the literature is one of "fighting the system", the mechanisms in place to support parents will often fail them and they are being left to deal with in some cases an unknown quantity.

3.2.3 Fighting the system

It is parents who will be responsible for ensuring their child receives the educational support they require to successfully progress through the education system. For some this can only be achieved through the obtainment of an SEN Statement. However the literature reviewed for the purposes of the study highlights that the system is not working (DfE, 2011). The current process of statutory assessment is extremely cumbersome which leads to many children having to wait too long to have their needs met (Sodha & Margo, 2010).

Parents have to be able to understand the relative roles of schools and local authorities (DCSF, 2009c). There are few mechanisms within the SEN system for providing support to parents who have to deal with a range of emotions and often daily contact with a variety of specialists who will be involved in their child's case (Truss, 2008). As with the process of exclusion there are organisations available to support parents. However it is questionable to what extent these are working in the best interests of the parents and their child.

In terms of the position of parents they are faced with issues that are beyond their control and are to a large extent subject to a system that is failing both them and their child. Warnock (2010, p. 44) describes the current system as 'wasteful and bureaucratic and causes bad blood between parents and Local Authorities and schools'. Currently, there is a vast amount of variance in what kind of provision pupils who have a statement access, and it is a postcode lottery provision (Ofsted, 2010). This is supported further by Pinney (2002, p. 120) who states that;

> the likelihood of getting a Statement – and therefore, in most areas, extra support in school – appears to vary in relation to a number of factors other than need, in particular, where you live, which school you attend and parental means and attitude.

The literature suggests that within the current system there is not a level playing field and the service received by parents and their children will be dependent on where you live. Parents

can push for a better service but they have to feel capable to do so. As previously suggested in the review the current discourse surrounding the position of parents is that of "fighting the system". Within this parents have reported feeling subordinated and marginalised (Row 2005; Pinney 2002; Pinkus 2005; Paradice and Adewusi 2002; Hess, Molina and Kozleski 2006). As with the process of exclusion it is the responsibility of the parent to speak on the behalf of the child to ensure they gain the support they require to successfully progress through the education system. The research highlights the importance of not only capturing the experience of pupils but also their parents. As it is not only the pupil who will be stigmatised once they have received the BESD label, their parents will also be judged as inadequate.

3.2.4 Parent voice

With increasing emphasis being placed on the important role parents play in their child's development, it seemed appropriate to critically examine how their voices have been heard within the education system. As noted throughout the study parents will often be blamed for the challenging behaviour displayed by their child (McCord, 1979; Wilson, 1980; Riley & Shaw, 1985). There have been recent moves within the political agenda to punish parents through the application of parenting orders and fines (Sheppard, 2011). Blame will be attributed to parents as they are seen to be failing their child by not getting them to school. Despite the introduction of numerous Government initiatives such as parent partnership, studies indicate the voice of the professionals takes precedence over the voice of the parent.

The relationship between parents and educational professionals can become even more frayed when a child has been labelled with BESD. Previous studies have highlighted the emotional and practical problems associated with being the parent of a child with SEN (Bruce and Schultz 2002; Russell 2003; Pinkus 2005; Hess, Molina and Kozleski 2006). Even for those parents who feel able to fight, it is very difficult for any parent to seek redress through the SEN Tribunal or the High Court. Indeed, unless one has means to do so it is impossible (Floridan, 2002). This evidence suggests that parents will simply be dismissed by those in a position of power.

So far this chapter has demonstrated the importance of listening to pupils and their parents but what about the teacher. Although there is a plethora of research which examines the position of teachers (Burton et al, 2009; Lloyd Bennett, 2006; Swinson & Knight, 2007; Hodkinson, 2009; Steer, 2009), it is still considered a worthwhile endeavour for the purposes of the current study to examine the potential role of the teacher in the development of BESD.

There are a number of reasons why teachers are deemed to have significance. Since the publication of the Warnock Report (1978) there has been growing emphasis on the role the teacher and the school can have in the development of BESD. Teachers and schools are responsible for providing education to this group of young people and the position teachers take is likely to be a reflection of their personal values and belief systems. Previous studies have argued that teachers can be a catalyst leading to young people displaying "challenging" behaviour in the classroom (Reid, 1985; Cronk, 1987). The current review however seeks to critically reflect on the position of the teacher to demonstrate how educational policy can impede on their ability to support this group of young people.

3.3 The teacher of the "challenging" pupil

Teaching pupils who display challenging behaviours can be exceptionally demanding both in terms of the professional skills required to deliver lessons and the emotional energy needed to deal with disruptive behaviour (Swinson & Knight, 2007). In a study by Barmby (2006) pupil behaviour was identified as one of the key factors in dissuading potential teachers from entering the profession and could cause existing ones to leave teaching. The following section will critically examine the impact Government legislation has on the individual teacher's ability to support this group of young people. A recent document by Steer (2009) produced on behalf of the Government reviewed behaviour standards and practices in schools in the UK. Within these standards the importance of ensuring newly qualified teachers have the confidence and skills to deal with more challenging pupil behaviours was stressed. Researchers suggest that many newly qualified teachers entering the profession believe they are ill-equipped to teach those labelled with BESD (Avramidis et al., 2000; Garner, 1996). Teacher training via the Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) pays scant attention to issues of emotional and psychological wellbeing, and many teachers graduate with a poor knowledge of how to tackle these issues, in particular, challenging behaviour (Margo et al, 2008). Teachers then are being placed in an impossible situation, they have not been adequately prepared to support this group of pupils yet they are expected to cater for their educational needs. This has led to many educators developing a utilitarian approach to the "challenging" pupil by removing them from mainstream setting. It has been argued this is due to external pressures being placed on teachers such as academic targets.

3.3.1 Political agenda – make do and mend

Chapter two (section 2.3.3, pg. 31 & section 2.4.3, pg. 37) demonstrated the growing emphasis being placed on teachers and schools in terms of the role they can potentially play in the development of BESD. Indeed Government publications such as the Elton Report (1989) have highlighted the need for teachers to be aware of the possible causes of disruptive behaviour by examining the quality of their teaching. However as noted throughout the study in reality very little changed and the same issues remained such as lack of training. The review will move to consider the potential benefits of teacher training in enabling educational professionals to support this group of pupils.

Within the literature base it is interesting to note the affect that training can have in relation to the issue denoted above. Research has highlighted the positive impact effective training programmes can have on teacher attitudes and their ability to support these vulnerable young people. Studies have shown that teachers' understanding of behaviour greatly impacts on their ability to respond well to it (Poulou & Norwich, 2002). Therefore it may be assumed that if they are provided with effective training they will be more understanding of the needs of young people labelled with BESD. Evidence also points to the strong relationship between sustained, collaborative teacher learning, where teachers learn with their peers, and improving pupil behaviour (Cordingly et al., 2005). Both these studies highlight the importance of continuing professional development for teachers.

The evidence within the literature indicates that there are teachers who show a strong child-centred approach to teaching pupils with SEN, with a commitment to helping the pupil. Daniels et al., (2003), note that "what mattered more (than the nature of the provision) were the degrees of skill and commitment shown by staff in any site of provision" (p. 134). In a study by Gross and McChrystal (2001) several of the teachers who participated had a good understanding of home circumstances. They had clearly made determined efforts to involve the family and showed much flexibility in seeking to accommodate and include the child. The study demonstrates the importance of the teachers being aware of the needs of individual pupils and positive impact this can have on a young person's educational journey. However for teachers to feel able to meet the learning needs of these pupils they have to feel competent and confident to recognise BESD. Worryingly research suggests that teachers do not feel equipped to do so (Goodman & Burton, 2010; Grieve, 2009; Visser & Stokes, 2003, Male, 2003).

3.3.2 The challenge of identifying and supporting the "challenging" pupil

The literature base indicates that teachers do not have a shared understanding of what the term BESD means which leads to the concept of inappropriate behaviour becoming socially constructed (Grieve, 2009; Visser & Stokes, 2003, Male, 2003). In the majority of cases it is teachers who are responsible for identifying whether a pupil has additional learning needs and should receive assessment for SEN. However as noted previously in chapter two teachers have indicated a need for specialist training on labels associated with BESD and an understanding of each of these conditions (Goodman & Burton, 2010). These issues make it difficult for educational professionals to arrive at a consensus as to whether a pupil has BESD. Furthermore these ambiguities will also have an impact on a teacher's confidence to identify SEN.

Teachers then will seemingly play a key role in identifying young people who they feel require assessment. However their judgements are likely to be subjective and based on their perceptions of certain behaviours and thresholds of social tolerance (McKay & Neal, 2009). It is therefore important to take into account the impact of environmental factors and context in determining whether a young person presents with BESD. The notion of "behaviour in context" has been highlighted by Hargreaves et al. (1975). He argued that whether a social action is considered problematic or non-problematic will vary according to person, place and time. Research highlights that how teachers view young people will be informed by their personal value positions (Hargreaves et al., 1975). They will however also be a reflection of wider policy perspectives and pressures (Adams, 2008). The literature makes clear that teachers are not being provided with adequate training (Goodman & Burton, 2010). This leaves teachers having to rely on their own previous experience when it comes to supporting this group of young people (Gray & Panter, 2000). As is explored below it appears that the difficulties teachers faced in identifying BESD is compounded by the SEN system no longer being observed as fit for purpose.

3.3.3 Fit for purpose?

There is a growing debate surrounding whether the current system for supporting pupils with SEN and more specifically BESD is fit for purpose. The literature surrounding this area is somewhat confusing with some authors arguing that the current approach represents a substantial improvement over earlier systems in terms of parental rights, efficacy and effectiveness (Farrell 2001; McConkey 2002; Gascoigne 1996). However problems of implementation have been identified at several levels (Truss, 2008). The demand for

Statements has gradually increased over the years and it has been suggested (Ofsted, 2010; Pinney, 2002) that perhaps the time has come to consider how far statutory assessment remains a "fit for purpose" process. Many researchers and educational professionals consider the system as both poor in theory and practice. Indeed the new Coalition Government recently published a green paper entitled "Support and aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability" (DfE, 2011, p. 15). This paper acknowledges that the system is no longer fit for purpose;

> Today's system for supporting children with SEN is based on a model introduced 30 years ago. It is no longer fit for purpose and has not kept pace with wider reforms; it fails children and undermines the effective use of resources, and it does not make the best use of the expertise in the voluntary and community sector.

It is evident that teachers are being placed in an impossible position. The confusion surrounding definitions of SEN means that it is difficult to predict the numbers of young people with SEN and therefore impossible to control resource allocation (Floridan, 2002). In the current system, funding for SEN is paid to local authorities in various grants that make up school budgets. They then delegate funding to schools, and retain some to pay for central services including SEN services and PRUs. In 2006/07, local authorities on average held back 12 per cent of their total schools budget, but this varied widely from less than five per cent to over 20 per cent. In many areas, most funding is delegated to schools and they choose to buy in extra provision (Sibieta, et al, 2008). The new Coalition Government will change the allocation of funding so it goes directly to the school, how this funding will be spent will be dependent on the ethos of the school and to some extent the parents.

In practice it appears the problem with delegating funds is that the money for SEN is not ring-fenced, and there is little accountability for whether or not schools have spent it on SEN. Ofsted (2010) research shows that some schools simply spend the funding intended for SEN elsewhere or on low-cost, low-skilled support from teaching assistants that serves only to make the child dependent and isolated from their peers (Blatchford et al, 2009). This is supported by the Lamb Inquiry (2009) which found that the delegation of funding to schools had led to a reduction in the quality of services in some areas. To a large extent the position of teachers will be determined by the powers that be. Rarely will they have the opportunity to have a say in the education they provide to pupils labelled with BESD.

3.3.4 Teacher voice

Teachers will be constrained by the political agenda of the day (Cooper, 2004). With regard to the relationship between the teacher and the pupil who has received the BESD label even

teachers who wished to pursue with challenging pupils would be pressured to tow the line. As stated earlier in this chapter the position of the pupil will be determined by the ethos adopted by the school. The ultimate decision whether a pupil is to be included or excluded will lie with the head teacher. Seemingly, it does not matter whether this contradicts the values and beliefs of individual teachers. It would seem that in addition to the voice of the pupil and the parent being silenced, teachers are given few opportunities to be heard.

Despite a growing interest in hearing the voices of pupils and parents within educational research, there is limited research which critically examines the teacher voice. There are however a range of teaching unions which are seen to be a representation of teachers' views and concerns. The National Union of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT, 2007, p. 1) previously published a statement which details their position on pupil behaviour;

> All pupils are entitled to inclusion in the education service and to have their educational needs met. However, for a small minority of pupils, inclusion in a mainstream school is inappropriate and access to specialist, alternative provision, of the highest quality, must be made available.

It would seem that although teachers generally endorse the principles of the inclusion they express concern about the inclusion of pupils with BESD (Hodkinson, 2011). However there is a need to be cautious with regard to how representative teaching unions are of all teachers. What is clear though is that pupil behaviour is a major cause for concern for many teachers. The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER, 2008) carried out a survey exploring teacher perspectives on pupil behaviour. Over two-thirds of respondents (68 per cent) agreed with the statement that: 'negative pupil behaviour is driving teachers out of the profession'. This is supported by Galton & MacBeath (2008) who conducted research to assess the impact of Labour policies on teachers' lives. They found that teachers increasingly singled out pupil behaviour as a major source of stress. There was a distinct difference of opinion between newly qualified teachers and those who have experienced a long career within the profession. Interestingly the newer teachers blamed the deterioration in classroom discipline on poor parenting and the increase in the number of children with severe learning difficulties. Longer serving teachers on the other hand tended to attribute the decline to the pressures emanating from the "performance culture".

The purpose of this chapter was to provide an overview of the position of the pupil who has received the BESD label, their parent and their teacher within the current education system. This chapter has demonstrated that these pupils are being removed through the processes of segregation and exclusion. This will lead to them facing chaotic educational journeys, where they are likely to experience a wide range of educational provisions. Throughout

educational history parents have been subject to a campaign of blame. It is their responsibility to ensure their child receives an adequate education however it is suggested they are subject to a system that is failing both them and their child. Furthermore teachers have expressed concerns regarding their ability to meet the learning needs of pupils labelled with BESD. The current education system is laden with contradictions between exclusion and inclusion which leaves little room for those who present with challenging behaviour. This chapter has highlighted that the current system is not working from the perspective of the pupil labelled with BESD, the parent or the teacher. The voices and concerns of these groups are often silenced by the Government who are responsible for formulating the education system. Yet despite this research studies have demonstrated that young people can provide powerful insights into their experiences. The following chapter will critically examine the position of young people labelled with BESD and the employment of pupil voice research. The study seeks to demonstrate how the concept of pupil voice has become mere Government rhetoric and despite best intentions pupils will be limited in their opportunities to be heard.

CHAPTER FOUR: ARE WE LISTENING? THE REALITY AND RHETORIC OF PUPIL VOICE

Since the late 1980s there has been an increasing interest in listening to what young people have to say (O'Kane, 2008). Schools have been encouraged to consult pupils in both organisational and pedagogic decision making. Although such projects are common in many mainstream schools these initiatives are much more challenging to put into practice in provision for pupils identified as having BESD (Sellman, 2009). Flutter (2007, p.344) notes that "listening and responding to what pupils say about their experiences as learners can be a powerful tool in helping teachers investigate and improve their own practice". However, teachers are often wary of pupil feedback as there is a concern that such initiatives may undermine their authority and change the power relationships that exist within many schools (Flutter, 2007).

In addition, examination of pupil voice literature highlights that many of these studies have focused on young people in mainstream educational settings rather than those of young people labelled with BESD (Davies, 2005). It would appear then that research to date has not, to any significant extent, captured the views of young people labelled with BESD. Indeed, it is the case that they appear as a neglected group within pupil voice research. This chapter critically explores and analyses the emerging concept of pupil voice as articulated within educational research. It provides an historical background to the young person's struggle for a voice. The review will also provide a context to the employment of pupil voice and why this is considered a worthwhile pursuit. Finally this chapter will critically examine some of the contentions surrounding the concept of pupil voice. The review begins by illustrating the complex nature of the term pupil voice. It would appear as with the term BESD (see section 2.1, pg. 21), this is a contested concept shrouded in ambiguities.

4.1 What do we mean by voice?

The term pupil voice can mean very different things to different people (Cheminais, 2008). Depending on the individual's perception of the child, people will interpret this notion differently. The basic premise of "pupil voice" is that listening and responding to what pupils say about their experiences as learners can be a powerful tool in helping teachers to investigate and improve their own practice (Flutter, 2007). In order for pupil voice to be truly effective though, teachers need to be willing to actually "hear" the voices of their pupils (Whitty & Wisby, 2007).

It is difficult to ascertain the origin of the phase "pupil voice" however in recent years it has been employed widely in educational literature (Fielding, 2001; Ruddock & Flutter, 2004; Wise, 1997; Davies, 2005) and it is generally applied to strategies in which pupils are invited to discuss their views on school matters (Arnot et al., 2004; Flutter, 2007). An early example of how this notion had been employed within the context of schooling is provided by *The Educational Review* which produced a special issue focusing on pupil voice over 30 years ago. Within this issue Meighan (1978, p.127 & 129) provides an example of a piece of research which is labelled as concentrating on pupil voice. He sought permission from schools to ask questions to pupils about effective teaching, some of the adult's responses included 'Children are not competent to judge these matters' and 'Children are not mature (enough) for this kind of exercise'. Despite these concerns his research found that pupils were generally thoughtful, insightful and co-operative in talking about teaching and learning. This study reflects how children were perceived by adults at this time. Indeed since this research the literature base makes clear that there have been significant developments in application and employment of this approach (Fielding, 2001; Ruddock & Flutter, 2004; Wise, 1997; Davies, 2005). As "pupil voice" is central to the study the following review will seek to ascertain the validity of this rather contested notion. Firstly though, it would seem appropriate that the study should provide an analysis of the terms surrounding pupil voice. Whitty & Wisby (2007, p. 5) have helpfully provided the following definition;

> Pupil voice can be understood as pupils having the opportunity to have a say in decisions in school that affect them. It entails pupils playing an active role in their education and schooling as a result of schools becoming more attentive and responsive, in sustained and routine ways, to pupils' views.

However for pupils to have their voices heard teachers need to be willing to listen. Alongside pupil voice, a variety of terms have been employed to describe the process of listening to the perspectives of young people. These include pupil participation and consultation. Unfortunately it would appear that these terms are just as contested and seemingly unworkable.

4.1.2 Pupil participation and consultation

Defining the terms becomes increasingly opaque when it is taken into consideration that in many environments the term pupil voice is articulated as pupil participation and consultation. The review seeks to demonstrate how the terminology surrounding pupil voice and participation can mean many things to many different people. Due to the complicated nature of such terms a number of concerns have been raised. For example Roche (1999, p. 489) has warned that the language of children's participation can be "cosy" and has suggested

that we need to be more critical of the circumstances in which children are asked to participate in decision making. The importance of participation has also been highlighted by Bennathan (1996, p. 91) who states "great harm can be done to children by well-meaning adults who fail to understand how the child interprets what is happening". The review will illustrate how it is adult agendas which tend to dominate within the field of pupil voice, as research is guided by adult decisions about what is relevant and important (May, 2005). There is a growing acknowledgement of the need though to strive for pupil empowerment and ensuring research methods are participatory. In light of these concerns Hart (1992) has rather helpfully produced a "ladder of participation" (see figure 4.1). Within the context of the current study Hart's ladder will be employed as tool to determine the level of participation being afforded to young people within educational research studies.

Figure 4.1: Hart's Ladder of Participation (Hart, 1992)

Although this has proved to be a useful tool for the purposes of the current study Hart's ladder has been subject to criticism. For example, some have questioned the validity of the concept of the ladder itself, which suggests a hierarchy and the objective of striving for the topmost rung (Treseder 1997). As Shier (2001) similarly points out, different levels may be appropriate for different tasks as part of an activity, project or organisation. Nevertheless,

such frameworks are useful in highlighting the need to understand and distinguish between different levels of empowerment afforded to children (e.g. see Sinclair 2004). Whilst frameworks such as Harts are useful Gersch (1996) and Cook-Sather (2002) remind us that we need to guard against the kind of tokenism which encourages pupils to express their views and then fails to either analyse what is said or use information to influence change. Here Harts ladder of participation, especially the "rungs", is employed to provide a framework for the analysis of the literature to demonstrate how pupil voice has been interpreted by educational professionals and researchers. The review will specifically explore the non-participation rungs of the ladder.

Non-participation (Feilding and Rudduck, 2002)

1. Manipulation – *adults consciously use children's voice to carry their own message*

Schools are being encouraged to seek the perspectives of pupils however this usually takes the form of focus groups and questionnaires (Riley, 2004; Maras et al. 2006). Furthermore they are dominated by the overriding concerns of adults such as teachers and governors leaving pupils effectively silenced (Fielding, 2001). In many cases then although there is to all intents and purposes an appearance of pupil involvement, it is adults who are shaping the agenda. This indicates that in some cases pupils are being manipulated into highlighting the concerns of adults rather than discussing issues that are of concern to them.

2. Decoration – *children used to promote a cause but have no involvement in organising the occasion*

Albeit pupils are increasingly being invited to talk, an imbalance of power remains. Pupils will seldom have the opportunity to organise discussions with their teachers, they still have to wait to be invited to have their voices heard (Fielding & Rudduck, 2002). Rudduck and Flutter (2004) firmly believe consultation with young people is essential however this process 'can fall short of making a difference to and for students because of power issues embedded in the everyday regime of schools and even woven into the very strategies we use for consulting pupils' (p. 157). An example of this would be young people not being given the opportunity to set the agenda when they are invited to discuss their experiences.

3. Tokenism – *children seem to have a voice but have little or no choice in the subject or style of communication and no time to formulate their own opinions*

With regard to consultation, evidence suggests that lip-service is often paid to the need for consultation with children. Research across a spectrum of services suggests consultation exercises are often poorly designed and/or tokenistic (McLeod, 2008). Cavet and Sloper (2004), in a review of children's involvement in local Government, found that consultation

was limited and patchy. In addition this tended to be confined to trivial issues, with weak methodology and there was little evidence of the impact on the decisions eventually made (Cavet & Sloper, 2004). Like Franklin and Sloper (2006) they found that socially excluded groups such as pupils who present with challenging behaviour were less likely to be included.

The ladder highlights the need for researchers to be reflective in terms of how participatory their study is. Researchers need to be aware of these issues and demonstrate how their study will overcome these difficulties to ensure young people are truly empowered. They need to be clear the extent to which their claims meet with the experiences of those participating in the research. It has been asserted by Franks (2011) that due to external constraints placed on researchers, for example funding requirements, total participation is a false goal. Instead she offers an alternative way forward, that of participative ownership. Here specific parts of the research process will be assigned to young people and they become stakeholders rather than owners of research (Franks, 2011). This notion of participative ownership is interesting as whilst it acknowledges the restraints placed on researchers it offers an alternative approach which seeks to empower young people. The need to be cautious is further reflected by sociologists of education who argue that the concept of pupil voice is a social construct.

4.1.2 Pupil voice a social construct

Researchers have identified the need to be cautious when applying the term pupil voice to their research. Komulainen (2007) writing from a sociological perspective argues that the child's "voice", as a concept, is a social construct. Komulainen also cautions against too simplistic a usage of the term "voice". Clearly it is essential for researchers to reflect upon their own positionality within the context of their research and how they interpret and present the perspectives of young people. It has become increasingly fashionable to link the idea of "voice" with terms such as "working from the bottom-up", and "participation", in order to describe different forms of collaboration between young people and professionals (Hadfield & Haw, 2001). As "voice" has been re-interpreted in these different collaborative relationships, and applied to an increasing range of issues, there is a danger of it becoming a "buzz" word that loses much of its original meaning (Hadfield & Haw, 2001). With the widespread use of terms such as "the voice" of the pupil there is a danger of creating a type of "chicken soup" effect – "where pupil voice is held out as an unquestionable good to be endorsed by all; a common, if somewhat dangerous side effect of children's rights discourse" (Sloth-Nielson, 1996, p. 337).

In many schools the opportunities for pupils labelled with BESD to make their voices heard though are still very limited. Usually these are the least listened to, empowered and liked groups of students (Baker 2005; Cooper 2006b; Lewis and Burman 2008), and the most likely to be at the receiving end of punitive and exclusionary practices (Cooper, 2001). Research studies highlight the positive impact listening to all pupils can have on school and the pupils themselves (Maras et al., 2006). Building on this evidence the study seeks to go further to work in partnership with the pupils to develop the research methodology to enable their voices to be heard.

This section has highlighted how the term pupil voice can mean different things to different people (Cheminais, 2008). This has led to differing interpretations by researchers this was captured by Hart's (1992) Ladder of Participation. There is a need for researchers employing pupil voice methodology to be reflective in terms of their positionality and perceptions of young people. The following section now employs a chronological framework to analyse how the concept of pupil voice has evolved over time. The purpose of this analysis is to demonstrate that despite good intentions young people's opportunities to be heard remain rather limited.

4.2 The emergence of pupil voice

This section will demonstrate how Government legislation has evolved to encompass changing perceptions of young people. Throughout educational history children have largely been observed as the property of their parents (Davie & Galloway, 1996). There is now though increasing recognition and acceptance that children's views and perspectives need to be heard (Fielding, 2001; Ruddock & Flutter, 2004; Wise, 1997; Davies, 2005). This section will demonstrate how the term pupil voice has been hijacked by the Government to promote an adult agenda rather than to empower young people to have a say on educational matters (Thomson & Gunter, 2006). The section begins with an examination of the child's struggle for a "voice".

4.2.1 "Seen and not heard"

From the earliest times children were to be "seen and not heard". Indeed, throughout the nineteenth century they were considered to be passive, silent, compliant, submissive and incompetent spectators in life events (Cheminais, 2008). Children, in legal terms, were at this time observed as property and were regarded by law, alongside married women and

lunatics, as "persons under disability" (Supreme Court Act 1873), with few rights and no voice. The positionallity of children within society and indeed the law remained largely unchanged until the landmark declaration on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1959). Whilst this declaration and subsequent legislation began a process of safeguarding children and providing for their protection, it did not empower children (Cheminais, 2008). Therefore, successive generations of children specifically within education and more generally within society itself were effectively silenced by legislation and the paternalistic hierarchical systems that dominated 19th and early 20th century. Towards the latter half of the 20th century the literature base details the developments in the rights of the child and both researchers and educationalists acknowledge the importance of listening to the voices of young people (for example UNCRC, 1989).

4.2.2 Rights of the child

Many researchers believe this change in the perceptions of young people began with the UN General Assembly in 1989 (UNCRC, 1989). The publication of Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1989 was seen as a key development in advocating the voice of the child. This article stated that;

> Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely, in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

The Convention was welcomed by many as having a positive ideology of the "child". Here children will be seen as social actors and human beings with their own rights (Lansdown, 1994). Although these articles have seemingly been fully embraced by the UK Government there remains a gap between the UK's international commitments and what happens in practice in relation to educational decision making (Coad & Lewis, 2004). For example, in the first periodic report on the UK in 1995, the UN Committee criticised the failure to solicit school children's views in relation to issues around education and school exclusion, stating 'the child is not systematically invited to express his/her opinion and those opinions may not be given due weight, as required under article 12 of the Convention' (UN CRC/C/15 Add.34 15 Feb 1995; reprinted in UK, 199, p. 208). Although in the following 2002 UK Report to the UN Committee it had been noted that progress had been made, again concerns were raised with regard to consulting young people on their educational experiences (UN, 2002). Despite the introduction of the Convention then, doubts have been raised as to whether adults are actually willing to embrace the concept of pupil voice (Coad & Lewis, 2004). Furthermore as with the label BESD (see pg. 21), the application of these articles will be

based on adults' subjective judgements. Not least, in that application of such articles would be largely dependent on adult interpretations. For instance they will be responsible for determining who is deemed "capable and mature". This leads to questions as to whether pupils labelled with BESD will be considered capable and mature. Alongside these concerns it appears that children themselves had very little input into the construction of the Convention (Hill & Tisdall, 1997).

The literature demonstrates that although substantial gains were made in the articulation of pupil voice it is clear that this notion of increasing children's rights has not been universally applauded. One view is that children's wishes have been given too much influence (Freeman, 2010). Indeed, the literature base is littered with research which has highlighted adult concerns, mainly teachers, of placing too much emphasis on the voice of the child (Fielding, 2001; Ruddock & Flutter, 2004). These issues will be critically examined in section 4.4 (pg. 87) of this review. The chapter will critically review the current position of young people in terms of having a voice. It is now over 20 years since the publication of the UNCRC and it will be argued that the concept of pupil voice has been reduced to mere Government rhetoric.

4.2.3 The rhetoric of pupil voice

In recent years it has seemingly become vogue to "include" the voice of children in research. However, the study now seeks to analyse whether these notions have been reduced to mere Government rhetoric. The New Labour Government introduced a series of key initiatives which aimed to provide young people with the opportunity to have their voice heard. For example the Code of Practice (DfES, 2001a) promoted pupil participation and emphasised the right of children with SEN to be involved in decision making processes. The SEN Toolkit (DfES, 2001b) meanwhile acknowledged that children should be encouraged to participate in all decision making processes that occur in education, including setting learning targets, developing individual education plans (IEPs), selecting schools and contributing to assessments and reviews (Harding & Atkinson, 2009). This demonstrates the importance being placed on seeking the views of young people labelled with BESD.

Moving further into the 21st Century the Government launched its landmark legislation Every Child Matters (DfES, 2004). This apparent strengthening of the notion of "Consultation with Pupils" was also addressed in the 2002 Education Act (DfES, 2002). Furthermore in 2004 a working party produced a document entitled "Working Together: Giving Children and Young People a Say" (DfES, 2004, p. 2) which states;

> By pupil participation we mean adults working with children and young people to develop ways of ensuring that their views are heard and valued...This means, in practice, opening up opportunities for decision making with children and young people as partners engaging in dialogue.

However, the study argues here that despite such apparent positive moves forward that pupil voice in this form will largely remain as rhetoric. This is because, as evidenced in preceding sections, how pupil voice is articulated will determine the level of participation afforded to young people. The Education Act 2005 placed a duty on Ofsted to have regard to the views of pupils when conducting a routine inspection of a school. The fact that pupil voice has most often been allied to agendas around school improvement means that in the "present performance dominated climate" pupil voice might be co-opted to produce "surface compliance" rather than deeper modes of reflection and engagement (Taylor and Robinson, 2009, p. 163). There are further concerns that such agendas might be cynical and manipulative, intentionally or not masking the "real" interests of those in power (Bragg, 2007). There is a marked tendency for senior policy makers within education to bring "pupil voice" into the policy conversation as a means of achieving school improvement and higher standards of attainment, rather than as a matter of the UN convention, citizenship and rights agenda (Thomson & Gunter, 2006). Strikingly, as noted in chapter three within the newly published Coalition Governments SEN green paper (DfE, 2011) there is no mention of pupil voice and seeking the perspectives of young people. Is this a sign of things to come? Is there an end in sight for the notion of pupil voice?

The sections above have outlined how the concept of pupil voice has been translated in Government legislation, the review now returns to examine how researchers have interpreted this notion. Researchers have highlighted the importance of moving away from data gathering processes, which treat young people as "objects", to methods which focus on empowerment and facilitation (Ravet, 2007). However within education it would appear that children remain the "objects" of education law rather than the "subjects" (Hill & Tisdall, 1997). Despite the recent developments in Government policy young people remain constrained and controlled by adults. At the beginning of this section it was noted that children had been considered property of their parents. New Labour progressed this by continuing to state that it is parents who are responsible for their child's education and they will be fined if a child does not attend school (DfES, 2004). The Coalition Government is taking further steps to "punish" the parent with the idea of taking benefits away from parents whose child does not attend school currently under review (BBC, 16.04.12). Focus within Government legislation remains one of control of both the pupil and their parents. Sparse attention has been paid to the legislation which advocates listening to the voices of these two vulnerable groups. This is demonstrated when young people are being assessed for SEN Statements. During this

process pupils are reliant upon professionals who will determine the topics for discussion and they will also be responsible for interpreting the young person's responses (May, 2005). As reflected in chapter three (see section 3.1.4, pg. 56) rarely are the views of the young person taken into consideration. Instead the adult will place their own interpretations on such discussions.

It is considered important for the researcher to take these issues into account when seeking the perspectives of young people. The researcher will need to reflect upon their own positionality and impact this will have on the study. The study will now critically review the methods which have previously been employed to engage pupils and highlights the challenges which have been encountered by researchers who have utilised this approach.

4.3 The voices of young people labelled with BESD

The research world as with the education system had previously considered pupils labelled with BESD to be "challenging" (Davies, 1996). This led to their voices being effectively silenced. However there is a growing interest in seeking the perspectives of young people labelled with BESD (see Table 4.1, pg. 78). A major consideration of the study is to critically examine how pupil voice has been employed within the context of educational research. With this in mind the chapter will now review previous studies which have claimed to utilise pupil voice methodology. These studies highlight that this group of young people clearly have a desire to be heard. There is a tendency as adults to make assumptions about young people, especially those who have received the BESD label. Due to the behaviours displayed by this group of pupils adults may even deem them unfit to contribute to discussions about their education. The purpose of this chapter though is to highlight the previous research which has been conducted with this group of pupils.

Table 4.1: Research with young people labelled with BESD using pupil voice

Item details			
Author	**Year**	**Title**	**Methodology**
Cooper, P	1989	Respite, relationships and re-signification a study of the effects of residential schooling on children with emotional and behaviour difficulties with particular reference to the pupils perspective	Interviews, observation and questionnaires
Awiria, O	1994	An exploratory study of the relationship between the physical environment of schools and pupil behaviour	Questionnaire, observations and interviews
Jones, R	1996	Perceptions of school among primary school pupils with and without behaviour problems .	Pupils assigned to 'problem' and control groups
Wise, S.	1997	The Behaviour of EBD Pupils and Their Perceptions of the Factors and Processes that are Significant in Relation to Their own Behaviour and Resulting Placement in Special Education	Interviews with pupils
Cooper, P & Shea, T	1998	Pupils' perceptions of ADHD	Interviews
Lloyd, G & O'Regan, A	1999	Education for social exclusion? Issues to do with the effectiveness of educational provision for young people with 'social, emotional and behavioural difficulties'	Interviews
Turner, C	2000	A pupil with emotional and behavioural difficulties perspective: does John feel that his behaviour is affecting his learning?	Interviews
Hamill, P & Boyd, B.	2002	Equality, fairness and rights – the young person's voice	Semi-structured interviews
Farrell, P & Polat, F.	2003	The long-term impact of residential provision for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties	Semi-structured interviews
Fox, P & Avramidis, E.	2003	An evaluation of an outdoor education programme for students with emotional and behavioural difficulties	Systematic observations of behaviour and recording of their academic performance during the programme, participant observation field notes kept by researcher and interviewing pupils and staff.
Riley, K	2004	Voices of disaffected pupils: implications for policy and practice	Study one – young people asked to draw pictures Study two – questionnaires

Author	Year	Title	Methodology
Davies, J.D	2005	Voices from the margins: The perceptions of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties about their educational experiences	Interview
Cooper, P	2006	John's story	Interview
Maras, P & Aveling, E	2006	Students with special educational needs: transitions from primary to secondary school	Semi-structured interviews
Maras, P., Brosnan, M., Faulkner, N., Montgomery, T & Vital, P	2006	'They are out of control': self-perceptions, risk-taking and attributional style of adolescents with SEBDs	Questionnaires
Travell, C & Visser, J	2006	'ADHD does bad stuff to you': young people's and parents' experiences and perceptions of ADHD	Semi structured interviews
Hallett, F., Hallett, G & McAteer, M.	2007	Every voice matters: evaluating residential provision at a special school	Questionnaires (parents) Student consultations
Ravet, J	2007	Enabling pupil participation in a study of perceptions of disengagement: methodological matters	Semi-structured interviews and activity based interviews
Harriss, L., Barlow, J & Moli, P	2008	Specialist residential education for children with severe emotional and behavioural difficulties: pupils, parent and staff perspectives	Semi-structured interviews with pupils, parents and staff
Midwood, C	2008	Eliciting pupil perspectives in a partnership project between a mainstream and a special school	Interviews
Boorman, G., Clarke, C & Nind, M.	2009	In their own words: the missing voices of girls with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties	Video dairies
Howe, J	2009	An investigation into the discourses of secondary aged girls' emotions and emotional difficulties	Focus groups with year 9 girls and semi-structured interviews with their teachers
Sellman, E	2009	Lessons learned: student voice at a school for pupils experiencing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties	Focus groups

Earlier it was evidenced how there has been increasing emphasis placed on the rights of the child and seeking the pupil perspective (UNCRC, 1989). The study now analyses the evolution of pupil voice research in terms of how it has been incorporated by researchers engaging pupils who have received the BESD label. The table (4.1) captures three decades of research within the field of BESD. The table illustrates that young people are willing to participate in research studies and can provide powerful insights into their educational experiences. A range of methods have been employed to elicit pupil perceptions including questionnaires (Maras et al., 2006; Cooper, 1989), interviews (Wise, 1997; Lloyd & O'Regan, 1999) and observations (Fox & Avaramidis, 2003). There have also been

innovative developments within this area with studies utilising interactive methods such as video diaries (Boorman et al., 2009). However issues remain in terms of adults determining which questions will be asked. There is also a need to acknowledge whose voice we are listening to and ensuring all young people are given the opportunity to have their say. Unfortunately researchers may be constrained by gatekeepers who will identify participants for the study. A series of reoccurring themes have been identified within the literature base. An analysis of the research studies contained in table (4.1, pg. 79) indicates such reoccurring methodological issues. These being class size, teacher relationships, curriculum and educational provision. These findings are further critically examined below;

4.3.1 Reoccurring themes

It is observed within the literature reviewed (Table 4.1 pg. 78) a number of themes recur and the review now seeks to critically reflect on each of these significant factors.

Class size

Wise and Upton (1998) found that large class sizes, lack of available teacher support, and high academic expectations were amongst some of the difficulties that pupils had experienced in mainstream education. In their conclusions they state for those who had received the BESD label, class size was of greater significance than for their mainstream peers. Ten years later this remains the case and has been reinforced by Harris et al. (2008), whose research confirmed the findings of Wise and Upton (1998). Furthermore, Davies (2005) in his study claimed that large settings make it difficult for teachers and others in authority to provide pupils' with the safe environment they require in order to thrive and develop.

Teacher relationships

Interestingly as reported in the previous chapter (see pg. 31), pupils were clear in their opinions of teachers. With pupils citing teachers and teaching styles as having a significant impact on the behaviours displayed in the classroom (Wise, 1997). Studies have demonstrated that the relationship between the teacher and pupil is significant in determining the success of lessons and the learning that takes place (Cohen & Manion, 1989; Lund, 1996). This is supported by Turner (2000, p. 15) whose participant's relationship with their teacher is summarised by the following quote "John only dislikes a subject if he

does not have a positive relationship with the teacher and consequently, he behaves differently according to the teacher he has".

Within Chapter Two teachers were cited as a major catalyst leading to pupils displaying "challenging" behaviour. How teachers respond to inappropriate behaviour is deemed a substantial factor in causing disaffection amongst pupils (Riley and Rustique-Forrester, 2002). This evidence lends further support to the need for a study which seeks to critically explore the relationship between the teacher and the pupil who has received the BESD label.

Types of provision

The literature reviewed in Chapter Three highlights that young people who have received the BESD label are being educated in a wide variety of educational settings (Gazaley, 2010; Pirrie et al., 2011). Within the table (Table 4.1 pg. 78) numerous studies have explored the different types of provision available to young people identified as having BESD (Fox & Avamidis, 2003; Hallet et al., 2007). Interestingly, it would appear that the pupil's educational placement will determine the extent to which young people are afforded a "voice" (Fox & Avamidis, 2003; Hallet et al., 2007). Indeed several commentators have noted that within this variety of provision that pupil voice is simply not considered a priority (Bragg, 2007; Thomson & Gunter, 2006). This is said to be due in part to cultures of accountability that leave little room for adults, let alone young people, to determine what happens in schools on a day to day basis (Bragg, 2007; Thomson & Gunter, 2006).

Curriculum

A number of researchers have also identified a correlation between behaviour difficulties and limited academic success (Epstein et al., 1989) and how inappropriate curriculum can exacerbate behavioural difficulties (Porter, 2000; Hamill & Boyd, 2002). White's (1980) findings support this with many of the pupils who participated in the study choosing not to attend school, or misbehave whilst there, not because they did not like schools but because they did not enjoy particular lessons and how they were taught.

Whilst these themes are of importance and indeed have impacted upon the thinking of the researcher it is in the application of research methodology that the real site of interest lies. This review seeks to demonstrate that although researchers may claim to pursue the pupil voice, in reality many of the studies are grounded in adult agendas and predetermined

concepts. The following sections, therefore, critically examine some of the potential methodological issues encountered by researchers conducting pupil voice research.

4.3.2 Methodological Concerns

An analysis of the studies detailed in the table (Table 4.1 pg. 78) indicates that in the main researchers have chosen to adopt a qualitative methodological framework to data collection and analysis. Examination of the data suggests that over reliance on such methodological approaches brings into these researches several potential dileminations. These are explored below;

Methodological choices

The majority of studies included in the review are based on a relatively small sample, with one including only the perceptions of a single pupil (see Turner, 2000). Although quantitative researchers would argue this leads to problems with producing generalisations and replication of the study, such issues do not have the same resonance for those based within the qualitative paradigm (Bryman, 1988; Golafshani, 2003; Gray, 2009). Generally speaking, qualitative researchers are prepared to sacrifice scope for detail (Silverman, 2005).

As indicated earlier a variety of research methods have been employed to unleash the pupil voice. Within this catalogue of methods the qualitative interview appears to be the data collection method of choice (Cooper, 1989; Wise, 1997; Turner, 2000; Farrell & Polat, 2003; Harriss et al., 2008). It may be observed interviews allow the researcher opportunity to gain a more detailed insight into the educational experiences of young people labelled with BESD (Bryman, 2004). They provide a flexibility that enables a pupil to directly engage with the research process (Bryman, 2004; Snape & Spencer, 2006). However it is unclear whether within these studies researchers have provided young people with the opportunity to frame the interview questions. For example in the study conducted by Harris et al. (2008, p. 35) it is stated 'content of the interview schedule was informed by a review of relevant literature and the professional experience of the researchers'. Strikingly there is no mention of consulting young people on the questions to be asked.

After interviews it would appear that questionnaires are another "favourite" method of researchers working in this area (Maras et al., 2006; Awiria, 1994). However the employment of questionnaires in pupil voice research is problematic as the questions asked

are usually predetermined by adults who design the study. For example in the Maras et al. (2006) study, young people were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed with a series of statements about themselves. Amongst these statements was one which stated 'I am always in trouble at home or school for my behaviour'. Clearly this put words into the pupil's mouth as the researcher has decided how the questions will be framed. The pupil is also not provided with an opportunity to explore the reasons behind their agreement or disagreement with the statements. The problems with the employment of questionnaires is further compounded if one considers Galloway's (1985) research which found that young people labelled with BESD are likely to have low literacy and numeracy levels. This is likely to have an impact on the pupil's confidence to fill in questionnaires (Galloway, 1985).

Albeit there is a marked tendency for researchers to lean towards either interviews or questionnaires, there is a growing trend towards the use of more innovative methods to capture the pupil voice (May, 2005). As demonstrated in the table (Table 4.1 pg. 78) a variety of methods has been used to supplement interviews, including multimedia methods (Boorman et al., 2009), drawings (Rilley, 2004) and observations (Cooper, 1989).

Evidently, although researchers claim to be unleashing the pupil voice, if we refer back to Hart's (1992) ladder of participation many of these studies would actually be considered non-participation. For example Hallett et al., 2007 the research focussed on the adult's perceptions of the pupil's needs. Interestingly, in terms of the study, within the literature base very little data is provided which analyses the perspectives of young people with regard to which methods they feel would be most appropriate to gather their views (Woodhead & Falkner, 2000; Prout, 2000; Laybourn et a. 2001). The fact that previous research is based on an adult agenda leads to questions as to whether young people are being given the opportunity to fully participate in the research process.

Pupil participation

There are further concerns with regard to data analysis processes themselves and whether in reality young people have been afforded the opportunity to ensure their experiences have been captured accurately. Indeed it is now widely recognised that participants should have the opportunity to receive feedback from researchers about the outcomes of the study (Coad & Lewis, 2004). Unfortunately due to the nature of some of the methods being developed within pupil voice research it can be easy for the researcher to place their own interpretation on the evidence provided by young people. Dockett and Perry (2007) have examined the use of drawing to highlight this point suggesting that it can be easy for researchers to

interpret drawings according to their own particular research agenda. This reinforces the need for researchers to reflect on their own positionality. It would seem important, in light of the main aim of the study that when analysing the data collected from young people they are provided with opportunities to confirm the findings of the study.

As well as the difficulties of interpretation of findings the literature also demonstrates how researchers have tended to focus on those who are the most able to articulate their views through traditional techniques such as interviews and focus groups. This has the effect that many young people who are the most disadvantaged or hard to reach are regularly excluded from pupil voice research (Clark and Statham, 2005). Furthermore, when such research is located within educational settings researchers are faced with professionals who act as gatekeepers. There is a plethora of research which acknowledges the impact of gatekeepers on accessing the voices of pupils (David et al. 2001; Denscombe & Aubrook, 1992; James, 1993; Mayall, 1996; Pole et al., 1999). Due to the position occupied by young people adults will be designated to speak on their behalf. This notion of gatekeepers seems an important issue to the reliability and validity of the study and will be critically explored within Chapter five (see section 5.7, pg. 102). However for the purpose of the current review it is clear the issue of gatekeepers will have an impact on the notion of choice and whose voices we are listening to.

Whose voice?

The review has demonstrated the complex nature of pupil voice research. These difficulties are further compounded when one considers that within these studies there appears to be a specific type of pupil who is being asked to participate. For example, Hallett et al. (2007) recruited pupils who had been selected to sit on the school council. The question this raises is whose voice did the research actually listen to here and are we therefore only getting a certain view of the school. It would seem that due to inherent power dynamics within the classroom certain groups of pupils continue to be ignored and thus remain on the periphery of decision making processes in education (Noyes, 2005). Amongst these are pupils who have received the BESD label (Rose & Shevlin, 2005). Noble (2003) indicates that the opinions of young people with SEN are rarely asked for, and when they are consulted the process is often tokenistic and their views are largely ignored. Adults will determine who is considered worthy of having their voice heard. Yet evidence suggests that pupils who are less articulate and who have difficulty in discussing their learning will gain particular benefit from opportunities to develop these abilities through being encouraged to reflect on what

they learn (Flutter, 2007). It appears then that there is a gap in pupil voice research as the voices of some of the most vulnerable young people continue to be silenced.

Ethical considerations

There would seem to be an issue then with the power dynamics inherent in classrooms and schools. This is brought to the fore when one considers the ethical issues of empowering and hearing the pupil perspective. Whilst these issues will be analysed more thoroughly in Chapter Five (see section 5.8, pg. 104) it is important to note here that researchers must at the outset of their study acknowledge their own value positions (Coad & Lewis, 2004). Moss et al. (2005) argue that there are risks and contradictions inherent in notions of young people as social actors, since relationships are never value-free but always imbued with inequalities. While they advocate seeking children's views and using these to develop more appropriate child care services they warn that it will tend to be the more privileged child's views which are likely to dominate. It is adults who will generally define the terms of the consultation. As such, consultation may support rather than subvert existing power structures.

One way to overcome these power relationships is to ensure young people are empowered. Listening is inextricably linked with empowerment: to ignore a person disempowers them. Taking notice of their views and allowing them to influence decision making is empowering. Listening is thus central to ethical practice (McLeod, 2008). There is also a need for researchers to be reflective in their approach and the understandings they attach to pupil voice. Some writers (Gersh, 1996; Cook-Sather, 2002) have emphasised the need to guard against tokenistic practice which fails to either analyse what is said or use the information to influence change. This again links back to Hart's (1992) "ladder of participation" and the need for researchers to reflect on how young people's voices are being heard. Researchers then as a matter of principle are required to be open and honest with young people throughout their study.

Examination of the literature detailed above highlights the need for researchers to be aware of potential pitfalls when conducting pupil voice research. As Komulainen (2007) warns there is a need to be cautious. Albeit studies such as Sellman (2009, p. 45) have demonstrated that pupils labelled with BESD can engage in research projects and have "extremely important messages". As noted earlier, researchers have previously been apprehensive to include the voices of this group of pupils. This is said to be due to

preconceived notions regarding the behaviours displayed (Davies, 1996). For many they are considered to present a "challenge". These issues are explored further below;

Engaging "challenging" pupils

A major concern encountered by researchers is keeping young people engaged in the research process (Maras and Aveling, 2006). This is because many of these pupils are likely to have experienced chaotic educational journeys (see section 3.1.2, pg. 47). Due to such chaotic educational journeys, previous researchers encountered problems in terms of keeping young people engaged in the research process (see for example Lloyd & O'Regan, 1999). According to Hart (2002) there is a growing concern amongst professionals and researchers as to what is possible and reasonable with this group of young people. MacConville (2006) suggests that the voice of the pupil with SEN has tended to be silenced by professional discourses and practices, thereby sometimes reducing pupils to passive recipients of specialist services. However there are though researchers willing to engage with young people who have been identified as having BESD. For example, Todd (2003) advocates if pupils are part of the decision making process, they can provide appropriate information about their skills and abilities and offer their views about possible interventions, enhancing the likelihood of successful outcomes. The review makes plain that listening to the voices of young people is not only good research practice it is also a legal requirement. However, as noted throughout the review concerns have also been raised as to the motives behind the employment of pupil voice not least in relation to the political agenda behind seeking the perspectives of pupils.

As described earlier in this review some adults are reluctant to engage with pupil voice research and have concerns about placing too much emphasis on the perspectives of children and young people (Lundy, 2007). Adult concerns tend to fall into one of three groups: scepticism about children's capacity (or belief that they lack capacity) to have a meaningful input into decision making; a worry that giving children more control will undermine authority and destabilise the school environment; and finally, concern that compliance will require too much effort which would be better spent on education itself (Lundy, 2007). The review will now turn to critically examine these concerns.

4.4 Critiques of pupil voice

Several commentators have expressed concerns as to the intentions behind pupil voice research projects. Flutter (2007) warns against pupil voice becoming the latest in a long line of educational chart toppers – ideas that come into favour for a few years and then fade away as a new hot topic comes along. This is further reinforced by Fielding (2001, p. 100) who notes;

> Are we witnessing the emergence of something genuinely new, exciting and emancipator that builds on rich traditions of democratic renewal and transformation?...Or are we presiding over the further entrenchment of existing assumptions and intentions using student or pupil voice as an additional mechanism of control?

The degree to which pupil voice has been embraced by both the Government and schools is questionable. In many cases the level of participation afforded to pupils will be dependent on adult interpretations, specifically the teacher. Despite numerous studies (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004; MacBeath at el, 2003; McIntrye, Pedder & Rudduck, 2005) showing that where increased democracy is introduced, the benefits for both teachers and pupils are great, teachers remain wary of the concept of pupil voice. Ruddock and Flutter (2003) highlighted some of these anxieties which included their practices being subject to criticism and a fear of challenge to the hierarchical structure of the classroom. Teachers' apprehension towards pupil voice has also been linked to a greater emphasis being placed on accountability within the classroom. Teachers are anxious that listening to pupils will unleash "a barrage of criticism" (Rudduck & Flutter, 2003, p. 75). In addition, how pupil voice is interpreted will to some extent be dependent on the attitudes of teachers towards their pupils. The evidence cited in the previous chapter indicates that teachers will hold certain perceptions towards this group of pupils. If they have negative preconceived notions, as some do towards those deemed to be "challenging", this may limit their ability to really hear what pupils have to say.

More recently NASUWT (teaching union) (TES, May 2010) called for regulations about school councils and associate pupil governors to be reviewed, claiming the abuse of pupil voice had "spiralled out of control". Interestingly Chris Keates, General Secretary of the NASUWT made the following statement;

> Children are not small adults. They are in school to learn, not to manage either the school or staff. The regulations must be amended to exclude specifically the involvement of children and young people in activities that allow them to make judgements about the suitability of teachers for posts and teachers' competencies in the classroom.

Here we seem to be reverting back to the notion of children should be seen and not heard. Clearly there is a need to be critical when applying the term pupil voice to one's work. Pupil voice has become a powerful moral crusade and consequently criticism of voice has been muted (Lewis, 2010). Two particular concerns have been identified, firstly the purposes behind such engagement with children and secondly the ethical protocols involved (Lewis, 2010). When adopting this approach there is a need for the researcher to be clear to all the young people taking part what their participation will involve and the intended outcomes of the study.

The rush to hear the voices of young people masks the danger of being insufficiently careful about how we go about hearing those voices (Hadfield & Haw, 2001; Lewis, 2010). Although researchers claim to be seeking the pupil perspective, are they really hearing what the young person has to say? Listening better requires the researcher to be reflexive and reflective in decoding the encounter (Lewis, 2010). The converse of having a voice is being silenced. A group can be silenced in many ways, from being ignored or being stereotyped in such a way as to invalidate what they say (Hadfield and Haw, 2001). This is certainly true for young people who have been identified as having BESD who have in the past rarely been considered to take part in research studies. The "voice" of young people is being increasingly sought as part of the general move towards social inclusion. It has become an established element of central and local Government rhetoric, but as it gains in popular usage it becomes increasingly open to question and criticism (Hadfield and Haw, 2001).

The review set out to provide an overview of how pupil voice has been interpreted both within Government legislation and BESD research studies. It has highlighted the importance of researchers being reflective and critical when applying this term to their work. Although there have been positive moves forward in terms of the position occupied by young people it will be adults who are responsible for interpreting these ideas into practice. Worrying evidence suggests that barriers such as gatekeepers remain and these mechanisms can work to silence the voice of the pupil. The review has provided a foundation for the study to build on to ensure such barriers are overcome and the study is able to meet with its intended aim of locating pupils at the heart of data collection processes. The study now turns to provide an overview of the approaches adopted throughout the research and critically reflect on the researcher's journey into the realm of pupil voice.

CHAPTER FIVE: METHODOLOGY

The study aims to develop innovative, participatory and exploratory research strategies for harnessing the voice of young people labelled with BESD. In light of this, a major task of the study was to identify data collection methods which would enable young people to actively participate in the research process. Extant researchers who have utilised pupil voice as a data collection method (Hamill & Boyd, 2002; Ravet, 2007; Thomas, 2007) have demonstrated that young people have a lot to offer researchers as they can provide powerful insights into their experiences. However as demonstrated in chapter four (see pg. 68), the term pupil voice is a rather complex and multi-faceted concept. Adding to this complexity is the fact that a researcher will hold their own views of pupil voice. It is important from the outset of the thesis therefore to consider the positionality of both the study and the researcher.

This chapter will critically examine the theoretical position of the research, provide an overview of the context of the study and discuss ethical considerations. In addition, there will be a critical analysis of the methods and the data analysis techniques employed throughout the research. Due to the nature of the study an overview of the findings from the pilot study is also provided. This was considered essential as the study aimed to develop novel and therefore untested methods of data analysis. Throughout this chapter the challenges of employing pupil voice will be critically examined. The chapter begins by reviewing the intended aims of the study.

5.1 Aims of the study

The aims of the study are to:

- critically examine how BESD are defined, identified and operationalised for young people within the English education system;

- explore the perceptions of young people who have been identified as having BESD by employing novel and innovation data collection techniques;

- produce peer-generated research with young people who have been identified as having BESD;

- identify models of good practice and effective provision for young people labelled with BESD by seeking the perspectives of teachers, parents and pupils; and;

- explore and map the antecedents of "challenging" behaviour from the perspective of the pupil, the parent and the teacher.

5.2 Theoretical positioning of the research

At the beginning of any research project the researcher needs to make clear their position in terms of the research approaches and strategies that will be employed. Researchers make methodological choices based on their assumptions about reality and the nature of knowledge (Cohen et al., 2007). Researchers will choose a strategy that is likely to be successful in achieving the aims of the study and one that works best for their particular research project (Denscombe, 2010). The study seeks to hear the voices of young people labelled with BESD and to understand their world from their perspective. It is therefore considered imperative that the researcher reflects upon their own positionality, which includes their personal background, their empistemological stance and most importantly their positioning as an adult (Weller, 2006).

There are two main research paradigms detailed within the academic literature those of positivism and interpretivism (Bryman, 2004; Denscombe, 2010: Robson, 2002). The creation of a methodological foundation for the study was considered crucial in order for the study to meet with its intended aims. The following section sets out the methodological and ethical approaches to the study and critically examines why these were considered the most appropriate to meet the aims of the research.

BESD studies which have been based within the positivist paradigm have tended to focus on interventions, measuring outcomes and effectiveness of different provision (Reid, 1993; Holmes, 1995; Bennathan & Boxall, 2000; Evans et al. 2004). Here the researcher will determine the focus of enquiry and to a large extent the research will be imposed upon the young person (Ravet, 2007). The current study attempts to move away from emphasis being placed on adult controlled research to explore the beliefs and feelings of the participating pupils. The literature base has of late observed a proliferation of studies which seek to hear the voices of those labelled with BESD (Cooper, 1989; Wise, 1997; Turner, 2000; Davies, 2005; Sellman, 2009). Previous researchers (reviewed in chapter two pg. 21) have highlighted the importance of considering the impact social factors such as the home, school and wider society can have in the development of BESD. Furthermore, as well as the importance of social factors to the formulation of the paradigm Wise (1997) helpfully adds that a researcher's choice of paradigm will be dictated by whether they are seeking to study the reasons behind challenging behaviour or the causes of BESD. Wise (1997) believes those who strive to identify the causes of BESD will necessarily adopt a positivist approach. They will employ the methods utilised within the natural sciences which they believe allow for casual statements about behaviour to be made and these patterns will

enable future predictions about behaviour to emerge (Wise, 1997). However, this study seeks to move beyond this objective approach and whilst it does analyse the antecedents to BESD it aims to do so by developing mechanisms to "hear" the voice of the pupil, parent and teacher. Here emphasis will be placed on the individual's understanding of their journey through the education system, how they make sense of their world (Snape & Spencer, 2006, Bryman, 2004). Within positivist research it is the case that the voice of the young person is confined and restricted as adults determine what questions will be asked and how these are to be answered (Lewis, 2010, Wise, 1997).

The current study though strives to be different, it seeks not only to listen but actually "hear" the pupil voice. In order to meet with the intended aims of the study the research will need to identify and resolve a whole variety of issues (Mason, 2002). As the positivist paradigm seemed inappropriate to the stated aims of the study, this naturally led the researcher to the interpretivist paradigm. However, interpretivist researchers have been criticised for being too subjective. It has also been argued that these researchers rely too much on their often unsystematic views about what is deemed significant and important to the study (Gray, 2009). In addition there are concerns that the findings of such research are difficult to replicate and there are problems with generalisation (Bryman, 2004). It is not the intention of the current study to produce generalisations, instead, focus will be placed on locating the pupil at the heart of the research process. The intention is to produce individualised accounts of the pupil's educational experiences. These accounts will therefore be context specific as they reflect the perspectives of the pupil (Dockett & Perry, 2007).

Further criticisms have been aimed at the paradigm with regard to the reliability and validity of the research produced. Traditionally, reliability and validity have been deemed an important criterion for assessing the quality of research within the positivist paradigm (Bryman, 2004). However their relevance to qualitative research has been a contested issue for many years amongst intrepetivist researchers (Bryman, 2004; Mason, 2002; Sarantakos, 2005). In order to overcome some of the limitations of the interpretive paradigm, Mason (2002) advocates adopting a "critical self-scrutiny" approach and the importance of researchers being accountable for the quality of their research. Therefore throughout the study the researcher will develop active skills to identify and resolve any issues encountered which may have an impact on the research process.

In summary despite the concerns surrounding interpretivist research, it was deemed the most appropriate paradigm to enable the study to meet with its intended outcomes. The study seeks to really "hear" the pupil voice, as such it is considered necessary that the research is framed within a paradigm that affords flexibility. To enter the field with

predetermined notions and a rigid methodological approach to the study design would only work to silence the pupil voice. Furthermore this approach reflects the position of the researcher who believes that young people should feel part of the research process. The current study wishes to move away from research mechanisms which are done unto young people. It was therefore considered vital to employ theoretical frameworks that would support this approach and enable voices of the pupils to be heard. For the purposes of the current study it was deemed essential to critically examine two theoretical areas namely, pupil voice and grounded theory.

5.2.1 Pupil voice

As evidenced in Chapter Four (pg. 68) research has a long tradition of viewing young people as objects and not people in their own right (Brownlie, 2009). It was discovered that within this research world young people are controlled and bounded by adults who choose what and how children's worlds are to be investigated. However, a new world is emerging, one in which children are not objectified but rather one where they are to be treated as individuals as equal partners in research and importantly one in which their voice is to be heard. Chapter four critically examined some of the predominant issues encountered by researchers who employ this approach. The analysis of the literature identifies the notion of voice (Komulanien, 2007; Sloth-Nielson, 1996; Rudduck & Flutter, 2004; Sloper, 2006), the challenge of developing participatory research methods (Hart, 1992; May, 2005) and the ethical concerns (Coad & Lewis, 2004; Groundwater-Smith, 2007) to be major areas of concern. These will be subject to further examination throughout the thesis.

The preceding chapters have made clear the position of pupils who have received the BESD label. Chapter four demonstrated that despite developments within the fields of pupil participation and education when young people are consulted this is often considered to be tokenistic practice. This was clearly evidenced within Hart's "ladder of participation" (see pg. 71) which raised concerns regarding the level of participation being afforded to young people. The study seeks to offer an alternative approach as it intends to actively engage young people in the research process through the employment of innovative research methods designed in partnership with young people labelled with BESD. Brownlie (2009) provides support for this, observing that when young people shape the research agenda, rather than relying totally on adult perspectives, the focus of the investigation becomes the way in which they experience their world. For these reasons it was considered important to adopt a participatory approach to the research. The use of participatory research methods has gained popularity across the disciplines of the social sciences. This is seen as a move

away from positivist approaches which are seen as objective and detached (Bagnoli & Clark, 2010). However, as noted in chapter four (see section 4.1.1, pg. 69), there is a need for researchers to be cautious when employing participatory research methods. Hart's (1992) "Ladder of Participation" (fig 4.1, pg. 71) illustrates that there are degrees of participation. As the study intends to develop research methods which enable young people to have their voice heard it was considered essential for the researcher to be aware of these issues. A further consideration for anyone employing this approach is how the data are analysed. It is essential that the voices of young people are not silenced by researcher interpretations. With this in mind the chapter will now critically examine grounded theory as a potential method of data analysis.

5.2.2 Grounded theory

Grounded theory is defined as "the discovery of theory from data systematically obtained from social research" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 2). Through detailed analysis of the data emerging themes, explanation and theory can be derived. These explanations will be grounded in reality as concepts and theories are developed with constant reference to the data collected (Mason, 2002; Denscombe, 2004).

There are difficulties the researcher will need to be aware of when adopting this approach to data analysis. Indeed there is much confusion surrounding this method, and a review of the literature highlights that there are many inconsistencies and unresolved issues regarding the nature and process of grounded theory (Cutcliffe, 2000; Charmaz, 2006; Thomas & James, 2006). Nowhere more are these tensions apparent than in the gulf that developed between the "founding fathers" of this approach (Dey, 1999; Thomas & James, 2006). Since its emergence the two authors have gone in rather divergent directions with Glaser adopting a model of theory generation which involves rigorously analysing the data and is devoid of interpretivism (Boychuk Duchscher & Morgan, 2004). Stauss' on the other hand advocates an interpretive stance encouraging direct questioning of the data and is conceptually descriptive (Boychuk Duchscher & Morgan, 2004).

Cultcliffe (2000) has critically examined some of the methodological issues researchers need to be mindful of when employing grounded theory. One key issue discussed throughout this paper is when to conduct the literature review. It is well documented that the researcher should avoid conducting a literature review prior to commencing data collection and analysis (Stern, 1980; Stern et al. 1982; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Stern, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1994). The purpose of avoiding the literature review is to ensure the emergent theory will be grounded in the data rather than the researcher's prior knowledge on the topic being

investigated. There are however researchers who disagree with this approach, for example Hutchinson (1993) suggests a literature review should precede data collection to identify gaps in knowledge or help develop a rationale for the proposed research. Furthermore as Culcliffe (2000, p. 1480) notes 'no potential researcher is an empty vessel, a person with no history or background'. Within the current study the literature review has developed as an on-going process. At the outset the researcher reviewed the literature to gain an insight into the field of study. Focus then turned to data collection and analysis, following this process the researcher returned to the literature.

Reviewing the literature then formed a fundamental part of the research process. By examining the literature in detail at the outset of the study the researcher was provided with the opportunity to formulate research questions and identify an area of focus which had previously been given scant attention (Dunne, 2011). Once immersed in the literature the researcher was able to identify key themes to be explored throughout the study. As stated throughout the thesis these included the BESD label, educational journeys, the culture of blame and pupil voice. Chapter two (see pg. 21) outlined the impact the government agenda has on the education of those who have received the BESD label. It was detailed how this was in a constant state of flux. What remains the same however is that these pupils present a challenge to educators and this leaves them on the periphery of mainstream education (Armstrong, 2005; Tomlinson, 2005; Adams, 2008). For the purposes of the study it was considered essential for the researcher to have a detailed understanding of the complex processes surrounding the educational journeys of pupils' who has been labelled with BESD.

As noted above the literature review was developed as an on-going process this approach was adopted to help clarify ideas and to demonstrate how and where the study fits or extends relevant literatures (Charmaz, 2006). By reviewing the literature both prior to and following data collection the researcher was able to locate and defend their given position toward the field of study (Charmaz, 2006; Holiday, 2002). In addition Charmaz (2006) advocates researchers treating extant concepts as problematic as this will allow them to examine the extent to which their characteristics are lived and understood by the research participants. Throughout the study much has been made of the significance of the government's approach to the "challenging" pupil and the effect educational policy will have on the lived experiences of pupils, parents and teachers. As detailed within previous chapters a major factor in this is the impact of the market forces agenda. Here emphasis will be placed on profit and meeting performance targets which leaves little room for those who do not fit with this agenda (Armstrong, 2005; Tomlinson, 2005; Adams, 2008). Through detailed examination of the literature the researcher was exposed to the contentious and dilemmas that surround the educational experiences of those designated as having BESD. It

is important to stress however that although the literature directed some of the focus of the study it was considered essential for the researcher to remain open to emergent themes.

A further area for debate discussed by Cutcliffe (2000) is the interaction between the researcher and the world they are studying, specifically how this affects the emerging theory. Any researcher employing grounded theory will need to be clear about which philosophy and resulting analysis approach they have adopted and the impact this will have on the research process (Boychuk Duchscher & Morgan, 2004). As the study will be based within the interpretive tradition, a constructivisit grounded theory approach will be utilised. Constructivists 'study how and sometimes why participants construct meanings and actions in a specific situation' (Charmaz, 2006, p. 130). Adopting a grounded theory approach to both the process and analysis of data collected is considered important when seeking the perceptions of young people (France et al., 2000; Roberts, 2008). By adopting this approach the voices of pupils will not be constrained by the researcher's interpretation. By capturing verbatim accounts of how they experience their educational journey the pupils will be afforded the opportunity to share what is considered significant to them in their own words. The data will be initially analysed by the researcher who will then go back to the young people to discuss the identified themes and confirm their perspectives have been captured accurately. It is evident that any researcher adopting this approach will need to be clear with regard to the procedures employed during their research. With this in mind the following sections will critically examine the processes and strategies employed for the purposes of the study.

5.3 Study design

The study took place within one North Western Local Authority (LA). The study aimed to gain detailed insights into how the education system is experienced by those labelled with BESD, their parents and teachers. In order to achieve this, the study adopts a critical case study design. The employment of case study research is widespread in social research and in education (Denscombe, 2004). One defining feature of case study research is the variety of perspectives that are available to the researcher within a specific context. By gaining a range of different perspectives, case study designs can build up detailed in-depth understanding (Lewis, 2006; Sarantakos, 2005; Burton, Brundrett & Jones, 2008). This is particularly germane to this piece of research as it will enable the researcher to gain the perspectives of pupils, teachers and parents.

Whilst it is apparent that a case study design has a lot to offer in terms of investigating the study's main research questions, the literature base highlights that it is subject to much criticism. For example, problems have been identified in terms of whether generalisations can be made from the findings (Bryman, 2004). In addition, case studies have been criticised for failing to develop a sufficiently operational set of measures and that "subjective" judgements are used to collect the data (Nisbet and Watt, 1984; Yin, 2009). To overcome this, researchers are encouraged to actively seek out negative instances as defined by the theory with which they are working (Mason, 1996; Silverman, 2005). Real life is composed of different perspectives that do not always coincide, discussing contrary information adds to the credibility of an account (Creswell, 2009). Researchers are required to be honest and transparent about findings from sub-groups, the views or behaviours of which differ to those of the population being reported (Gray, 2009).

Despite these concerns case study researchers have argued that 'they aim to generate an intensive examination of a single case, in relation to which they then engage in a theoretical analysis' (Bryman, 2004, p. 52). Denscombe (2004) argues that although each case is in some respects unique, it is also an example of the broader situation. So with this study comparisons can be drawn from LA's with a similar demographic. The onus is on the researcher to ensure that sufficient detail is included with regard to how the case compares. Furthermore, interpretive researchers such as Mason (2002) have emphasised the importance of taking into consideration the "wider resonance" of research rather than concentrating solely on the ability to make generalisations from findings. To this end the researcher will need to ensure consideration is given to the extent to which the findings from this study can have on any "wider resonance" outside of the specific context of the LA being investigated. As with many of the previous interpretive studies which have employed a case study approach, the focus is on comparability of the research (Dockett & Perry, 2007). The emphasis will be placed on whether others can make sense of the study and the results (Dockett & Perry, 2007).

In light of the study's main aim of exploring pupil voice, significant time and effort has been placed into talking to young people to gain their thoughts on potential methods of data collection. As detailed throughout the study, this aspect of the study is significant as consultations with participants are often bypassed in educational research, especially where young people are concerned (Macnab, Visser & Daniels, 2007). Analysis of the literature base in chapter four revealed that a number of methodological techniques have proved useful for the collection of data from young pupil labelled with BESD (Table 4.2, pg. 76). The most commonly employed method being interviews (Cooper, 1989; Wise, 1997; Turner, 2000; Farrell & Polat, 2003; Harris et al., 2008) closely followed by questionnaires (Maras et

al., 2006; Awiria, 1994). In addition there has been a growth in more interactive and participatory methods (Ravet, 2007; Boorman et al., 2009). However the most popular approach to BESD pupil voice research appears to be adopting a multi-method approach.

As noted by Drew et al (2010) a momentous task for any researcher is ensuring their chosen methodology is interesting and appealing to enable young people's engagement and promote participation. In order to achieve this, a range of methods were considered including questionnaires, multi-sensory approaches, digital technology, focus groups and interviews. Following critical examination of the literature and discussions with young people it was determined that similarly to previous researchers the study will pilot a mixed method approach.

5.5 Approach adopted for the study

The study aims to develop innovative mechanisms for liberating the pupil voice. As part of the approach developed it was considered important to have visual elements in addition to verbal exchanges. Previous researchers have advocated the use of distraction strategies in order to help facilitate the data collection process (Doherty & Sandelowski, 1999). A major aim of the study is to capture the educational journeys experienced by young people labelled with BESD. This will involve young people recalling past events. It has been suggested by Doherty and Sandelowski (1999) that offering props to young people can stimulate recall. Drawings have also been identified as a valuable technique in encouraging young people to participate in research (Coad & Lewis, 2004). Young people require a variety of mechanisms to be able to express themselves, and researchers need to listen with all their senses to what is being communicated (Pascal & Bertram, 2009). The techniques developed for the purposes of the current study are detailed below;

5.5.1 Activity sessions

O'Kane (2008) explored the development of participatory techniques in order to record young people's views. She developed a number of participatory research methods which included the notion of "activity days". During these activity days young people were invited to share their views with other young people. A range of participatory activities were

designed to enable an exploration of children's views. They included graffiti walls and storytelling. These are seen as a way of capturing the perspectives of children and young people. The employment of activity days draws upon the literature relating to focus groups.

Focus groups have been described as 'loosely constructed discussion with a group of people brought together for the purpose of the study, guided by the researcher and addressed as a group.' (Saratakos, 2005, p. 194) Researchers who have consulted young people on methods of data collection have found that they would prefer to meet in groups as they felt less shy and this was considered fun, quick and convenient (Stafford et al., 2003; Hill, 2006). Bryman (2004) amongst others has examined the advantages of utilising this research method. Firstly, it allows the researcher to develop an understanding about why people feel the way they do. It also provides the opportunity for participants to probe each other about why they may hold a certain view (Gray, 2009). Secondly, participants are able to discuss issues in relation to a given topic that they believe to be important and significant (Cohen et al., 2007). Thus, young people will be able to identify the main issues that are of concern to them. Thirdly this method allows the researcher to study ways in which individuals collectively make sense of a phenomenon and construct meanings around it (Morgan, 1988). This is a key feature of interpretive research. Furthermore Krueger and Casey (2000) suggest that this method tends to present a more natural environment than that of an individual interview because participants are influencing and influenced by each other. When conducting focus groups it is important to consider both the location and the atmosphere created. Thus, the researcher will need to ensure a permissive environment is created in the focus group so participants are able to share their perceptions and individual points of view (Krueger & Casey, 2000). This is of particular importance for this study as data collection will be taking place in the young person's learning environment, the significance of this will be explored further within section 5.8 (pg. 104).

The researcher will guide the activity sessions and suggest themes for the young people to discuss but will allow space and freedom for the young people to express themselves. This was considered important in order to give young people a voice and avoid the researcher being seen as an authority figure (Cohen et al., 2007). Young people will be invited to join discussions examining different themes which are relevant to the research – activities could include producing diagrams, graffiti walls, mapping and storytelling. The activity sessions will provide young people with the opportunity to direct the content of the discussions and "rely [them] to [explain] their interpretation of their reality to the interviewer" (O'Kane, 2008, p. 144).

Despite activity sessions having never been trialled within the area of pupil voice the evidence suggests that this method will enable young people to feel part of the research process and thus have their voices heard. Although activity sessions are observed as essential, by themselves they risk mono method delimitation. The researcher needed to consider additional methods of data collection. Researchers acknowledge the importance of adopting a multi-method approach for example Cohen et al. (2007) inform us that validity of a study may be increased by methodological triangulation. In addition, adopting a multi-method approach helps to reflect the diversity of the young peoples' experiences and competencies (Barker & Weller, 2003). As evidenced in previous chapters (see section 2.1, pg. 21) the BESD label is a complex and broad term which is applied to wide variety of young people with a wide range of educational needs. It was considered essential for the study to take account of these issues when designing the methodology for the research. This again emphasises the importance of adopting a flexible approach so the study can be adapted to meet the requirements of the individual participants. In light of this it was decided that the activity sessions would be followed by individual interviews to gain a more detailed insight into the educational journeys experienced by young people.

5.5.2 Educational life grids

One of the primary aims of the study is to capture the educational journeys experienced by pupils labelled with BESD. Previous research has demonstrated that participants were unable to recall the events that had occurred during their time in education including the events leading to exclusion (Pirrie et al., 2011). Mindful of this, the study sought to develop visual aids which would facilitate memory recall (Doherty and Sandelowski, 1999).

During the interviews the young people will be asked to fill in a time line of their education journeys (see fig. 5.1, pg. 100). This method is based on life grids which are a visual tool for mapping important life events against the course of time (Wilson et al., 2007). Life grids have been described as a methodological tool that can be utilised to elicit an account of research participants' life histories (Ashwin et al., 2009). Traditionally, they have been employed within health research to minimise recall bias in the reporting of health histories (Blaine, 1996) and to capture reliable retrospective data from elderly respondents (Parry et al., 1999; Hildon et al., 2008). This approach is useful when discussing sensitive issues as the visual element engages young people and it creates a more relaxed atmosphere which is supportive of pupil voice (Wilson et al., 2007). Throughout the interviews the young people will be asked to identify what they consider to be "critical moments" in their education, for example, when they were excluded from school. Thomson et al. (2002, p. 339) define

"critical moments" as 'an event described in an interview that either the researcher or the interviewee sees as having important consequences for their lives and identities'. This study will draw on Webster et al's (2004) and Wilson et al's (2007) adaptations of the life grid method. With the life grids focussing on three broad life periods of a young person's educational journey (primary school, secondary school and the future) rather than focusing on particular dates. An example of the educational life grid utilised throughout this study is provided below;

Figure 5:1: Example of Educational Life Grid Template

Outside								
School								
Teacher								

Nursery   Reception   Year 1   Year 2   Year 3   Year 4   Year 5   Year 6

As noted throughout the study the researcher will need to be aware of issues specific to conducting research with young people labelled with BESD. The behaviours displayed by those participating is likely to be wide and varied (Hamill & Boyd, 2002). As such the researcher will need to be flexible in their approach to ensure the participants feel empowered and part of the research. During the interviews the researcher will ask the young person whether they would like to fill in the grid themselves or would they like the researcher to fill it in on their behalf.

Although the main focus of the research is pupil voice, the study will also seek to critically examine through semi – structured interviews, the perspectives of parents and teachers. This aspect of the research will focus on the term BESD and experiences of living with or working with young people labelled with BESD. Chapter two of the study identified a series of issues which have relevance for the study such as the cycle of mutual blaming (Miller, 1994, pg. 34), past educational experiences of parents (Galloway et al., 1994) and teacher training (Hodkinson, 2009). As noted in the pupil voice chapter (see table 4.1, pg. 78) there is a wealth of evidence (for example Cooper, 1989; Wise 2000; Hamill & Boyd, 2002; Farall & Polat, 2003; Davies, 2005) that supports the employment of the semi-structured interview for this type of research question. For the purposes of the research the "flexibility" (Bryman, 2004: Snape & Spencer, 2003) offered by such an approach was essential as the aims of the research is intended to gain an understanding of how participants' conceptions or values emerge. Gaining the perspectives of pupils, parents and teachers will allow for data triangulation (Denscombe, 2007).

5.6 Sample

The basic principle of sampling is that it is possible to produce accurate findings without the need to collect data from each and every member of a survey population (Denscombe, 2010). The study is firmly located within an interpretive research framework. The key issue for interpretive researchers is how to focus, strategically and meaningfully, rather than how to represent. Interpretive researchers will focus on how things work within particular contexts, rather than giving the full range of experience (Mason, 2002). For the purposes of the current study, a purposive sampling method will be employed. The key feature of this sampling method is that the researcher will purposely select participants who are believed to have relevance to the research project (Sarantakos, 2005, Jeon, 2004; Ritchie, Lewis & Elam, 2003).

From the outset of the study considerable time was spent identifying educational provisions and speaking to professionals who work with young people labelled with BESD. Previous studies within BESD research have employed a range of sampling procedures depending on the aims of the study (see table 4.1, pg. 78). As noted earlier those which are based within an interpretive approach have tended to employ relatively small sampling frames. For example Turner (2000) and Cooper (2006b) had a sample of only one pupil. Here emphasis is placed on gaining a detailed insight into how the pupil understands their educational experiences (Silverman, 2005). For the purposes of the current study the sample will consist of 13 pupils, 10 teachers and 10 parents, leading to a total sample size of 33 (see table 5.1,

pg. 103). Throughout the researching process the researcher will work closely with the education providers to establish a cohort for the study. However there is a need to be cautious when working with educational professionals and the researcher will need to be aware of the impact this will have on the study. There are many aspects of research into "pupil voice" which may inadvertently put undue pressure on children to continue to participate such as the location of interviews and the introduction to the research in ways which reinforce adult-child power relationships (Denscombe & Aubrook, 1992).

The young people will be identified by the education providers and selected on the basis that they are aged between 14 and 16 and had been excluded from school for their behaviour. By concentrating on this age group the researcher will be provided with access to pupils who have had significant experience of schooling and are likely to have experienced a range of different educational provisions. Furthermore as Cooper (1989, p. 152) notes when discussing his own thesis the older pupils seemed to have better developed critical responses to their situations than the younger pupils, which they expressed often with great clarity and depth of perception. For the purposes of the study young people who have been identified as having mental health problems will be excluded from participating. The inclusion criteria for participation in the study will be further explored within the pilot phase of the research. The researcher will seek advice from professionals working with young people who have received the BESD label to identify potential participants. The parents and teachers of these young people will also be invited to be involved in the study. Chapter Four introduced the notion of gatekeepers and the significant role they play in research studies conducted within educational setting (see pg. 85). Aware of the potential damage that can be done by such figures of authority, considerable time was spent in the initial stages of the research developing relationships with gatekeepers to ensure they understood the nature and purpose of the research. The study will be based in one North-Western LA. Chapter three (pg. 42) provided details of the setting of the study.

Table 5.1: Overview of the research sample

The information located in table below defines the participants who will be involved in the study.

Stages of the research	Data collection method		Participants	Total number of participants
Pilot study	Activity session		Young people who have been excluded from school as a result of their behaviour and currently attending alternative training provision	3 in each session
	Interviews		Young person who has been excluded from school as a result of their behaviour	1
			Young person's parent/carer	1
			Teacher based in the school the young person was excluded from	1
			Teacher from current educational provision	1
Main phase of the study	Activity sessions (3 in total for each group)		Young people labelled with BESD who have obtained SEN statement and are currently attending a special school	3 – 4 in each group
			Young people who have been excluded from school as a result of their behaviour and currently attending alternative training provision	4
			Young people who have been excluded from school and are currently attending a support centre	3 – 4
	Interviews		Young person labelled with BESD	13
			Young person's parent/carer	10
			Teacher from young person's educational provision	10

5.7 Accessing the sample

Throughout the thesis one of the major issues encountered was accessing the field of study. From the outset of the research it is important to acknowledge the importance of the gatekeepers in potentially subverting the study. It is widely acknowledged that adults control the spaces that young people occupy (David et al. 2001; Denscombe & Aubrook, 1992; James, 1993; Mayall, 1996; Pole et al., 1999). As previous researchers have noted however much agency they may wish to accord to young people within research and consent

procedures, there are layers of gatekeepers who exercise power over children (David et al. 2001; Denscombe & Aubrook, 1992; James, 1993; Mayall, 1996; Pole et al., 1999). Sime (2008, p. 67) suggests;

> This is clearly a reflection of the society's views of the *innocent child* in need of protection and a denial of children's consent as valid in itself, regardless of the ethical requirements of eliciting children's own consent for participation in any research.

Adults then have to consent for the young person to be able to participate in the study. Within the following section these issues are explored in detail and related to extant literature.

5.7.1 Gatekeepers

As with previous studies a considerable amount of time during the first year of the study was spent negotiating access to young people (Daniels et al, 2003; Sime, 2008). Many researchers have articulated the difficulties of immersion in this field of study specifically the difficulties faced when researching "hard to find" young people. This becomes evident when research involves critically analysing forms of provision as professionals become wary of the researcher and the repercussions of highlighting bad practice (Macnab, Visser & Daniels, 2007). In this way school structures can be seen to silence the pupil voice (Thomas, 2007). Throughout the study as with research conducted by Sime (2008) initial information about the project will be filtered by the managers and teachers who may place their own understanding of the materials and of the significance of the project. The pupil's educational provider will be initially responsible for explaining the current study to the pupil. Clearly, there is the potential danger that the adult may misinterpret the purpose of the study, which would leave the young person with the wrong first impression. These studies highlight the importance of establishing positive working relationships with those in a position of "power" (Sime, 2008). In an attempt to overcome these issues this study will collaboratively engage professionals to ensure they were aware of what was happening at every stage of the research process so they feel part of the study.

5.7.2 Parental consent

Due to the age of the pupils participating in the study the researcher will also be required to obtain consent from the young person's parent/carer. Researchers have noted that this can be particularly challenging when working with "hard to reach" participants in deprived areas

(Atkinson & John, 2001). Previous studies which have attempted to engage parents of pupils labelled with BESD have found this proved to be extremely difficult (Broadhurst et al., 2005; Pirrie et al., 2011). There are a number of factors which may account for this such as parental disengagement from the education providers (Reay, 2005), and low levels of adult literacy (Sime, 2008). Although the young people have been keen to take part in the study difficulties had been encountered in obtaining written consent from their parents/carers. Initially information regarding the study, including a consent form was sent to the parents' home addresses. This approach yielded an extremely low response rate and it was clear the researcher would need to consider alternative approaches to accessing the parent voice. Helpfully Sime (2008) advocates obtaining verbal consent via the telephone rather than written consent. Mindful of this, the researcher began to employ techniques of verbal consent. This proved successful and therefore during the main study consent will be obtained through recorded verbal telephone conversations. This however is not ideal as ethical procedures dictate that written consent should be obtained. Therefore during the interview with parents the researcher will obtain written consent from the parent. There are further issues however with researchers using schools to access parents. The letters sent to parents will be administrated through the schools, the parents will be aware that the school sent them. This is likely to have an impact on the parent's perception of the research. This leads to issues surrounding the notion of choice as they may feel refusing to participate will have a detrimental impact on their child's education (Flewitt, 2005). These issues have clear implications in terms of the ethics of the study; the chapter will now turn to critically explore some of these issues in more detail.

5.8 Ethical considerations

Throughout its duration the study will be subject to rigorous ethical procedures. The research has gained approval from the University Ethics Committee and Graduate Research Committee (Appendix 10.2.1). In addition, the research will be guided by BERA guidelines (2011) and the British Sociological Association (BSA) "statement of ethical practice" (BSA, 2002). According to the BERA and BSA ethical guidelines the following areas have importance for the study;

- Children's rights
- Informed consent
- Power relations
- Confidentiality, anonymity and child protection

Each of these issues are now critically explored in detail below;

5.8.1 Children's rights

As demonstrated within Chapter Four the 20th century saw an increasing interest in listening to the perspectives of young people (section 4.2.2, pg. 75). This is reflected in Government legislation with the 1989 Children Act (implemented in 1991) making it a legal requirement for young people to be consulted and involved in decisions that affect them. Furthermore current SEN policies promote pupil involvement in decisions surrounding their education and illustrate that it is important to listen to the views of children with SEN (For example SEN Code of Practice 2001).

It is questionable however to what extent young people will be aware of their rights. These young people will have been assessed by a range of adults on numerous occasions which may lead to an aversion to "being studied" (Hill, 2006). Research has found that within this context young people often feel powerless to influence these processes (Hill, 1999). In addition as the study will be conducted within a school environment young people who take part may feel under pressure to get involved and may think that non-participation will be penalised or will impact negatively on their relationship with the adult in control (Sime, 2008).

5.8.2 Informed consent

The 2011 BERA guidelines describes informed consent "to be the condition in which participants understand and agree to their participation without any duress, prior to the research getting underway" (p. 5). A key aim of the study is to enable young people who have received the BESD label to be heard. The study seeks to empower young people to discuss their experiences in their own words. Through the process of informed consent the young people will be informed of the purpose of the study together with what their participation will involve and how the research findings are going to be used. The study hopes to empower young people to have their voice heard. It is therefore anticipated that the pupils taking part in the study will benefit from sharing their experiences with their peer group and the researcher (Kendrick et al., 2008). During the debriefing session a discussion will be initiated with the young people which will enable all involved to observe the potential benefits of participating in the study. However it is essential that the researcher remains realistic in the promises being made to participants.

The young people participating in the study will be provided with an information sheet which will detail the purpose of the study (appendix 10.2.5). Participants will also be offered a

verbal explanation by the researcher to ensure they understand the research process. Throughout this process the researcher will need to remain conscious of the position young people occupy within the confines of their education. This has been well documented throughout the current study. Although the study strives to be different it would be naïve not to take into consideration the impact this inherent imbalance of power may have on a study of this nature. There are unavoidable differences that the researcher will need to be aware of when conducting research with young people labelled with BESD. For example evidence suggests that they are likely to have low literacy skills due to their often chaotic educational journeys (Galloway, 1985).

Throughout the study it was considered essential that the research adopted "process consent" with consent being negotiated as an on-going concern within the research process (Heath et al. 2004). The young people will be provided with on-going opportunities to assess what is being asked of them as well as opportunities to agree to continue or withdraw at any stage (Hill, 2005). It is anticipated this will give participants full control at all stages of the research process (Sime, 2008). The young people who took part in the study will be provided with space to consider how they would like to participate, for example if they would like to fill in the educational grid themselves or they would like the researcher to complete this on their behalf. It is hoped this will help to alleviate power relations which are inherent within pupil research.

5.8.3 Power relations

Power relations are going to be a significant aspect of the study. With this in mind the ethical procedures employed will draw on this evidence to ensure the information and processes are appropriate for the participants. As the study seeks to develop innovative and participatory research techniques, young people who participate may wish to produce drawings when engaging with the research. Dockett & Perry (2007) state this can lead to additional power issues in relation to the artefacts produced by the participants and ownership of these products. They advocate these should be the property of the children and it must be their decision whether or not they will be available to the researcher. In an attempt to overcome these concerns it has been suggested by Kellett and Nind (2001) that the researcher acts as a banker who retains the information provided by young people but gives others access to it. Lewis (2005) notes however there may be intended outcomes of using safeguarding protocols, describing the example whereby material being returned to young people is interpreted as a rejection or failure.

A further consideration with regard to power relations is the environment in which the research takes place. All of the data collected for the purposes of the current study will take place in the young person's educational settings. Within such adult dominated environments it is deemed extremely difficult for young people to opt out of research (Denscombe & Aubrook, 1992). The authors argue that the high response rates achieved in school-based studies is rooted in hidden pressure, and researchers will need to consider the ethics of their practice in this respect (Denscombe & Aubrook, 1992). One example of such hidden pressure would be teachers informing young people of the study. The pupil may feel they have to do as they are told as this person is in a position of authority. It is important to acknowledge and address these concerns throughout the duration of the study. Previous researchers have developed strategies for equalising the power relations between the adult researcher and the child; they include the need for reflexivity, responsiveness, fun and allowing the children greater participation and control (Mayall et al., 1996; 200; Mauthner, 1997; Clark and Moss, 2001).

5.8.4 Confidentiality, anonymity and child protection

Confidentiality and anonymity are considered to be two ways of protecting research participants' right to privacy. The principle means of ensuring anonymity is not using the names of participants. The information provided by participants should in no way reveal their identity. However there are doubts as to whether researchers can guarantee total anonymity (Coad & Lewis, 2004). For the purposes of this study all names will be changed so it will not be possible to identify participants. The researcher will know who has provided the information and are able to identify participants from the information given. In order to ensure confidentiality however the researcher will not make these connections known publicly. All data will be treated as confidential. Only the researcher will have access to the raw data collected. The study will comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998. All data will be stored within a password protected computer and a locked filing cabinet. All audio recorded data will be erased and computer files deleted at the end of the project.

As this study will involve working closely with young people it is essential to be clear about what their participation will entail and what will be the outcomes of the research for them. Hill (2006) suggests that young people can often feel disappointment and disillusionment when they see no change in their educational experiences subsequent to them sharing their views. This leads to questions being raised about the ethics of seeking the views of young people when they themselves are often unlikely to enjoy any positive changes as a result of

the research (Kendrick et al., 2008). However within social research the benefits for individual participation is often framed in terms of the potential intrinsic and even healing benefit of "telling one's story" (Roberts & Taylor, cited in Hill, 2006) and the value of having your story heard (Munro at al., 2005). This may be particularly important for young people labelled with BESD as the literature surrounding pupil voice establishes these young people to be a neglected group. The data collected will be analysed to identify good practice in terms of services and support and highlight what is lacking in terms of provision. In this respect the results of the research will be employed to enhance the experiences of young people who have received the BESD label. The overriding aim of the study is to offer young people labelled with BESD a voice and to assist these pupils to express their needs in terms of educational provision.

5.9 Data analysis

As noted earlier in the chapter a grounded theory approach to data analysis will be employed. The data generated will be analysed thematically, with emphasis being placed on what is said rather than how it is said (Bryman, 2004). The grounded theory approach is seen both as a way to do qualitative research and a way to create inductive theory (Backman and Hyngas, 1999). Researchers conducting small scale projects keen to work with grounded theory may use it as a method of qualitative data analysis (McCallin, 2003). For the purposes of the study the processes of coding and memo-writing will be employed. The chapter will explore how this approach will be adapted throughout the study. As noted earlier it is considered essential that the researcher makes clear the processes that will be employed throughout their research (Boychuk Duchscher & Morgan, 2004).

5.9.1 Coding

Coding has been described as the defining aspect of analysis within the grounded theory method as it allows for the development of emerging themes (Strauss, 1987). In their original work Glaser and Strauss (1967) developed grounded theory as a method that combined two data analysis processes. During the first process the analyst codes all data and then systematically reviews these codes to verify or prove a given proposition. In the second process, the analyst will inspect the data for properties of categories and will use memos to track analysis and develops theoretical ideas (Walker & Myrick, 2006). Thus the grounded theory technique initially requires the researcher to fracture the data through open coding and then put it back together again in a more abstract and conceptual theoretical form (Mills

et al., 2006). This is clearly an essential aspect of employing grounded theory as a method of data analysis and the researcher will adopt this technique throughout the study. By using participants' own language at all levels of the coding process the researcher can further ground theory construction and add to the credibility of findings (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Researchers employing this approach will need to acknowledge the impact their own perceptions will have on the selection of codes. Powney & Watts (1987 p. 37) that; 'The interviewer may only hear the responses that are compatible with the picture which is taking shape'. Grounded theorists, like other researchers, may unwittingly start from their own preconceptions about what a particular experience means and entails (Charmaz, 2006) One way of overcoming this is to involve the participants in the process of data analysis so they can verify the codes that have been identified throughout the study.

5.9.2 Memo writing

Memo writing has been described as a reflective process which provides the researcher with an opportunity to "remember, question, analyse and make meaning about the time spent with participants and the data that was generated together" (Mills et al., 2006, p. 11). It has been suggested that this process helps the researcher become more analytical and reflective as well as helping to retain and develop thoughts and ideas, which in turn helps to develop theoretical codes (Jeon, 2004). Once the data has been collected and transcribed the researcher will read through each of the transcripts and write notes in the margins. As Cooper (1993) warns, the researcher will need to be aware of the circumstances that prevail when interviewing young people labelled with BESD. There are circumstances surrounding interactions with these young people that may impact upon the data collection processes. Memo writing will provide an aide to enable the researcher to remember the context of their exchanges with young people.

5.10 Findings from pilot study

As detailed earlier the study aims to develop innovative and novel data collection techniques. However as the study has noted this leaves methods open to potential bias and delimination. To increase the internal validity of the study a pilot study was undertaken which specifically set out to ensure the proposed methods successfully engaged young people in the research process. For the purposes of the pilot study one young person was selected to take part in an individual interview. The young person's teacher was also invited to take part in an interview to gain a complete picture of the young person's educational journey. Three young people who have been excluded from school and were attending an

Alternative Training Provider (ATP) were identified to take part in a series of activity sessions. The following section will therefore critically analyse the methods employed as well as the findings achieved.

5.10.1 Educational Life Grid Analysis

The grid

Paul is 14 years old and had been attending the Secondary Education Centre (SEC). The SEC assesses young people who have been excluded from school; Paul was excluded when he was 13 years old. The researcher met with Paul on a number of occasions prior to any data collection taking place to establish trust and allow time for him to feel comfortable. Paul is currently in the process of returning to mainstream education. This meant that the researcher was only able to complete one interview with him. Two of Paul's teachers were also invited to take part in an interview to gain a more detailed insight into his educational journey Throughout the interview Paul identified what he considered to be critical moments in his educational journey, these are highlighted below.

Critical moments

During the interview with Paul three critical moments were identified. As stated earlier a critical moment is defined as 'an event described in an interview that either the researcher or the interviewee sees as having important consequences for their lives and identities' (Thomson et al. 2002, p. 339). These are discussed below

Whilst filling in the grid Paul was asked to rate how happy he felt during each stage of his educational journey. This was largely based upon Paul's own perception of what happiness meant to him. The results of this are demonstrated in graph 5.1 below;

Graph 5.1: Paul's happiness throughout his educational journey
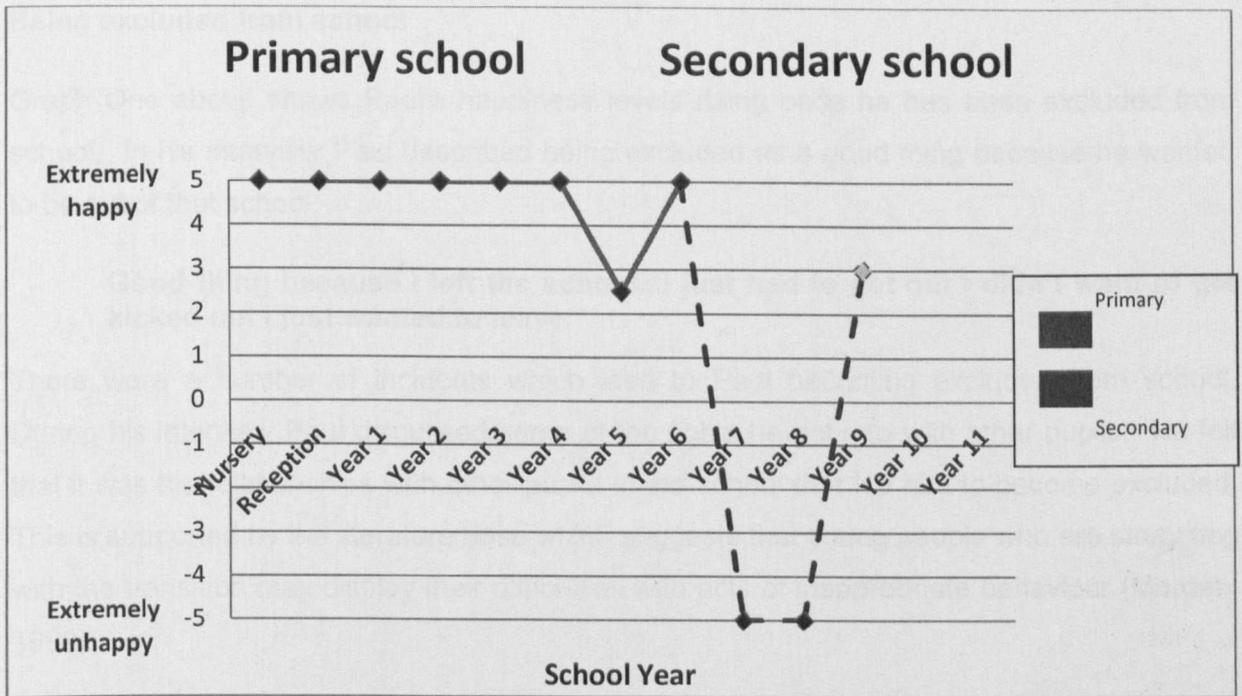
Transition from primary to secondary

The graph indicates that the transition from primary school to secondary had a detrimental impact on Paul's happiness levels. Research from around the world has identified a variety of factors including changes in building size and the complexity and organisation of the school day which can be potentially problematic for young people during this transition (Maras & Aveling, 2006). Paul made it clear throughout the interview that he really enjoyed primary school and that it was when he went to secondary school that he started to become disengaged from education;

> I loved every school that I went to except for the seniors. Them (primary) schools I loved, I didn't want to leave me, everyone didn't want to leave. (Paul)

Paul's teacher at the SEC also discussed the transition process and the impact this can have on young people. She identified what she considered to be a lack of support in the secondary sector. She felt that primary schools can be a "very nurturing environment" and when young people then move into secondary schools they may become lost;

> I am not blaming secondary schools because secondary do a really good job but you get bigger classrooms, children moving around the school, children can become much more isolated if care isn't taken. (SEC Teacher)

Being excluded from school

Graph One above shows Paul's happiness levels rising once he has been excluded from school. In his interview Paul described being excluded as a good thing because he wanted to be out of that school;

> **Good thing because I left the school...I just had to get out I didn't want to get kicked out I just wanted to leave.**

There were a number of incidents which lead to Paul becoming excluded from school. During his interview Paul discussed some of the fights he got into with other pupils. He felt that it was his relationships with other pupils in the school that led him to become excluded. This is supported by the literature base which suggests that young people who are struggling with the transition may display their difficulties with acts of inappropriate behaviour (Morgan, 1999).

Returning to mainstream education

During Paul's interview he discussed wanting to return to mainstream education. Although each young person should only attend the SEC for around 12 weeks to be assessed Paul had been placed there for approximately 10 months. Paul appeared fed up that he had been placed at the SEC for so long;

> **I am only supposed to be here, well every kid is only supposed to be here a few weeks but I think I have been one of the longest.**

He discussed the process of identifying which school he would like to be placed; this is something that Paul has taken careful consideration over. He made it clear that he didn't want to repeat what happened in his first secondary school;

> **I don't want to go to School X because I got attacked on the bus there so as soon as I go into that school I am going to start fighting and get a bad reputation then I am probably going to get thrown out I don't want that to happen that is why I picked the other school.**

After the pilot study had been completed the researcher learnt that Paul had returned to mainstream education.

During the pilot study a combination of activity sessions and individual interviews were undertaken. Through the process of coding and memo writing the data obtained during both the activity sessions and the interviews were analysed and a number of key themes emerged.

5.10.2 Themes

In addition to the individual interviews three young people were asked to participate in a series of activity sessions. The voices of the young people have been drawn together and a series of reoccurring themes have been drawn out from the data. These themes are examined critically below;

Definitions of BESD

All of the young people who took part in the activity sessions stated that they had not heard of the term BESD, although when asked about more general behavioural problems they did identify some conditions such as ADD, ADHD and were able to make some suggestions as to what this may mean;

> **Like were you get angry and go out of control. (Paul)**

The young people discussed the process of being identified as having a behavioural problem although both of Paul's teachers believed he had behavioural difficulties, he did not agree;

> **No, I haven't got behavioural problems but I think personally I have got anger problems (Paul)**

The young people who took part in the activities highlighted their experiences of being assessed for behavioural problems. One of the young people had gone through the process of being assessed,

> **Oh yeah I have once I think when I was about ten. I went to see this fella called Dr something and he tried to hypnotise me. (Michael)**

Those young people who had not been formally assessed suggested that they would welcome the opportunity to discover whether they would be formally identified as having a behavioural problem;

> **Nah I would like to go and check though, sometimes I just can't help meself but be naughty... I would take one tomorrow and see if there is anything wrong with me. (James)**

The teachers described a range of behaviours that come under the label of BESD and the difficulties they have in determining whether a young person has a diagnosable condition or is just simply being naughty;

> there is sort of like a fine line if a child is just persistently naughty then you know that they haven't got any sort of BESD but I mean with a child with any difficulties there is sort of a fine line whether is it actually their personality, their persona or is it they know what they are doing and they are stepping out of line...you have to know that

background and think well how I am going to go about this you have to be a bit more careful. (Secondary Teacher)

Evidence from the pilot study suggests that the term is applied to a wide variety of young people with a wide range of needs (Hamill & Boyd, 2002). These findings further support claims made within the literature reviewed in previous chapters that the BESD label is difficult to define and operationalise within educational settings (Grieve, 2009; Visser & Stokes, 2003; Male, 2003).

BESD Causation

The literature suggests that the antecedents of BESD are unclear and it appears that a number of factors such as home, school and society may act as catalysts to its development (Evans at al., 2003). The pilot study aimed to critically review what pupils and teachers considered to be the main antecedents leading to pupils displaying "challenging" behaviour. For the young people however the reasons why pupils may display poor behaviour in the classroom are rather simple;

because they are not interested in what they are doing (Michael)

school is boring (James)

it is because they don't like school (Peter)

For the young people then, the school environment was cited as a major causal factor which led to them displaying "challenging" behaviour. The pupils' relationships with their teachers will be critically explored in the following sections. It is evident however that their educational placement will have a significant impact on their happiness and negative experiences could cause them to self-exclude. The teachers discussed in more detail what they considered to be some of the main causes of BESD. Research has indicated that teachers consider parents and home circumstances to be the major cause of misbehaviour in schools (Croll & Moses, 1985; DfES, 1989; Maras, 1996; Miller, 1995). This notion was reinforced by one of the teachers during her interview ;

we generally see children who have issues, who have reasons why their behaviour is how it is maybe they have severe difficulties in their family/home lives or maybe they have a diagnosed condition or an undiagnosed condition that is apparent. (SEC Teacher)

This teacher felt there was a clear distinction between those who chose to push the boundaries and those who have a diagnosable condition. The difference would be related to the parents. Evidently the cycle of mutual blame (Miller, 1994) remains a consistent feature

of the education system, especially for parents of pupils who are considered "challenging". With the teacher citing parental ineptitude as a determining factor;

> I have seen children who for all intents and purposes have a very good supportive family life, good peer group who choose to push the boundaries because it is fun. That is the difference, these don't tend to push the boundaries because it is fun, yes they do at times but there are generally reasons why. (SEC Teacher)

Provision

All of the young people who participated in the pilot study had experienced a range of different provision including in-school inclusion units, Pupil Referral Units (PRU), Alternative Training Providers (ATP) and specialist BESD schools. This is supported by the literature which indicates that despite the Government's inclusionary agenda young people labelled with BESD are being educated within a wide range of provision (Ofsted, 1999).

Within the literature a consistent theme outlined is the difficulties Government, local authorities and schools have in providing effective educational provision (Ofsted, 1999). It became clear during both the activity sessions and interviews that the young people had encountered difficulties throughout the process of exclusion mainly in terms of finding suitable provision;

> **I just kept getting put on them negotiated transfers me for like six weeks and no one wanted to accept me. They just kept saying 'oh no we are going to do another six just so we are sure' and after that other six weeks would be up I would go back and they would just say 'nah we don't want him'. (James)**

It is clear from the above quote that young people are all too aware of how they are perceived by adults, for example James claims school **'will not want him'** due to his reputation. The literature makes clear the difficulties educators face in placing this group of young people (Cole et al., 1998; Cole & Visser, 1999). In many cases the placement of young people labelled with BESD depends on what vacancies and funding are available at the time they were offered a diagnosis (Grimshaw with Berridge, 1994, Cole & Visser, 1999). Within SEN legislation young people who present with BESD are regarded as having learning difficulties and thus should be given a Statement of Special Educational Needs. The professionals who were interviewed at this stage indicated some of the difficulties they have faced in getting SEN Statements for young people. One teacher suggested these difficulties may be due to funding issues;

I think there are funding issues because as soon as you issue a statement for a child then a level of support has to be provided and those resources may not be available there may not be finances for those resources, there may not be physical buildings. (SEC Teacher)

Teachers

The young people highlighted what they considered to be negative teacher perceptions towards pupils with behavioural difficulties. Within the literature it is suggested that teachers will attach labels to young people who present behaviour difficulties and this can exacerbate the way young people act, leading to problems of disaffection and disrespect (Riley, 2004). These cyclic behaviours were reinforced by the young people who felt that their teachers will have preconceived ideas about what sort of pupils they would be, for example if they were going to be disruptive and problematic (Hargreaves et al., 1975; Cooper & McIntyre, 1996). This would have an impact on how the teacher treated the pupil, one pupil indicated these notions could simply be based on your family tree;

> **Defo 100 per cent and if you have got someone else in your family who is naughty and has been in the school then...I haven't got no brothers or sisters but I have had mates who say you know what I mean you had best not be like your brother. (Peter)**

Some of the young people felt that they were being isolated by their teachers and deliberately picked on;

> **Do you know what it feels like it is not like he picks you up on things he goes out the way to see what is wrong do you know what I mean...to look for a fight. (Peter)**

The young people appeared to be wary of their teachers. Previous research with pupils who had become disaffected from education found frustration and mistrust between these pupils and their teachers (Riley and Rustique-Forrester, 2002). The data though does indicate that although during the activity sessions the young people did discuss what characteristics they felt made a good teacher, overall they held rather negative attitudes towards teachers;

> **Yeah they don't care you could get hit by a lorry tomorrow and they wouldn't be arsed. (Peter)**

During the interviews the teachers identified a need for further training specifically within the areas of SEN and BESD. This finding is consistent with existing literature identifying that teachers have expressed concerns about the lack of training and the lack of skills to deal with challenging behaviour in the classroom (Broomfield, 2006). Although both teachers had received some training during the initial teacher training course, they felt this was rather limited and had not adequately prepared them to work effectively with young people labelled with BESD. This finding is also reflected in the literature (Hodkinson, 2009);

Through the registers that we get we get a general definition of what difficulties they have so you kind of have to make up your own sort of strategies to try and get them included into mainstream so possibly an eye opener some sort of introduction how to deal with it. (Secondary Teacher)

In order to build on these findings the researcher deemed it necessary to hold consultations with young people to further explore and develop the methodology for the study. In line with the analysis of the literature base which highlights the importance of involving young people in every stage of the research process (Coad & Lewis, 2004), the participants were consulted throughout the study. Through discussions with young people a number of amendments were made to the research methodology (see appendix 10.3.3, pg. 284). Many of the findings from the pilot support previous research into this area such as the need for more teacher training in the area of BESD (Bloomfield, 2006; Hodkinson, 2009; Goodman & Burton, 2011). The pilot study however has also been helpful in highlighting themes that had not been previously considered by the researcher as relevant such as the transition from primary to secondary school. The chapter will now go on to discuss the implications of the pilot study for the main phase of data collection.

The pilot study has highlighted aspects of the chosen research techniques that have worked well. However a series of difficulties were also encountered during the pilot study, these issues are discussed in the next section.

5.10.3 Implications for the main study

During the pilot study a number of difficulties were encountered which the researcher will need to develop strategies to overcome. In addition the young people who participated in the pilot study were asked for feedback on methods that worked and any improvements they felt could be made to the data collection process. These issues have been summarised (see appendix 10.3.3, pg. 284).

The researcher is now aware of the main issues involved and has developed potential solutions to access and data collection techniques. The pilot study provided the researcher with the opportunity to test out potential methods of data collection and consult with young people on how they would like to have their voices heard. The study seeks to locate the pupil at the heart of the data collection and to examine how specific turning points can impact upon the educational experiences of young people labelled with BESD. The methods of data collection have now been determined and will be a combination of traditional "adult" methods and child-centred methods. Punch (2000) and Clark and Statham (2005)

recommend this approach when working with children and young people in order that they are not patronised by using only child friendly techniques.

5.10 Sampling for the main study

For the purposes of the main study 13 young people will be asked to be participants in the research project (see table 5.1). The results from the pilot study demonstrate that employing a purposive sampling method can be an effective mechanism to hear the pupil voice. The following section will provide a description of the settings for the study and details of the participants.

5.10.1 Description of the provisions

Chapter three (see section 3.1.2, pg. 47) highlighted that young people labelled with BESD are likely to experience chaotic educational journeys. This often led to them attending a wide range of educational provisions (Gazaley, 2010; Pirrie et al., 2011; Pirrie & Macleod, 2009). Therefore it was considered essential to conduct the current study in a variety of educational settings. This allowed the researcher to gain a detailed insight into the potential journeys taken by this group of young people (See appendix 10.4.1, pg. 286)

5.10.2 Overview number of participants

The table below provides details of the number of participants who engaged in the main study and the provision they were attending.

Table 5.2: Overview of the number of participants for the main study

Type of provision	Number of pupils	Number of parents/carers	Number of teachers
Provision A (Support Centre See section 3.1.3 (ii), pg. 56)	3	1	3
Provision B (Alternative Training Provider See section 3.1.3 (ii), pg. 56)	4	4	2
Provision C (Special School See section 3.1.3 (i), pg. 51)	6	5	5
Total	13	10	10

5.10.3 Details of participants

It was considered important for the main study to obtain a picture of the different educational provisions experienced by this group of young people. The pilot study also highlighted the importance of establishing trust and collaborative working relationships with gatekeepers. In line with the ethical procedures adopted for the purposes of the study all the names of the participants have been changed. In addition the young people were asked to decide the name that would be used throughout the study. This was considered an essential aspect of the study and a mechanism for engaging the participants in the research.

Table 5.3: Details of the participants

Type of provision	Participant	Gender	Age	School year	SEN Statement	Parent/Carer interview
A	Adam	Male	13 – 14	Year 9	No	Yes
A	Christine	Female	13 – 14	Year 9	No	No
A	Clare	Female	13 – 14	Year 9	Yes	No
B	Zoe	Female	14 – 15	Year 10	No	Yes
B	Whitney-Bob	Female	15 – 16	Year 11	No	Yes
B	Helen	Female	13 – 14	Year 9	No	Yes
B	Louise	Female	14 – 15	Year 10	No	Yes
C	Martin	Male	14 - 15	Year 10	Yes	No
C	Billy	Male	14 – 15	Year 10	Yes	Yes
C	Tyrese	Male	14 – 15	Year 10	Yes	Yes
C	Jacob	Male	14 – 15	Year 10	Yes	Yes
C	Boris	Male	14 – 15	Year 10	Yes	Yes
C	Daniel	Male	14 – 15	Year 10	Yes	Yes

5.11 Data collection for the main study

The findings from the pilot study helped to inform the data collection methods which would be employed for the main study. The methods utilised in the main study are highlighted below.

5.11.1 Phase one: activity sessions

As with the pilot study the first stage of the main study involved the participants meeting as a group. The pilot study results demonstrated that activity sessions are effective in identifying issues that concern young people labelled with BESD. The young people also stated that they enjoyed completing the tasks and working as a group. Difficulties however were encountered with regard to length of activities and ensuring the pupils were fully engaged. As Johnson et al (1998) note one of the biggest problems experienced by researchers is keeping the momentum going and not losing the child's attention. For example, during one of the activities it became apparent that there was not enough stimuli to keep the young people engaged. Although the participants did not explicitly state they were bored it became clear that they were losing interest in the study through their body language and level of participation. In light of this the activities have been developed to take account of these issues. (For details of activities see appendix 10.4.2, pg. 288).

5.11.2 Phase two: Life grids (pupil individual interviews)

During the pilot study the educational life grids proved a useful tool in engaging pupils and providing an overview of the pupil's journey through education. The pupils who participated in the pilot study stated that they enjoyed completing the educational life grid. However the young person struggled to complete the grid in one interview. In addition it was considered important to develop the tool to allow an exploration of those surrounding and influencing the pupil's educational journey. With this in mind an additional grid was designed which would be employed to identify who young people felt had influenced them throughout their educational journey. Instead of a one off interview with the pupils a series of interviews will be conducted to ensure the data collected is accurate and to capture an in-depth account of their educational experiences. Christensen (2004, p. 168) is critical of approaches such as "one-off interviews with children" because they limit the pupil's ability to respond in ways that reflect their considered views: "children will have been left little scope for engaging in a critical manner with the research questions and the research practice". By conducting a series of interviews both the researcher and the young person will be provided with the opportunity to reflect on their exchanges before verifying and expanding upon the emerging themes.

Engaging in ongoing exchanges with the young people increased the validity of the research. It has been suggested that validity of a study is judged by whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant or the reader of an account

(Creswell & Miller, 2000). With this in mind it was considered essential that at different stages throughout the research process young people were provided with the opportunity to discuss emerging themes to check their accounts had been captured accurately (Creswell, 2009).

Although the main focus of the study will be on hearing the pupil voice, the perspectives of teachers and parents will also be sought. As noted earlier in the chapter the study will employ semi-structured interviews to gain the parent and teacher perspective.

5.11.3 Phase three: Teacher perspectives

There is a plethora of research which has examined the experiences of teachers with regard to working with young people labelled with BESD (Burton et al, 2009; Lloyd Bennett, 2006; Swinson & Knight, 2007; Hodkinson, 2009; Steer, 2009). In order to gain a grand narrative of the pupil's educational journey it was considered essential to capture the perspectives of teachers. A number of teachers from each of the educational provisions will be interviewed. It was anticipated this will provide the researcher with the opportunity to gain an insight into how BESD is operationalised within the context of the LA being investigated.

5.11.4 Phase four: Parent perspectives

The literature reviewed throughout the study has illustrated the importance of seeking the perspectives of parents. Research has indicated that parents along with pupils who have received the BESD label are considered a neglected group (McDonald and Thomas, 2003). Previous studies have also highlighted a cycle of mutual blaming between the home and school (Miller, 1994) and the significant impact the educational experiences of parents can have on their own child's journey through the education system (Boreham et al., 1995; Galloway, Armstrong & Tomlinson, 1994). Unfortunately during the pilot study phase of the thesis it was not possible to engage any of the parents. However as the evidence gathered within the literature reviews clearly demonstrates it is important that these voices are given the opportunity to be heard. All of the parents of the pupils participating in the study will be invited to take part. It is hoped this will provide the researcher to gain an understanding of how the parents experience their position within their child's educational journey.

5.13 Data analysis for main study

Employment of grounded theory within the pilot study evidenced it to be highly effective in unleashing the pupil voice. In light of this the main study will also adopt this approach to data analysis. Many researchers have adapted and adopted grounded theory methodology to fit with a variety of ontological and epistemological positions such as constructivism and feminism and that it is the researcher's ontological and epistemological position that determines the form of grounded theory they undertake (Annells, 1997; Chiovitti & Piran, 2003). As noted earlier a constructivist grounded theory approach will be employed (see section 5.2.2 pg. 88 – 89).

The chapter has provided an overview of the methodological approaches which will be employed throughout the study. This has included a detailed exploration of the researcher's journey in the search for appropriate techniques to meet with the aims of the study. The study seeks to develop innovative and participatory approaches for capturing the pupil voice as such the study will combine a range of data collection methods including individual interviews and activity sessions. The study will bring together the perspectives of the pupil, the parent and the teacher to build a grand narrative and gain a detailed insight into how BESD is operationised within the education system. The chapter has highlighted some of the challenges surrounding conducting pupil voice research, it is clear the researcher will need to be mindful of such concerns and develop mechanisms to overcome the potential barriers to enable the young person's voice to be heard. A grounded theory approach has been adopted to allow themes to emerge from the data. Within the next chapters these emergent themes are explored and presented from the perspective of the pupil, parent and teacher. Firstly it would seem appropriate to introduce the co-researchers.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

CO-RESEARCHERS

The table below provides a brief overview of each of the young people who participated in the study;

Name of pupil	Background
ADAM	Adam had recently been reintegrated into mainstream school after attending a support centre for approximately six months. He was living at home with his mum and sisters. During his educational journey he had been excluded from two mainstream schools and had attended eight different provisions. He had never been officially diagnosed therefore he had not obtained an SEN Statement but he had been identified as having anger management issues. He acknowledged he had anger issues and this was also reflected by his mother and teachers at the support centre. He believes his problems began in primary school when he would get into fights this with peers and his teachers. This coincided with his father leaving the home environment. There was a feeling amongst all involved with Adam that he belonged in a mainstream provision. He willingly engaged in all aspects of the study and would often encourage his peers during the activity sessions.
CHRISTINE	Christine was attending the support centre and had been placed there for nearly a year. It became clear throughout the process of the study that Christine was experiencing a difficult home life and had turbulent relationships with both her mother and father. She had a range of agencies involved in her care including social services. Unfortunately it was not possible to engage her parents in the study. She had obtained a Statement of SEN and had been diagnosed with ADHD for which she takes medication. She had experienced an extremely chaotic educational journey and had attended 10 different provisions. She struggled to remember the details of provisions and would become agitated. Professionals were clearly struggling with finding a suitable educational provision to place her in. It was hoped that they would be able to obtain a special school placement as it was felt she would not cope in a mainstream setting. Although she stated that she enjoyed participating in the study she would occasionally become frustrated during the interviews and would be easily distracted.
CLARE	Clare was also attending the support centre and had been placed there for nearly a year. Although Clare had been diagnosed with ADHD she had not obtained an SEN Statement. She appears unhappy in school and she described numerous occasions where she would make the decision to remove herself. Clare had experienced difficult relationships with teachers whom she felt would treat her differently due to her "condition". In addition, she was having problems in her home life unfortunately as with Christine it was not possible to engage her parents in the study. She willingly engages with the study and openly discusses both her home life and educational experiences.

ZOE	Zoe was the only pupil in the cohort who had not been excluded from mainstream education instead she had made the decision to remove herself. She remained on a school roll but had been referred to an alternative provision to support her re-engagement into education. During her interview she discussed incidents of bullying which occurred whilst she was attending primary school. It was at this point that she became disengaged with mainstream education. She felt the teachers had let her down as they were not able to come up with adequate solutions. This led to her becoming distrusting towards adults. She lived at home with her mother and sister. She openly discussed her home circumstances and discussed her role as carer for her mother. Zoe struggled with maintaining her attendance at both the alternative provision and her mainstream school. She was unclear as to why she did not want to go to school. She felt she would be ignored by teachers as her behaviour was withdrawn. Although she had never been officially diagnosed with a behavioural "problem" it was clear she had social and emotional needs.
HELEN	Helen had been attending an alternative provision for over six months. She remained on the school roll of her previous mainstream secondary school however she had made the decision to remove herself and chose to simply not attend. She was in the process of being assessed for Aspersers however she was coming to the end of her educational journey. This meant even if she did obtain an SEN Statement this may be too late to make a difference to her educational journey. Her mum discussed the difficulties she experienced when trying to obtain additional support for Helen. When reflecting on her time in education Helen stated that she enjoyed primary school however her difficulties started once she moved to secondary school. She linked this to the loss of her father who died while she was attending primary school. She openly discussed her home life. She also talked about her behaviour outside of school. As with other pupils in the cohort she had a wide range of services involved in her including the Youth Offending Team (YOT).
WHITNEY-BOB	Whitney-Bob was also attending the alternative female provision. Throughout her educational journey she had experienced a wide range of provisions including mainstream, support centres and colleges of further education. Whitney-Bob was living with her nan as her mother had passed away when she was only four years old. She states that she managed to cope in primary school however she started to display "challenging" behaviour in secondary school. She believes that was due to her "getting in with the wrong crowd". She described the difficulties she experienced maintaining her educational placements as she would only manage to remain in provisions for relatively short periods of time. She had not received a diagnosis and she found it difficult to identify her needs. During the process of the study she had been attending a college but towards end of the research she stated that has no longer engaged in her course.
LOUISE	Louise was the only female attending the alternative provision who had managed to remain engaged with her mainstream school. She had been progressing well and teachers were hopeful that she would be able to obtain GCSEs. She had not been officially diagnosed with a "problem" however as with Adam she felt she had anger management issues. Her main "difficulties" appeared to be occurring outside of school. She had previously been living with her

	grandparents but had recently been placed in foster care. During the interviews she stated that she enjoyed school however due to her complex home life she moved around a lot in primary school. She felt this had a negative impact on her happiness throughout her educational journey. Although she was managing her behaviour in school her behaviour outside of school was of concern to the adults surrounding her. They stated that she would often place herself in vulnerable situations and on a number of occasions would run away.
MARTIN	Martin was attending the special school as he had been identified as having a "problem" with his behaviour in primary school. He has been diagnosed with ADHD for which he takes medication. He described that he displayed what he considered to be low level behaviour which led him to be excluded from mainstream secondary school. He was not happy with his placement in special school and this led him to become a chronic non attendee. He would often run away from what he considered to be difficult situations. Unfortunately it was not possible to engage Martins parents in the study.
BILLY	Billy had been placed in special school towards the end of his time in primary school. Billy openly discussed his difficult relationship with his birth mother who was an alcoholic. He had been placed in foster care but his mother lived near his primary school so he would run away from school to visit his birth mother. At this time he was always displaying "challenging" behaviour in the classroom and would get into fights with other pupils. Once he was placed in special school he felt his behaviour had calmed down. He was adamant that he did not have a "problem" with his behaviour. His foster carer also felt that rather than medication all that was needed was for Billy to be placed in the "right" supportive home and school environments. He enthusiastically engaged in all aspects of the study and would often encourage others to get involved in the activities. He would also take control of the activity sessions and would tell the other pupils off if they were to get distracted.
TYRESE	Tyrese had been placed in the special school following his exclusion from mainstream secondary school. He strongly believed that he should have been given a second chance to return to mainstream provision. He described feeling let down by the adults surrounding him and both his mother and teachers should have done more to help him. He believes they had simply given up on him. He does however acknowledge that he was struggling whilst based in mainstream provision and he felt special school was able to meet his educational needs. Both Tyrese and his mother felt strongly that he did not have a "problem" with his behaviour. His mother stated that his behaviour would be different in school to the behaviours he would display at home. His mother also described feeling let down by teachers who she felt should have identified his learning needs earlier in his educational journey.
BORIS	Despite Boris being identified as having a "problem" in primary school his SEN Statement had not been finalised. He was placed in a special school before the end of his time in primary school. Whilst taking part in the research activities he would be easily distracted and would often struggle to concentrate on tasks. He stated that he has been happy throughout all of his educational journey and had mainly positive relationships with his teachers. However his mother described the struggle she experienced whilst attempting to get his

	SEN Statement finalised. She openly discussed the impact having to fight for her son's educational needs had on her emotional well-being. Prior to his placement in special school he had experienced an extremely chaotic educational journey as he was constantly removed from primary. The school would even employ illegal mechanisms. His father left home whilst Boris was in primary school his mother linked this to the start of his "problems" in school.
JACOB	Jacobs "difficulties" started in primary school. Throughout the interviews with Jacob he struggled to remember the different provisions he had attended. He was however aware of his "disabilities" and why he had been placed in a special school. Although he struggled to remember the specific details of his educational journey it was clear that the adults surrounding Jacob found it difficult to identify the "best" provision to meet his educational needs. This resulted in him moving around a lot in primary school. For Jacob the happiest time in his educational journey was when he was not attending any form of provision. He has been diagnosed with ADHD for which he is taking medication. His parents described the struggle they encountered when trying to obtain the educational support he required.
DANIEL	Daniel had experienced a turbulent educational journey which saw him excluded from primary school on a number of occasions. Following his removal from primary school he was placed in a specialist provision. There was confusion as to whether Daniel had ever been assessed for a Statement of SEN. His mother felt he had learning difficulties. During the activity sessions it became clear that Daniel struggled in social situations and was having difficulties socialising with his peers. However he stated that he enjoyed school and he was enthusiastic throughout the research process. He was experiencing difficulties outside of school. As with other pupils in the cohort social services were involved with his family. He openly discussed his home life. Worryingly he described placing himself in vulnerable situations, for example he would run away from home. He was aware of his "difficulties" and stated that he would isolate himself from other pupils and acknowledged that he needed to develop his social skills.

The pupil profiles described above demonstrate that a series of themes reoccur. These include significance of home background, the struggle to find the "right" provision, difficult relationships with teachers and the confusion surrounding the BESD label. The findings of the study will be split into three sections, these are detailed below;

- The BESD label
- From pillar to post
- Emerging culture of blame

Throughout the findings sections a series of case studies of individual young people will be interwoven into the discussion and representation of the data. This was considered important in enabling the study to meet with the intended aim of placing pupils at the heart of the research.

In addition, the section will examine the educational journeys experienced by this group of pupils. To illustrate the varying trajectories of the pupils a series of flowcharts have been included in the findings chapters. The figures will be employed to map out the wide range of provisions experienced by this group of pupils.

Figure 6.1 Key for pupil educational journeys

Shape	Label
⬡	Mainstream
⬭	Special School
▭	Support Centre
⚐	Alternative Provision
◇	College of Higher Education
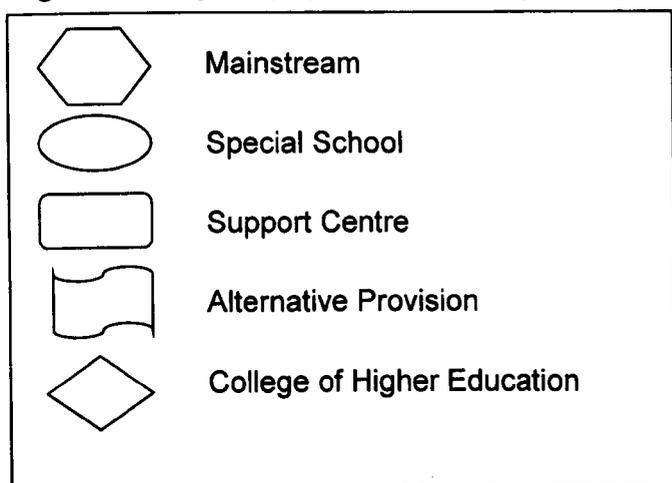
CHAPTER SIX: THE BESD LABEL

A major component of the study has been to critically examine how BESD is defined and operationalised both within the literature and the applied educational settings. Through examination of the literature it became apparent that the concept of BESD is by no means a new phenomenon. In their summary of this literature Frederickson and Cline (2002) highlight how the construct of "maladjusted" has been subject to change; change which mirrors the evolution of societal attitudes to young people who present with "problematic" behaviours. Thus BESD is observed as a fluid concept which has evolved over time. This was clearly demonstrated within chapter two (see pg. 21), which critically examined how the labels employed to describe these young people have continually evolved throughout educational history. It would appear then that pupils who have been labelled with BESD are always going to be a feature of the classroom. It was considered essential to critically explore how these young people are identified, how pupils and parents experience this label and how teachers determine whether a pupil has a "problem" with their behaviour.

A further theme identified within the literature is the challenges Government, local authorities and schools face in identifying and providing interventions to ameliorate the difficulties young people labelled with BESD face in schools (Ofsted, 1999). These pupils' continue to provide a "challenge" to educators today as observed by one teacher who participated in the study;

> There is always going to be this type of child, we are never ever going to have schools full of nice kids who skip into school and do everything that they are asked to do in a nice way. Without these kids we wouldn't be in a job. (Support centre manager)

Teaching pupils who display challenging behaviours can be demanding in terms of the skills required by professionals to deal with disruptive behaviour (Swinson & Knight, 2007). In addition, previous researchers acknowledge the compromising position teachers are placed in with regard to identifying and defining those pupils who will receive the BESD label (Goodman & Burton, 2010). It is teachers who will initially be responsible for determining whether a pupil requires additional support. They will also be involved in decision-making processes surrounding whether a pupil should receive an SEN Statement assessment. Evidence extracted from the literature (for example Pinney, 2002: Truss, 2008) and findings from the study demonstrate that the current SEN process is no longer fit for purpose. With many authors acknowledging that these processes are extremely cumbersome leading to some pupils having to wait too long to have their needs met (Sodha and Margo, 2010). When speaking to parents and professionals for the purposes of the current study it became apparent that difficulties were experienced in obtaining SEN Statements. It will be argued throughout the following chapter that in many ways obtaining an SEN Statement is an

"achievement" (Visser et al., 2005). This is due to the challenges encountered throughout these processes such as finalising the SEN Statement. Whilst undertaking the study it became clear that obtaining an SEN Statement is considered a greater priority for adults rather than the pupils themselves. As most of the young people stated they had never heard of the BESD label and appeared confused as to whether they had actually obtained an SEN Statement. However even those who stated they had never heard these terms or been involved in assessment procedures expressed that they would like to be reviewed by professionals to determine whether they had a "condition" that could be "treated".

Many researchers and educators have expressed concerns regarding the employment of labels (Kelly & Norwich, 2004; Thomas, 2005; Tobbell & Lawthom, 2005). Yet despite such trepidation it became clear that some pupils, parents and teachers continue to pursue this label. The terms employed to describe this group of young people are ambiguous which makes it difficult to determine whether a pupil has a medical "condition" that requires some sort of "treatment" or whether they are simply a "naughty child". If a young person is deemed to have BESD they may then be prescribed medication. Pupils, parents and teachers discussed concerns regarding placing young people on pills to control their behaviour. Within all of these processes it is adults who determine the trajectory of the pupil as they decide whether a pupil will receive an assessment for an SEN Statement. This leaves pupils' both voiceless and powerless within the confines of their educational journey. It is determined that with regard to the BESD label the following key themes have relevance for the current study;

- Identifying and defining BESD
- Naughty vs. BESD
- Achieving the BESD label
- Medicalisation of behaviour

These themes will be explored and critically analysed within the following chapter. This critical exploration will seek to determine how pupils, parents and teachers perceive the BESD label and how they experience the dilemmas outlined above.

6.1 Identifying and defining the BESD pupil

The label BESD is widely employed within the context of education. The numbers of pupils identified as having BESD continue to grow (Cooper, 2006). However uncertainties surround what constitutes BESD. In the majority of cases it was teachers who were responsible for identifying whether a pupil has behavioural issues and should receive assessment for SEN. However with teachers not having a shared understanding of what the term BESD means the concept of inappropriate behaviour has become socially constructed (Grieve, 2009; Visser & Stokes, 2003, Male, 2003). In addition to these uncertainties teachers have indicated a need for specialist training on how labels represent underlying complex conditions and issues (Goodman & Burton, 2010). Throughout the interviews the teachers who participated in the study highlighted the dilemmas they encounter in terms of identifying BESD. Currently BESD is not an officially recognised medical diagnosis; the label covers a wide range of pupils with a wide range of needs. It was suggested by one teacher that BESD should be classed as a mental health issue;

> I think BESD is a kind of broad term that is a kind of umbrella cover all for a host of different conditions which include ADHD, conduct disorders, oppositional defiance disorder a whole host of arguably what are mental health problems. I think although there doesn't exist a diagnosis of BESD it could be argued quite validly that BESD is in itself a mental health issue because of all of the different facets that make up what is the term BESD. (Special school head teacher)

It became apparent that young people themselves had never heard of this label suggesting that it is a term employed by adults to describe and categorise pupils. For example during the first activity session the young people were asked if they had ever heard the term BESD, not one of the pupils could provide a definition, typical responses included;

> Researcher: Have you heard of BESD?
>
> **No (Adam)**
>
> **Yeah what is that? (Christine)**

Alongside pupils not being aware of the label BESD, parents stated they had never heard of the term;

> My study has been looking at BESD – have you heard of that term?
>
> No (Daniel's mum)

Thus, it would seem that having a label to describe "problematic" young people is a priority for educators but not for pupils or their parents. The language employed by pupils and parents to describe this group of young people included terms such as "naughty" and "bad". Pupils were clear as to how they would be perceived by the teacher;

They would never believe me. They would always think that I must be a bad kid. (Tyrese)

The terms associated with this "condition" have negative connotations. This terminology clearly demonstrates how these young people not only perceive themselves but their perception of other people's attitudes towards them. During the discussions with both pupils and teachers it became clear that there were varying levels of "inappropriate" behaviour and this could be linked to whether the pupil was deemed to have a "problem" with their behaviour. The teachers appeared to be suggesting that some pupils will just "play up for fun". This was reflected by one of the teachers who suggested they would make a judgement as to what behaviour was deemed worthy of a response;

In the main what we try to is ignore poor behaviour or attention seeking behaviour in the first place in the hope that you are going to be able to keep the pupil within the classroom. (Special school teacher three)

As in the pilot study (see section, 5.9, pg. 109) the pupils were more likely to be aware of specific conditions such as ADHD rather than the broad term BESD. The extract below is taken from one of the activity sessions conducted with young people attending the support centre and highlights the pupils understanding of the diagnosis ADHD;

Researcher: Have you all heard of things like ADHD?
Christine: I have got it
Researcher: What do you think it means when you have got ADHD?
Christine: I don't know you just fidget
Researcher: Do you get easily distracted?
Christine: Yeah
Clare: Yeah
Researcher: Have you been assessed?
Clare: Yeah
Researcher: Did somebody come out and make you do tests?
Christine: No just went to the doctors
Researcher: Do you have to take any medication?
Christine: Two in the morning and one in the afternoon

Throughout the study those young people who had not received a definitive diagnosis such as ADHD found it difficult to express themselves and determine why they had been identified as having a "problem" with their behaviour. One example of such is the interview conducted with Whitney-Bob who had been excluded from mainstream education. Despite being given the opportunity to return to secondary school she made the decision to remove herself and chose not to attend. She is currently placed in an alternative provision and when asked about her behaviour in school she commented;

> **I am weird, one minute I am nice, then the next minute I am horrible and the next minute I want to cry, then I want to go mad I think I have got something wrong with me. (Whitney-Bob)**

> Researcher: What do you mean?

> **Not like mental problems, I just think I have got something wrong with me (Whitney-Bob)**

The data also reveals how there was a frustration amongst the young people who had not been afforded a diagnosis. Throughout their educational journey these pupils will have encountered a range of professionals. They will have been asked on many occasions about their behaviour and the reasons behind their actions. Despite this a number of the participants struggled to determine why they had been identified as having BESD;

> **I really don't know so I can't really explain to people. When people ask me, I try to really think but I can't (Zoe)**

It was difficult to establish whether some of the young people had ever been assessed. The majority of the pupils who participated in the study either could not remember or simply stated that they have never been assessed;

> **No I don't think so I can't remember (Whitney-Bob)**

> **Something that has just been said in school no-one has assessed me (Louise)**

It would appear that rather than young people being officially assessed and obtaining an SEN Statement the term BESD might be being attached to young people on the basis of a teacher's preconceived notions of inappropriate behaviour (McKay & Neal, 2009). The teachers discussed the dilemmas they encountered when trying to establish the difference between a pupil with additional learning needs and those who are simply "naughty for fun". This again highlights the complex nature of this label and the important role teachers can play in determining whether a pupil has a behavioural problem or not. As noted within chapter two (see pg. 21) there are problems reaching a consensus as to what constitutes BESD. There is no official diagnosis rather it is an umbrella term which covers a wide range

of behaviours (Clough et al., 2005). The evidence from the current study supports the assertion that the term is applied to a wide variety of young people ranging from those who are occasionally disruptive and observed to have only relatively short term difficulties to those presenting with extremely challenging behaviour or who have serious psychological problems (Hamill & Boyd, 2002);

> It is such a broad thing because every kid is different you see. There is no one size fits all...I wish sometimes they were all the same it would make my job a lot easier but I think they don't like certain things you know. Hence why they are kicked out of school because they upset every single teacher, it is just a few incidents blow up and how they behave to other kids or certain teachers that has led them to get kicked out. (Support Centre Teacher)

Based upon this initial data it appeared essential to gain an insight into the teachers' experiences of identifying and supporting pupils who are deemed to have BESD. The teachers interviewed provided a wide range of definitions for the term BESD. Strikingly however the majority of definitions focused on the behaviour of the pupil not being appropriate for the educational setting. For example one teacher stated;

> They are constantly challenging routines or structures which are put in place to help them cope with the school day and their behaviour doesn't quite fit with what is acceptable (Alternative provision staff)

It is interesting that within the above quote it is the pupil who is deemed to have failed rather than the education system that surrounds them (Hodkinson, 2012). The failing inclusion agenda has been a major theme throughout the thesis. It is argued here that both policy-makers and researchers need to pause to consider the position of the teacher. Many of the policies introduced as part of New Labours inclusive agenda appear to hinder rather than enhance the teacher's ability to support these young people. This situation is made more complicated by the continued emphasis on categorising pupils. Researchers have suggested that the BESD label implies within its subtext that problem lies within the child (Thomas, 2005). These researchers argue that having a label "explains away" the problem, this can lead to teachers, parents and others believing that there is nothing they can do or could have done to prevent the young person developing BESD (Lauchlan & Boyle, 2007). Once a young person had received the BESD label they will be taken down a particular educational pathway (this point will be further evidenced in chapter seven see pg. 154). Teachers discussed the notion of pupils "coming down" the special schools route. For pupils, parents and teachers there was a sense that this is the only option available to these young people as no mainstream schools are willing to engage "challenging" pupils. This position was reinforced by one of the teachers from the special school;

Sometimes what happens is they are excluded first and get the statement second just so they can place them in school but yeah all ours have been excluded from probably three or four before they come to us. (Special school teacher two)

This clearly supports the claims that these pupils are seen to present a "challenge" to educational professionals. The teachers appeared unsure as to the needs of these pupils due to the uncertainties surrounding the BESD label. There were a range of definitions offered by professionals as to what constitutes a behaviour problem. This highlights as the literature reviewed in previous chapters suggests, that teachers do not have a shared understanding of the label BESD (Grieve, 2009; Visser & Stokes, 2003, Male, 2003). The literature intimated that teachers' judgements were likely to be subjective and based on their perceptions of certain behaviours and thresholds of social tolerance (McKay & Neal, 2009). The evidence gathered during the study supports these claims.

The literature makes clear that teachers are not being provided with adequate training this leaves teachers having to rely on their own previous experience when it comes to supporting young people labelled with BESD (Gray & Panter, 2000). The evidence obtained during the study emphasises the importance of training and teachers being provided with guidelines as to what behaviours constitute BESD. Teachers who participated in the study expressed concerns regarding the employment of this label and attaching it to young people;

I don't think school has it fully focused to be honest with you because we get a lot of kids that are down as BESD kids but it is hard to understand why because when you interact with them and talk as much as we do you don't seem to find the problems involved. I think a lot of educators aren't too sure on it whereas it is easy to label them to be honest with you as BESD and push them to one side over here rather than cope with the problems. (Support centre teacher)

The above quote supports the argument that rather than addressing the reasons behind inappropriate behaviour and ensuring support mechanisms are put in place, the pupil will be removed (Adams, 2008). The teacher claims that school will "push them to one side". The evidence makes clear that BESD is a fluid label and to some extent untried and untested in terms of how these young people should be supported. There is a sense that teachers with no training are in a situation where they are making it up as they go and they will learn on the job. It would seem that "make do and mend" (see pg. 62) is an accurate portrayal of the current situation for many teachers. The findings further support the claims made in the literature that the current solution for this unknown quantity is to adopt a utilitarian approach and remove the "challenging" pupil.

Interestingly, the confusion surrounding the legitimacy of the BESD label and the diagnosis ADHD was also reflected in the discussions with young people. A number of the pupils who

participated in the study questioned whether conditions such as ADHD actually exist. It would seem that the BESD label attracts a certain level of stigma. This is supported by the literature which suggests that pupils would be unhappy to be in a class with a peer displaying externalised or internalised behaviours (Visser & Dubsky, 2009). Pupils who stated they had never been assessed such as Adam and Tyrese expressed scepticism towards other pupils who had been diagnosed with ADHD. However within the quote provided below there is a suggestion that this is something pupils have to consciously control;

> **I think it is just made up, I think it is a joke, some cases it is just you are hyperactive and you just give in instead of calming down. (Adam)**

To summarise it appears that teachers are placed in a difficult position in terms of identifying and defining the BESD label. With no training or official guidelines teachers seemingly have to rely on their own notions of sensibility and will to some extent be "making it up as they go". Questions are also raised regarding the legitimacy of the BESD label. The label covers a wide range of behaviours and will be applied to young people without a formal assessment. Evidence presented in the chapter suggests that teachers and some pupils are suspicious of the BESD label. It would seem in reality the attachment of this label will often be based on subjective judgements by the teacher. A key challenge for educators then is how to determine whether a pupil has a "condition" that requires interventions and support or is simply regarded as a "naughty" pupil.

6.2 Naughty vs. BESD

The label BESD is shrouded in ambiguities, there is no consensus within the literature or the data as to what constitutes BESD. Bowers (1996) has questioned the legitimacy of joining the terms emotional and behavioural side by side in Government policies. As official reports and research in this area are generally more concerned with the managing of behaviours instead of evaluating the underlying emotions which may influence what is termed disturbance. The evidence from the study indicates that those working in the education profession are clearly focussed on the behavioural aspect of the BESD label.

Earlier it was determined that although most young people acknowledged they had displayed naughty behaviour there was disagreement amongst the pupils as to what extent this could be considered a "problem" or "condition" that required some form of intervention. This aspect was explored below. The main issue for pupils and teachers appeared to be whether the pupil was able to control their behaviour. A number of the participants stressed

that they could control their behaviour for example during his interview Adam stated **'yeah I think I can control how I behave but sometimes I just feel like I shouldn't, I just feel like I don't want to like'** the suggestion here is that he is making a choice to misbehave. The importance of the pupils' relationship with their teachers will be explored throughout the following chapters. However the quote above provided by Adam supports the claims made by a number of the teachers that these pupils will push the boundaries for fun.

For teachers they will be responsible for deciding whether a pupil is simply being naughty or has a specific educational need that requires additional support. There is a certain stigma attached to the BESD label and this became apparent during the interviews with young people suggesting that pupils will manipulate teachers. The notion of young people being in control of their behaviour was supported by a number of the teachers. When asked what they considered to be the difference between a pupil who is naughty and one who has obtained the BESD label, one teacher commented;

> Naughty out of mischief and badness but are quickly labelled as BESD but they know what they are doing…they all seem to get labelled under the one tag and the problem isn't really dealt with underneath. (Support centre teacher)

This teacher highlighted the importance of exploring the reasons behind a pupil's inappropriate behaviour and addressing the needs of the pupil. There are teachers who supported the application of the BESD label and were adamant that there is a difference between a naughty pupil and someone with BESD. One teacher explains what he considers to be the difference;

> with EBD kids it is usually one step forward three steps back whereas kids who are just naughty can actually make good progress their behaviour does improve. That is the difference between a kid who is naughty and a kid who is maybe naughty to the point where they get the EBD label but it is the progress because you can have them naughty girls and boys who fly through school and do really well (Special school teacher 2)

It is interesting to note the term employed by this teacher as he describes pupils as "EBD" rather than "BESD". Despite moves to broaden the scope of the BESD label, practising teachers still refer to the old term. This would support findings from the literature which suggests a need for specialist training on labels associated with BESD and an understanding of each of these conditions (Goodman & Burton, 2010). Throughout the interviews teachers acknowledged the confusion surrounding the BESD label. Importantly unless a pupil has obtained an SEN Statement they can remain in the classroom and teachers will have to "deal" with them. The literature intimates that teachers are wary of the inclusion of these pupils in the classroom due to the perceived negative impact they will

have on the learning of others (Farrell et al., 2005). It is important to also reflect on the fact that some pupils struggle to cope in mainstream setting and thus require specialist provisions. Clearly placing pupils in inappropriate settings can be potentially distressing for both the pupils and their teachers. In order for pupils to receive the additional support to enable them to progress through the educational system they needed to have obtained an SEN Statement. A number of teachers stressed the importance of identifying needs earlier in a pupil's educational journey;

> you can have loads of EBD kids in your class that haven't got the label and you have to deal with them anyway and all kids go through a crisis where their emotions affect their behaviour...I do think if they got the label when they are younger not a label but where identified as having some barriers to their education it would help (Special school teacher 2)

If the young person has not received an SEN Statement, which may be seen to give them some form of diagnosis, teachers may not feel capable to cater for their educational needs. This highlights the power of having the "right" documentation to ensure pupils are afforded the support required to remain engaged in education;

> Unless you have got the diagnosis in front of you, in the situation we are in you treat them all as naughty kids do you know what I mean...unless you have got that statement in front of you, you class them all as naughty kids and deal with it the best way you can. Then once the statement comes through that is why he is the way he is and you make a little bit of space for him but you are not doing him any favours by letting him get away with so much because then the other kids in this situation will pick up on it. (Support centre teaching assistant)

The extract above stresses the importance of obtaining an SEN Statement. As noted earlier in the chapter there was suspicion amongst pupils as to whether other young people have a behavioural problem or they are just making the choice to misbehave. A number of the pupils who participated felt pupils will manipulate teachers and use their label as an excuse for their inappropriate behaviour;

> **Some people just act like they can't because you obviously can control it, people just act like they can't. (Adam)**

> **Because they have been told that they have got something wrong with them, they will probably act smart and try but really they are embarrassing themselves...and like in this school because some of them have got ADHD like when they get detention they get away with it because they say that they couldn't control themselves but really they can (Tyrese)**

Evidently, even amongst their peers these pupils will be blamed for their behaviour with pupils suggesting that they are in control and are making the choice to be disruptive. This is

supported by Clough et al. (2005) who found that the BESD label attracts a level of stigma that other "learning difficulties" do not. The study sought to hear the voices of young people who have received this label, it is clear that pupils will have different experiences which will be determined by their individual circumstances. The study hoped to identify critical moments in the pupil's individual educational journeys. A series of case studies will be critically examined within each of the findings sections. The following case study was provided by Tyrese and demonstrates the complex nature of the BESD label and the implications this can have on the trajectory of the pupil.

TYRESE

'Nah I know I haven't got ADHD because I can control myself'

Tyrese is currently attending a special school (provision C). He was excluded from mainstream education when he was in his first year of secondary school. When asked why he was excluded from school he stated **'just like not listening out in class sometimes, messing about and clowning about'**. When he recalls this event he feels unfairly blamed and often states throughout the interviews that he should have had a second chance and been allowed to return to a mainstream setting. The implication here is that he feels he was treated differently to his peers;

> **Others kids they will be kicked out of school and they will be able to go back to another mainstream. I just got put in this school (Tyrese)**

In order for a pupil to attend a special school they need to have acquired a Statement of SEN. Both Tyrese and his mother stated that he did not have an SEN Statement nor had he ever been assessed for one. There was confusion over what his needs were His mum supports his claim that he can control his behaviour and therefore does not have a "problem".

> No not that I can remember, even if they did say that I wouldn't believe it anyway because if he was doing the same things at home yeah I would understand but he knows who to play on it...the way I look at it now he is just choosing not to learn (Tyrese's mum)

His mum stresses that his behaviour has deteriorated since he was placed in a special school. The evidence from the study illustrates that special schools will be more tolerant of inappropriate behaviour. Tyrese's mum feels this has had a detrimental impact on Tyrese's behaviour. She suggests that Tyrese will actively make the decision to misbehave because "he knows he can get away with it"

> ...me personally, I am no doctor, I am just his mother but I think he is just copying what other children are doing because he knows he can get away with it in that school (Tyrese's mum)

Tyrese continued...

However it becomes clear throughout the interviews with Tyrese that he sees himself differently to his peers.

> **I haven't got behaviour problems I can control myself it is like other kids here can't control themselves I know when to stop they don't (Tyrese)**

The teachers also acknowledge that Tyrese is able to recognise when his behaviour is inappropriate and will take responsibility for his actions.

> He always comes and apologises. He recognises when he is wobbly I know I am all over the place today and he usually knows why it is (Special School Teacher)

Both Tyrese and his mother stress that his behaviour is not out of the ordinary for a teenager. His mum simply stated that "boys will be boys". Tyrese feels he will only display relatively low levels of inappropriate behaviour when compared to his peers

> **Well it is normal just to get into a bit of trouble in class I do get detentions but I am not the type of kid that runs away from school. I don't run away I just stay but sometimes I am a bit naughty (Tyrese)**

Tyrese appears suspicious of the other boys who attend the school, specifically those who have obtained a medical diagnosis such as ADHD. He feels they use this diagnosis as an excuse for their behaviour and as a result will be treated differently Tyrese helpfully provided the example of time given for detention when you misbehave to demonstrate this perceived discrepancy;

> **Yeah they just walk out of class because they are lazy and they don't want to do nothing...say if I was to walk out of class I would get a straight up hour they would get like half an hour (Tyrese)**

The case study detailed above highlights the emphasis that will be placed on the behaviour aspect of the BESD label by educators. The inappropriate behaviour displayed by this group of pupils led to them being branded as having a problem. The label BESD covers a wide range of behaviours however there is a tendency to focus on the external behaviours displayed by young people. Throughout the data there is a recurring theme that those who have obtained the BESD label due to their social or emotional needs are frequently ignored. This is clearly reflected in the case study detailed below;

ZOE

'...they could have helped me and stopped it before it got out of control but they just didn't'

Zoe was attending an alternative provision. She is the only pupil in the cohort who had never been excluded from school. She made the decision to remove herself from mainstream education following incidents of bullying. During the interviews she discussed her experiences in school and stated that she feels she will often be ignored because her behaviour is withdrawn and she does not 'kick off' or display her difficulties.

> **They won't really shout at me because I don't act up in school, I don't fight with no-one so they don't pay attention to me that much because they pay attention to the girls who are kicking off. I just ask me mate and she explains and I try and get on with it.**

Zoe's mother also reflected on her daughter's withdrawn behaviour in school

> **She won't tell them anything when she is struggling, she just leaves it and buries her head in the sand so she won't put her hand up and ask for help even with homework. She is going "no I can't" why can't you just ask? She has got to ask for help but she won't. I don't understand why she is like that sometimes. (Zoe's mum)**

It would appear that Zoe's mum is suggesting that it is Zoe's fault for not approaching the teacher and discussing her problems. For Zoe however she had justifiable reasons for her reluctance to open up to adults. It became clear during the interviews with Zoe that she had difficulties trusting adults. Whilst in primary school Zoe stated that she was bullied when she attempted to discuss this issue with her teachers she described feeling let down by the their responses

> **They didn't do nothing, there was one teacher she said you can come in later than everyone else and go home earlier and I was thinking that is going to do no good because they are still going to see me, I am still going to have no mates so I just left**

This again reinforces the importance of the teacher's response. During the interviews Zoe also discussed her life outside school. She made clear the need for adults to listen to young people rather than simply assuming they know what is best

> **I don't think they should shout at kids when they are not going to school because that doesn't do nothing it makes them just ignore it and not listen no more. My social worker was shouting at me and my little sister for not going to school and having a proper go at us and we just ignored her because I didn't want to talk to her about stuff like that because she is not going to do nothing**

The lack of clarity surrounding the BESD label leads to questions surrounding how professionals determine whether a young person has BESD. The following section will critically examine both the pupils and parents experiences of obtaining an SEN Statement of BESD. However acceptance of the notion that special educational needs are not fixed within children, for example the impact of school factors, has contributed to a situation of tremendous variability regarding who receives an SEN Statement (Florian, 2002).

Throughout the duration of the study it became apparent that there are pupils, parents and teachers who actively pursue this label. The teachers asserted that in order for pupils to receive additional educational support they will needed to have acquired an SEN Statement. Having an SEN Statement then legitimises the BESD label. However as noted throughout the study, obtaining an SEN Statement can be extremely arduous. The data is now analysed to clarify this theme and review the participants' experiences of "achieving" BESD status.

6.3 Achieving the BESD label

The researcher experienced difficulties in establishing whether pupils who participated in the study had been officially diagnosed with BESD through the process of SEN Statementing. A number of the young people and some parents were not aware of whether they had obtained an SEN Statement. As stated earlier in the chapter pupils demonstrated that they had not heard of the label BESD rather terminology employed by pupils included "naughty kid" or "bad kid". Parents generally fell into two categories those who pursued the label BESD and those who denied their child had BESD. For those parents who pursued the SEN Statement route the prevailing discourse was one of "fighting the system". This findings support the literature reviewed within previous chapters which suggested that these parents often feel subordinated and marginalised by educational professionals (Row 2005; Pinney 2002; Pinkus 2005; Paradice and Adewusi 2002; Hess, Molina and Kozleski 2006). During the study only three of the parents remembered their child being assessed for an SEN Statement. Strikingly these parents described the struggle and the battle they encountered;

> My fight was how can you tell me that a child has got behavioural problems ADHD and you are passing him from pillar to post. I couldn't cope with that as a grown up how do you expect a seven year old little boy to cope with it. (Boris' mum)

Some parents however were adamant that their child did not have a "problem". For these parents all that was needed the child to progress was the right supportive educational environment;

> He has got a lot more options open to him. He is in the right setting, small classroom, and more staff he gets more back to task so they get the work out of him. (Daniel's mum)

Unfortunately ensuring their child was attending the "right" provision for their needs was neither an easy nor a straightforward task. Indeed the findings suggest that pupils and their parents would be sent "from pillar to post". These difficulties will be further explored in chapter seven (pg. 154). These are clearly not desirable pupils and school will employ a range of mechanisms (sometimes illegal) to remove these young people;

> When he was in mainstream all he would get was he was being naughty again. He is out of class for a week as soon as that week was up he would be in bother again. (Daniel's mum)

During the interviews with the pupils, those who were able to remember were asked about their experiences of being assessed for BESD and SEN Statements. Martin was attending the special school and when recalling his experience of being assessed his response was **'Nothing just test me'** his understanding of the results of the assessment was **'I have got a mind of a seven to eight year old'**. It became apparent throughout the study that the assessment process and achieving the label BESD was not a major concern for the young people themselves. For example Boris stated **'No-one talks about it'**. Therefore the SEN Statement process was not considered an important aspect of the educational journey for the pupils;

> **I don't know me mum has probably got one for me but I don't know where it is (Boris)**

> **I don't know I don't really listen (Jacob)**

With both pupils and parents struggling to remember whether the pupil had received an assessment for an SEN Statement the researcher attempted to gain access to the pupils documentation. The Head teacher refused access to this documentation although both the pupil and parents consented to this information being viewed. The reason behind this reluctance to share this information was unclear. After several discussions the decision was made to abandon this aspect of the study and focus instead on hearing voices. However this incident clearly demonstrates the importance of gatekeepers and how they work to subvert pupil voice research. Adults need to be willing to embrace the ideals set out in Government legislation to allow the voices of young people to be heard. Worryingly evidence suggests that some teachers remain suspicious of these processes.

There was a suggestion that for those who had obtained an SEN Statement this "achievement" was more important for the parent than the pupil. However as with the pilot

study there were examples of young people who sought an official diagnosis. Both Whitney-Bob and Louise stated that they would like to be assessed; these young people acknowledged that they had difficulties with their behaviour and felt obtaining a diagnosis would in some way make them "better off". This is reflected in the following quote provided by Louise;

> **I would like to just to make sure because if I have then at least I can get not get fixed but I can get diagnosed with it and would be better off. I wouldn't know what to do, I wouldn't know where to go (Louise)**

The above quote demonstrates how young people are powerless within the confines of the SEN Statement processes. Despite Government legislation such as the SEN Code of Practice 2001, highlighting the importance of seeking the pupil's perspective evidence from the current study indicates these processes are forced upon the pupil. It is adults who determine whether a pupil receives an assessment. The voices of young people then will be silenced by overriding adult concerns (Galloway & Goodwin, 1987). During this process pupils are reliant upon professionals who will determine the topics for discussion (May, 2005). The evidence gathered during the study supports these claims as pupils stated they were rarely afforded opportunities to join discussions surrounding their education.

A prominent theme throughout the discussions with both teachers and parents was the difficulties finalising the SEN Statement. It is only once the Statement is finalised that the child will be placed in an educational provision which will provide the additional support required to meet their needs. There were examples of young people such as Helen who were close to reaching the end of their educational journey and the Statement was yet to be finalised. During her interviews Helen's mum describes her experiences within the current SEN statementing processes. Although the law (DfES, 2001) states that assessments for SEN Statements should be completed in six months there is currently an 18 month waiting list. For Helen's mum this would have been too late as Helen would have been of school leaving age. This is clearly worrying for pupils as they have to wait significant periods to have their assessment needs met. Helen's mum pushed for this to be completed sooner and acknowledges the support she received from the educational professionals within the alternative provision Helen was attending;

> There was an 18 months waiting list for it. I thought I am going to have to wait by the time 18 months was up she would have been gone anyway...everyone they have tried to get it done quicker so from the 3rd June last year till now this is the second part of it. So it is better than the 18 month at least they can do something before she leaves really...but you can imagine how many people it has happened to were you just get called naughty, you are naughty. (Helen's mum)

Clearly, these parents are keen for their child to be seen as having a "problem" and not just referred to as a naughty pupil. The notion of there being a difference between these two groups of pupils was critically explored earlier in the chapter (section 6.2, pg. 141). It was important for parents to pursue the BESD label so their child could be identified as having a "condition" rather than simply being judged an inadequate parent not able to control their child.

It is clear that obtaining an SEN Statement is vital to ensure the pupil receives the support required to successfully progress through education. The findings from the study highlight that it will be parents who are accountable for ensuring the child receives an assessment. However parents often felt their pleas were ignored by educational professionals. There is a lot of expectation placed on parents and there are few mechanisms within the SEN system for providing support to parents who have to deal with their own emotional responses (Truss, 2008). Parents often described their frustration at continuously being ignored by those designated to speak on their behalf, for example Helen's mum recalls;

> Even though every time we had parents evening and review days I would be like her spelling is appalling, her spelling is atrocious. In the end it was only that there was a classroom assistant in year six, he said has she ever been assessed for dyslexia and I said no never. (Helen's mum)

The literature intimates that there is a vast amount of variance in what kind of provision pupils who have a statement will be able to access. The findings support this notion and it would seem there is a postcode lottery of provision (Ofsted, 2010). The evidence from the study suggests this variance can even occur within one postcode. Nowhere is this more clearly demonstrated than in the educational journeys experienced by two of the young people who were attending the Support Centre. Clare and Christine both have the same diagnosis of ADHD and have experienced the same educational provisions. Christine is in the process of obtaining an SEN Statement whereas Clare's "problem" was not deemed to be severe enough to warrant an SEN assessment. This clearly leads to questions over who determines whether a pupil receives an assessment. The findings from the current study support the notion that in practice it is merely a matter of chance whether a pupil is removed through the process of exclusion or "achieves" the BESD label through SEN statement process and placed in specialist provision (Booth, 1996).

Despite Christine currently being in the process of obtaining an SEN Statement this again has yet to be finalised. The educational experiences of Christine and Helen clearly indicate that the SEN process is not working. These experiences support the argument that there is a need to review the current SEN system. In terms of the process, too many children have

to wait too long to have their needs met. This is further supported by (Sodha and Margo, 2010) who also found the statutory assessment process to be extremely cumbersome. In addition to parents highlighting the flaws in the current system, teachers acknowledged the challenges that occur when a pupil's statement has not been finalised. This includes problems identifying a suitable placement. Following New Labour's inclusive agenda the numbers of special schools were reduced in some areas (Priestley & Rabiee, 2002). However the number of requests for placements has gone up, suggesting that supply is not meeting demand. For pupils this meant they would often be placed in limbo as they waited for a placement to become available. Christine for example had been placed in a support centre for over a year despite this only intending to be a short term solution;

> Statement is all finalised but it can't be finalised until there is an actual place for her to go and the recommendation is that she goes to a special school. Literally this has now been dragging on since before Christmas. It is like right we have approached this special school they have got 14 days to reply and then they say no (Support Centre Manager)

> You have to go through this very long process of statementing and I think some local authorities are now quite reluctant to do statementing because some don't have as many special schools as we have (Special school teacher 1)

The official guidelines state that only those who have obtained an SEN Statement will be placed within a special school (DfES, 2001). During the interviews the special school head teacher stated that "99% of pupils that come to us have a statement of BESD". However both parents and pupils were unclear as to whether they had an SEN Statement. The head teacher did acknowledge that is was possible for pupils without statements to be placed in specialist provision;

> Technically yes in fact we are finding more and more situations were some pupils have kind of circumvented the system really. Some arrive with us before their final statement has been written up and that is usually called an assessment placement (Special school head teacher)

For many pupils this assessment placement would become a permanent situation. The difficulties experienced in obtaining a suitable educational placement and the often chaotic educational journeys encountered by this group of pupils had a detrimental impact on their parent's emotional well-being. Previous studies have highlighted the emotional and practical problems associated with being the parent of a child with SEN (Bruce and Schultz 2002; Russell 2003; Pinkus 2005; Hess, Molina and Kozleski 2006). Parents feel isolated; they are expected to navigate complex systems with little support. When asked if they were aware of the support services typical responses included;

> No I didn't have a clue. I was just left on my own trying to figure out what to do and I got in touch with the parents support thing and they were saying because I didn't know what you had to do for schools I didn't have a clue. I spoke to a woman a few times and she said you have to fill the forms in (Zoe's mum)

The challenge of determining whether a pupil had obtained an SEN Statement is further exacerbated by parents not being aware of what was happening with their child's education. Many of the parents who participated in the study described tenuous relationships with professionals and professional organisations;

> There have been a lot of organisations that have come for assessments, come for this and that and then you don't hear off them again. (Boris' mum)

The Government have adopted a variety of approaches to engage parents in their child's education, the most prevalent being parent partnerships. Despite best intentions of the Government such partnerships do not always serve the best interest of the parent and their child. Difficulties can arise from the unequal power relationships between the parent and the professional (Paige-smith, 1997). Education policy and practice restrict the rights of parents to participate in decision-making about SEN and choice of provision (Frederickson and Cline, 2009). In addition, Wolfendale and Bryans (2002) have argued that most parents do not have experience of SEN and so find themselves in an "information vacuum" at various stages of their child's life. Those who had not experienced the SEN Statementing process appeared unclear about their child's difficulties;

> I think she did I am not sure there is so much happening lately you would have to see (alternative provision) they know about her education. (Whitney's nan)

This chapter has outlined the difficulties in obtaining SEN Statements it now moves to examine the experiences of adults and young people who actively seek the BESD label through entering the SEN system. These parents described gaining a sense of relief once their child had received a diagnosis (Adams, 2008). The literature on 'ADHD' frequently acknowledges that one of the main benefits for parents of receiving a formal diagnosis for their child is they are less likely to feel blamed by the school for their child's actions and behaviours (Cooper, 2005). The teachers who participated in the study all linked the development of BESD to what they considered to be inept parenting. This culture of blame will be explored further within chapter eight (see pg. 182). For many of the parents the diagnosis as previous researchers (see Lloyd & Norris, 1999) have claimed was seen as a "label of forgiveness";

> when he was assessed I was relieved and then when I found out what it actually was that opened my eyes with a lot of things that he was doing with noise and why he

wouldn't go shopping...if we had a video you would see totally a different child. (Jacob's dad)

These parents often felt they would be judged for their child's sometimes inappropriate behaviour receiving a diagnosis provided them with feelings of relief. This was further reinforced by Jacob's mum;

> Yeah relieved because before you always got looked at you are such a bad parent why can't you control your child. Everywhere you go people look at you and stare at you. (Jacob's mum)

Teachers also acknowledged the significance of "achieving" the label and why pursuing the label can be reassuring for some parents;

> I just think some parents find it useful to have a diagnosis, to have been told your son has got ADHD. I think it is reassuring for them to know (Special school teacher 1)

In many ways having a diagnosis gives parents the permission required to fight the system. Having a label therefore is clearly important for some parents and pupils in a way it legitimates the pupils behaviour;

> All this were it has been in my brain, she is just a wrong-un. At least I will know now it is not her fault but they will see me roar...It is not enough now is it? If she has got that, you are going to have to do something to give her the education that she didn't have because you couldn't be bothered with her because you thought she was naughty. (Helen's mum)

Even those who advocate the employment of labels highlighted their concerns as this can sometimes lead to pupils being stigmatised. As highlighted earlier in this chapter these young people are more likely to be stigmatised than pupils who experience learning difficulties (Clough et al. 2005). As the literature suggests this may be because these pupils are considered to be the "problem" rather than having a problem (Heary & Hennessey, 2005). The experiences of some of the parents and pupils support this claim;

> Some parents will say we don't want them in here with our children. It is like a disease that you can catch. (Liam's mum)

> **I get in incidents and the staff do nothing when it has got something to do with me. When it is me saying something has happened they do nothing. (Daniel)**

A common theme identified by the pupils who had been placed in a special school was the perceived stigma of attending specialist provision rather than "normal school". This theme will be critically examined further in the following chapter (section 7.2, pg. 165). The extent to which young people actively pursue the BESD label is questionable. Achieving the BESD label may be seen as a double-edge sword. If the young person acquires the label they

should receive the additional educational support required to enable them to remain engaged in education however they may also be stigmatised. If pupils do not obtain an SEN Statement they may still be removed from mainstream education and placed in inappropriate educational settings.

The findings suggest that a label to categorise young people is more pertinent to adults, for example parents will seek the label as a means of ensuring their child receives the support required to successfully progress through education. This highlights the imbalance of power that occurs between pupils and adults. Young people do not have control over these processes rather they are done on to them, adults determine who gets assessed. Those who have "achieved" the SEN Statement may receive some form of medication to control their behaviour. This chapter now turns to explore the impact the medicalisation of behaviour had on those labelled with BESD. Concerns have been raised regarding the legitimacy of the ADHD diagnosis (Cohen, 2006) and the impact of placing pupils on medication to control their actions. There were a number of pupils in the cohort who had been placed on medication. The study sought to examine how pupils, parents and teachers experienced these processes.

6.4 Medicalisation of behaviour

Those who have successfully navigated the SEN Statementing process will normally receive some form of intervention. Although there has previously been calls for a shift away from the medical model (Warnock, 1978; Laslett, 1983) this approach continues to dominant intervention procedures. Here emphasis will be placed on treating the young person, with the implication being that it is the pupil who needs to change rather than the school environment (Lauchlan & Boyle, 2007). One of the major conditions associated with BESD is ADHD. For problems that are severe drug treatments may be recommended. Although official guidelines state that drug treatments should form part of a wider holistic approach (NICE, 2008), research studies have found that medications are frequently prescribed as a first line of treatment (Travell & Visser, 2006). Interestingly and perhaps of concern is that six of the pupils who participated in the study had been placed on medication. When discussing their medication the pupils began arguing over who had the "worst" case of ADHD. The following extracts are taken from the activity sessions and they highlight the pupils' levels of awareness regarding their medication. Their knowledge of the range of drugs available is striking. They also discuss the potential side effects of being placed on medication;

> Martin – how bad have you got it?
>
> Jacob – not that bad
>
> Daniel – well when I get violent I flip
>
> Martin – what tablets are you on?
>
> Jacob – when he gets violent he flips (laughs)
>
> Martin – what milligram you on?
>
> Daniel – I haven't been given any tablets for my ADHD for some reason I was took off them
>
> Jacob – I have got to take tablets me everyday, I have to take two every single morning
>
> Martin – he is just playing up, you on Ritalin?
>
> Jacob – no acquitson or something like that
>
> Daniel – I was on concerter before I got took off them
>
> Martin – they are Ritalin
>
> Daniel – concerter excel
>
> Researcher: What happens when you get diagnosed do you have to be assessed?
>
> Martin – yeah
>
> Jacob – why aren't you two on it anymore?
>
> Martin – I am on it
>
> Daniel – I was took off it two years ago, my aggression levels just went up and up and up
>
> Jacob – you are not worse than me then I have to take them everyday, I have had to take them since I was about seven every single day
>
> Daniel – I had to take them since I was like two, I was took off them when I was like nine or ten
>
> Martin – you are too young to have them because they have got drugs in

As with the BESD label there was disagreement amongst parents regarding the ADHD diagnosis and whether it could be attached to their child. For example Billy's carer did not believe that his problem with behaviour required medical treatment. She was cynical of the reasons behind parents pursing the diagnosis. She suggests that the reasons behind obtaining the diagnosis are so the mother can claim more benefits. The implication being she is using her son's condition for financial gain. This again links back to the perceptions of parents;

> Oh god no mum wanted him on medication for that...she was trying to claim money. I said no he is just naughty and I said when you tell him off and he knows you will stick to it he stops it...he said I want to see someone and they were saying about me behaviour and I have got and I said Billy you haven't you are just naughty because he would be all over the furniture he would be swearing (Billy's carer)

Some parents were concerned that placing young people on medication could have a detrimental impact on their health and well-being. Previous studies have acknowledged that the use of pharmacological treatment can have potentially adverse effects both physically and psychologically (Baldwin, 2000; Breggin, 1999; Baughman, 1999; Cohen, 2004; Fone & Nutt, 2005; Graham, 2006; Timimi, 2008). Parents expressed concern regarding the long-term side effects of being placed on medication;

> I don't think a child should be put on medication unless they are fully diagnosed. When they leave school were does that leave them...they just going to be in the streets like zombies, are they going to end up on drugs, are they going to end up with no education – where is the after plan for them kids? (Boris' mum)

The strategies employed have tended to focus on "treating" the pupil to modify their behaviour. The behaviours that young people learn at home may not necessarily meet the expectations set out by the school. As schools are coming under increased scrutiny it has been suggested that there is no place for those who cannot or "will not" keep up to order (Adams, 2008).

Although the pupils were happy to share their experiences of being placed on medication for some of the pupils receiving the diagnosis was perceived as a negative aspect of their educational journey. For example while filling in Clare's educational life grid her happiness decreased in year two of primary school when she was first placed on drugs to "treat" her behaviour.

Graph 6.1: Clare's happiness levels throughout educational journey
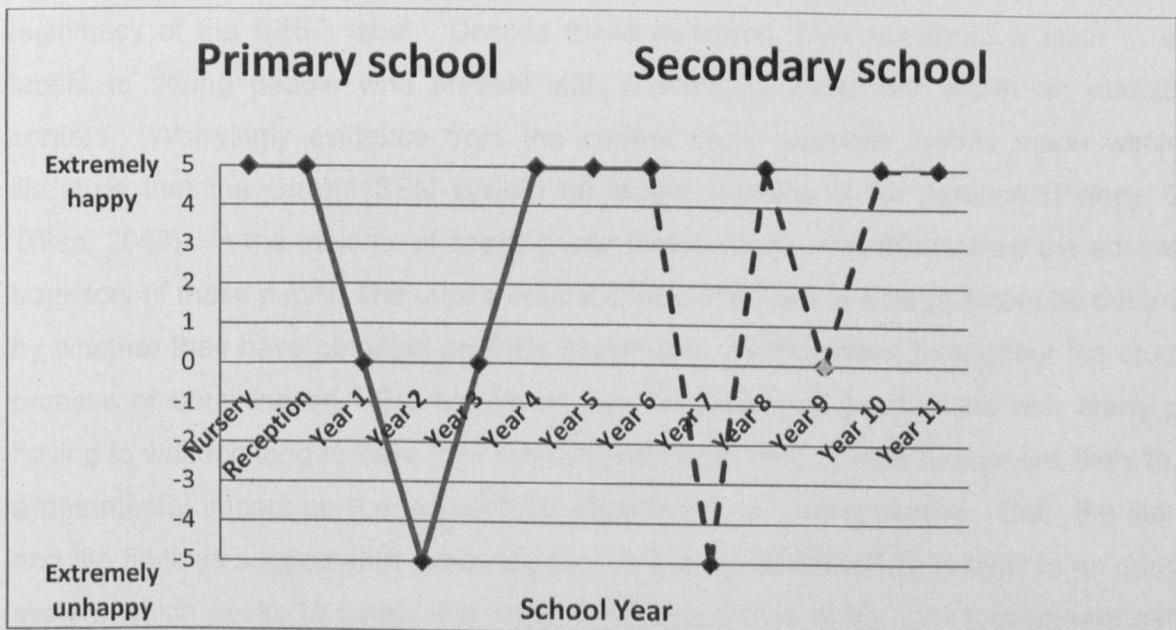
Clare experienced difficulties when first taking her medication as she struggled to swallow her pills;

> **I went the doctors because my mum thought this is not right for a kid to just run round and hit people and scream at teachers. They did a test and said she has got ADHD me mum was like oh right so they gave me medicine and then I took that but it was dead horrible. I tried not to take it but my mum used to force it down my throat. (Clare)**

During her time in education she feels she would be treated differently to her peers due to her ADHD diagnosis and this had a negative impact on her relationships with other pupils;

> **One of the kids would say that is not fair she goes out half of the lesson and the teacher would be like well you haven't got ADHD so it is not fair on the other kids but it is not my fault (Clare)**

It has been suggested that the short-term improvements in the pupils behaviour as a result of medication are more likely to be beneficial to parents and teachers rather than to the young people themselves (Cantwell, 1999; Miller & Leger, 2003). The findings from the current study support these claims with the processes of labelling, assessing and medicalising pupils being perceived as a priority for adults.

The chapter has highlighted the complex nature of the BESD label. Despite this label being extensively employed within the context of education, both pupils and parents stated they had never heard of BESD. However the term will be applied to a wide variety of pupils who have diverse educational needs. The lack of clarity surrounding this term has led to difficulties identifying BESD. Furthermore questions have been raised regarding the legitimacy of the BESD label. Despite these concerns there remained a push to attach labels to young people who present with challenging behaviour within an educational context. Worryingly evidence from the current study supports claims made within the literature that the current SEN system no longer remains fit for purpose (Pinney, 2002: Truss, 2008). In the majority of cases it was professionals who determined the educational trajectory of these pupils. The pupil's educational journey will to a large extent be determined by whether they have obtained an SEN Statement. As illustrated throughout the study the process of obtaining an SEN Statement can be extremely problematic with many pupils having to wait too long to have their educational needs met. These factors are likely to have a detrimental impact on the educational experiences of young people. Both the literature and the findings suggest that pupils labelled as having BESD will be subject to an education system which seeks to categorise them and then remove them from mainstream settings. All but one of the pupils had been excluded from mainstream education. Once a pupil has received the BESD label they will "come down" the special schools pathway or they will be

subject to a "dump and hope" model where they will be placed in a variety of alternative educational settings. In light of this significant finding the study now turns to critically examine the educational provisions experienced by young people once they have received the BESD label.

CHAPTER SEVEN: FROM PILLAR TO POST

It has been the assertion of the current study that the political agenda towards pupils who have been labelled with BESD is one of removal. As demonstrated in chapter two (see pg. 21) the policy towards this group of young people has continually changed throughout educational history from segregation to inclusion (Cole et al., 1998; Cole & Visser, 1999; Daniels & Cole, 2002). It will be argued that the New Labour policy of "inclusive education" was simply to become mere rhetoric as this group of pupils remained on the outskirts of mainstream education. The purpose of the chapter is to provide an overview of the educational journeys experienced by this group of pupils.

As with previous researchers such as Gazeley (2010); Pirrie et al., (2011) and Pirrie & Macleod (2009) difficulties were encountered when attempting to map out the educational journeys of young people labelled with BESD. This was largely due to their often chaotic trajectories. These young people encountered severely disrupted educational pathways which included a wide range of educational provisions, often for only relatively short periods of time (Gazeley, 2010; Pirrie et al. 2011). All of the participants raised concerns regarding the educational placement of these pupils. The teachers linked the removal of challenging pupils to the attainment and performance pressures placed on mainstream school;

> I can understand why with the pressures of league tables and other pressures that are heaped on to schools in terms of attainment and progress Ofsted and so on. I can understand why kids do slip through the net and end up in schools like ours (Special school head teacher)

Many of the pupils experienced particularly complex and unstable patterns of school attendance (Gazeley, 2010). The pupil's disrupted educational pathways and poor attendance often had a detrimental impact on the pupil's pre-existing learning and social difficulties (Pirrie et al, 2011). The table below (Table 7.1, pg 155) highlights the range of educational provisions this group of young people experienced with some attending as many as 11 different institutions. A notable challenge for parents, pupils and educators then is finding the "right" form of provision.

Table 7.1: Overview of the research participant's educational journeys

Name	Type of provision	Number of provisions attended	Number of times excluded	Exclusion vs. SEN Statement
Adam	Support Centre (A)	8	2	Exclusion
Christine	Support Centre (A)	10	Not known	Exclusion and SEN Statement
Clare	Support Centre (A)	7	4	Exclusion
Zoe	Alternative provision (B)	4	0	Neither
Helen	Alternative provision (B)	6	Not known	Exclusion and SEN Statement
Whitney-Bob	Alternative provision (B)	11	Not known	Exclusion
Louise	Alternative provision (B)	10	2	Exclusion
Martin	Special School (C)	5	2	Exclusion and SEN Statement
Billy	Special School (C)	6	Not known	Exclusion and SEN Statement
Tyrese	Special School (C)	4	1	Exclusion and SEN Statement
Jacob	Special School (C)	6	2	Exclusion and SEN Statement
Boris	Special School (C)	6	3	Exclusion and SEN Statement
Daniel	Special School (C)	7	4	Exclusion and SEN Statement

The above table supports the assertion that there are two potential pathways which these pupils will experience that of removal either through exclusion or the SEN Statementing process. There was only one pupil in the cohort who had not been excluded from mainstream education nor received a Statement of SEN. Interestingly though this is not a straight forward either/or situation with the majority of young people experiencing both exclusion and the SEN Statementing process. As highlighted in chapter six the researcher did experience difficulties in establishing whether the pupils had actually been assessed for an SEN Statement.

The table also illustrates the increased likelihood of exclusion once a pupil has received the BESD label. Indeed the number of times that pupils have been excluded highlights the difficulties in re-integrating young people back into mainstream education. Instead these pupils will be placed in special schools (provision C) or an alternative model of "dump and hope" will be utilised (provision A and B). When examining the participants educational life grids it is clear that once placed in a specialist provision the majority of young people who

participated in the study were able to maintain their placement. Worryingly for those who had experienced the alternative route, this often led to continued chaotic trajectories. The pupils' turbulent educational journeys clearly demonstrate the inclusive agenda is simply not working. Yet many of the pupils and parents held mainstream as the ideal educational placement. This finding suggests that even though the participants acknowledged the extra support they would be afforded in specialist settings, there remains a hierarchy of education. This apparent contradiction will be critically explored within the following section.

7.1 The rhetoric of inclusion

For the majority of both pupils and parents the main goal was to return to mainstream education. Although pupils acknowledged the additional support they received in special school there remains a perceived stigma of attending such provisions. This became apparent in the language employed by young people as they referred to mainstream settings as "normal school". Research indicates mainstream schools are becoming increasingly reluctant to admit young people who have been labelled with BESD (Farrell & Polat, 2003). The findings from the current study supports these claims with this group of pupils being considered the problem rather than having a problem (Heary & Hennessey, 2005). Encouragingly however there were a wide range of packages being developed to enable these pupils to remain in some form of education. The section begins by critically examining how inclusion is perceived by pupils, parents and teachers.

7.1.1 The ideal of mainstream

During the interviews with young people they discussed the range of provisions they had experienced throughout their educational journey. For many of the pupils there was a hierarchy of educational settings and mainstream was held up as their "ideal" placement. On several occasions pupils stressed that they would rather be in mainstream than their current educational provision. However it would be made clear to the pupil that in order for this to happen they would need to change their behaviour to fit in with the school rules;

> Researcher: Do you ever think that you would like to be in school full time?
>
> **Yeah it would be boss if I could do that (Louise)**
>
> Researcher: Do you think there is any chance of that happening?
>
> **I did ask and they said we will have to see if you can improve because I have got anger management and that and I lash out really easily (Louise)**

However if the pupil was not able to change their behaviour then they would no longer be afforded the opportunity to return to a mainstream setting. For some pupils this was clearly distressing as they felt mainstream school would offer them more opportunities and they stated they were keen to ensure this option continued to be available to them;

> **I have been kicked out four times of four different schools...they said if you get kicked out of this one I don't think we would be able to get you in to another school or another opportunity to go to another school. The only opportunity would be a college all week which I went well that would be OK but I still want to go to school. (Clare)**

Both educationalists and researchers have raised concern regarding the inclusion agenda adopted by the Labour Government and whether pupils who have received the BESD label are best placed within a mainstream setting (Warnock, 2010; Ellis, Tod & Graham-Matheson, 2008). One of the major arguments put forward by the teachers who participated in the study against the inclusive model was that mainstream schools were not able to meet the needs of these challenging pupils;

> To assume that a mainstream school could cope with the kinds of challenges in behaviour and the needs of individual pupils when you are dealing with some of the most complex cases in our case in a very deprived city then I believe it is somewhat unrealistic to hope that a mainstream setting could meet the needs of all of the children...I honestly don't think that that model of inclusion that kind of one size fits all would work in our country because it would be the demise of the special school. I think there is always a place for special education. (Special school head teacher)

Research reviewed in the preceding chapters indicated that teachers were not being provided with adequate training to enable them to meet the needs of more difficult pupils. All of the teachers though stated that they were happy with the level of training they had received. This was considered to be a particular strength of those working in specialist provision. Interestingly however when recalling their first experiences of working as a

teacher they considered their teacher training qualification insufficient in preparing them to support pupils labelled with BESD.

> It was all relatively new at the start to me when I first started it was just shock. My PGCE didn't prepare me for this like to be quite honest with you it took me a while...I think the problem with teaching is that you just adapt as you go on and until you see it and you learn to cope with it, deal with it then. It is OK having a lecture about behaviour using techniques and stuff but until you put it into practice it is a different matter completely. (Support centre teacher)

Within the above quote there is the suggestion that teachers will "learn as they go" and it is only once you have gained experience of working with pupils that you will be able to develop your own mechanisms to support them. For those based within a mainstream setting they are being placed in an increasingly difficult position as they are expected to meet the learning needs of a wide range of pupils. Teachers are placed under mounting pressure to meet performance and attainment targets whilst balancing the best interests of their pupils. This suggests that educators must put the needs of the majority first resulting in challenging pupils being removed from the classroom.   Here again there is evidence to suggest that schools will adopt a utilitarian approach to "deal with the problem pupil". It has become clear throughout this study that the recent emphasis on measurement of performance is a central pre-occupation in schools (Cassen & Kingdon, 2007; Gillborn & Youdell, 2000; Torrence, 2002) has had a damaging impact on the educational journey of young people labelled with BESD. Teachers suggested that mainstream schools would need to change their whole ethos and approach to successfully engage those labelled with BESD in order for an inclusive model to work. The teachers also acknowledged that there is currently not a level playing field with some schools being more tolerant in their approach to challenging pupils;

> Mainstream isn't for everybody as I say schools are mainly focused on exams and results and there isn't the support in mainstreams yet. Some schools are very good from my knowledge from walking round seeing kids from different schools, some schools are very good and some schools aren't so good. There is not a level playing field.(Support centre teacher)

Following discussions with professionals it became clear that they felt they would adopt a different approach towards this group of pupils when compared to their mainstream colleagues. They felt this was due to the specialist training they had received. Previous research (such as Hodkinson, 2009; Burton & Goodman, 2010) acknowledges the importance of training in developing the teachers understanding of the needs of those labelled with BESD. It would seem that training is clearly a significant aspect of the study. The findings indicate that the level of training provided to teachers would be dependent on

the type of provision they were working in. It was suggested that those based in specialist provisions would be provided with "specialist" training which enabled them to be more accepting of the behaviours displayed by this group of pupils;

> There is no point in excluding somebody for telling you to fuck off you would be excluding 30 people a day. In a mainstream school that is a major problem if you told one of the senior teachers to fuck off we can't have that you will have to go home (Special school teacher 3)

> we are a lot more tolerant of behaviours we are a lot more specialist in how to deal with particular behaviours for example in a mainstream setting if a Head teacher was told to F Off then a pupil would probably be excluded. (Special school head teacher)

The parents whose children were attending the special school acknowledged the extra support that would be afforded to their child and concur with the view that these pupils are not able to cope in a mainstream setting;

> I am glad he is there because he would never cope anywhere else and they are good with him. The things they do are fabulous, I think bloody hell you wouldn't get that in a normal day school no way. I can't thank them enough I say that every time I see them without them he wouldn't be where he is now. (Billy's carer)

It is clear that from the perspective of those who work closely with this group of pupils' inclusion and placement in a mainstream setting is simply not a viable option. Interestingly despite often stating that they would like to return to mainstream, pupils were realistic about their future educational journeys and where they are best placed;

> **...I will just do my GCSE's here because there no point going back to mainstream school now then I would have to fit in with their work and I have already done different work here so there is no point...but I would if I got offered to go back obviously I would because I don't want to be in this school but I am not going to try and get into if I get offered, I get offered, if I don't I don't. (Tyrese)**

There is an underlying notion within the above extract that Tyrese is not happy with his current provision but will put up with it as he does not feel he has any other option. These pupils acknowledged their position within the education system and appear aware of how they will be perceived by adults, especially those working in mainstream. The findings clearly illustrate that pupils labelled with BESD continue to be removed from mainstream educational settings. With this in mind the study aimed to explore what happens after exclusion. With the introduction of the inclusion agenda a major focus for mainstream schools is the re-integration of excluded pupils. The chapter now turns to critically examine whether these pupils are ever afforded a second chance.

7.1.2 Fresh Start

Once a child has been removed from mainstream education reintegration can often be extremely problematic (Reed, 2005). Indeed many excluded pupils simply do not return to mainstream education (DfE, 1995; Bentley, 1998). Researchers such as Gazaley (2010) have identified a perceived reluctance to accept pupils with histories of involvement in school exclusion. This was due to the impact such pupils would have on other pupils and to the public profile of the school (Gazeley, 2010). Unfortunately the majority of pupils do not have a successful progression back into mainstream. This was the case for most of the pupils who participated in the study. Many of the pupils were excluded on more than one occasion and were able to provide examples of when attempts had been made to re-integrate them back into a mainstream school. As part of Adam's educational journey he was able to provide examples of both unsuccessful and successful re-integration.

ADAM

'There is a chance for everyone to get excluded isn't there just mine is a bit more likely that I will.'

When he first engaged with the study Adam was attending a support centre (provision A) for excluded pupils, following his second exclusion from mainstream education. During the interviews with Adam he recalled his experiences of exclusion. After his first exclusion attempts were made to re-integrate Adam unfortunately as with many of the pupils his reputation preceded him. It appears that the stigma of the BESD label will follow pupils wherever they are placed this left Adam feeling he was not given the opportunity for a fair second chance and a fresh start in his new learning environment

> **Because when you go to a new school it is suppose to be a fresh new start isn't it? Well she wouldn't mention nothing like that she was just saying well he seems like he is a bad kid and stuff like that and look at his record he is not really a perfect kid is he. I hated her from that point and she made me mum cry and everything so every time I would see her I would just give her dirty looks. (Adam).**

During the interviews with Adam's mother she also recalls this event; this was clearly a very distressing time for both Adam and his mother. Seemingly the teachers had preconceived ideas about the type of pupil Adam would be. This case study highlights the imbalance of power that occurs between parents and pupils and the teacher. It is the teacher who will decide Adam's educational trajectory

> The meeting had to be stopped and the education department had to pull her to one side and say you know you can't do this. It was as though he had gone to crown court on a murder charge and before he had even got into the school she was more or less saying I don't want you here I have to take you. I sobbed; he was upset the others were just gobsmacked at the way she carried on. (Mum)

Adam continued...

As with many of the pupils Adam had been excluded on more than one occasion. Encouraging his most recent experience of re-integration was deemed more successful. All of the teachers interviewed from the support centre felt strongly that he belonged in a mainstream setting. They all talked positively about Adam as a pupil and there was a feeling that Adam did not belong in specialist provision

> He is a mainstream kid and that is where he should be after this he has gone into (mainstream) it is successful so far he has been in a couple of months now or so, he has started off well (Support Centre Teacher)

Adam agreed and appeared excited to be leaving the support centre as he did not feel it was able to meet his learning needs. During the transition Adam had numerous meeting with staff members and felt involved in the whole process. The new school had developed support mechanisms to accommodate Adam's learning needs these included a red card which he can present when he needs time out to control his anger. This was obviously important for Adam as the literature indicates pupils benefit from feeling part of decision making processes and having their voice heard

> **She offered me a pass so if I get angry in class I can just use it and get out for five minutes. Everything that they were going to do they asked me if it was alright with me. They asked me when I felt alright to go in and stuff like that. I have had a say in everything. (Adam)**

This case study demonstrates the significance of the school's ethos as successful re-integration will depend on the schools approach to BESD. Adam reflected on the impact of having the BESD label attached to him and what this would mean for his educational future

> **some schools just take it over the top, you have a little fight and get kicked out for nothing...say if you go to a school and you think it is good and you have a fight some schools will kick you out and you have got that reputation haven't you. (Adam)**

Unfortunately Adam was not the only pupil who had experienced difficulties with re-integration into mainstream. Zoe and her mum discussed the barriers they encountered when trying to get Zoe back into education. In fact this led to Zoe spending a considerable amount of time out of the education system;

> **My aunty and my mum tried dead hard to get me back into schools but they wouldn't accept me. It took quite a few weeks to get me into the school I am meant to be in now. I was just like sitting at home not really doing nothing (Zoe)**

Albeit there are procedures in place and staff employed by LA's, such as Education Welfare Officers (EWO), parents remain unsure of their rights. Previous research has highlighted the challenges experienced by some of the parents with regard to low literacy levels and not

feeling confident when dealing with educational professionals (Farrell & Polat, 2003: Harris & Goodall, 2008). For many of the parents this was considered one of the key obstacles in preventing them from helping their child.

The problems with re-integration have been linked to financial issues and schools focusing on the market agenda (Adams, 2008). Interestingly a number of the parents reflected upon this during their interviews, they linked this to their child not being considered a priority for mainstream schools;

> They didn't want him in a mainstream school because there were no placements in mainstream school. Basically that is a load of shit what they are saying is they haven't got the money, well they have but they don't want to spend it on him. That was his last choice that school there and if I didn't agree I was getting taken to court but no-one was getting taken to court for him being out of school for a year...no mother should have to endure what I have endured. (Boris' mum)

A consistent theme of the study has been the parents having to fight in order for their child to receive or remain in some form of educational provision. This was clearly a stressful period for many parents as with the pupils they felt they were being let down by the system. The evidence above illustrates the detrimental impact exclusion and receiving the BESD label can have on pupil trajectories. Notwithstanding these results there were pupils who appeared to be manipulating school rules to their own advantage by employing exclusion as a means to escape from unhappy situations.

For some pupils exclusion can be a more positive experience. The pupils described situations where they had become unhappy in their educational placement and exclusion was seen as a means to escape. These findings are supported by previous studies which state that sometimes all that is required is breathing space in an alternative setting with one-to-one learning and social support to re-engage excluded pupils in mainstream education (Evans, 2010). Furthermore in a study conducted by Daniels and Cole (2010) participants believed exclusion had a positive effect on their lives, sometimes increasing opportunities. It would seem then that exclusion may provide pupils with the opportunity for a fresh start. When Adam was discussing his re-integration into mainstream he was looking forward to starting somewhere new where he would not be judged on his previous actions;

A good thing because that meant a fresh start, no-one knew who I was. (Adam)

For Zoe leaving her previous school has deemed a positive experience because this has opened up more opportunities for her;

I am happy it happened because since like moving school so much stuff has happened to me that has been good (Zoe)

The pupils did acknowledge that exclusion would not be viewed as a positive event by those surrounding them such as their parents. However, for them it meant they could remove themselves from unhappy situations;

> **I was quite happy that I got excluded...well in my parents way it was bad but for me I was quite happy because I didn't have to go (Jacob)**

It would seem, as with the pupils who participated in Wise's (1997) study, pupils would manipulate school rules to their own advantage by acting inappropriately in the classroom;

> **I would never go to school and stuff like that I would stay out of school and I would run out of school and I would cause fights. (Billy)**

Notwithstanding these findings, the overriding theme within the literature on exclusion is the negative impact this has on not only the individual but society as a whole. Prior to exclusion from school, whether it be official or unofficial, the pupils will have displayed acts of inappropriate behaviour. They often described acting out their frustrations. Cole et al. (1998) and others (Cooper, 1993; Daniels et al., 1998; Garner and Gains, 1995) identify the significance of the classroom environment for pupils labelled with BESD alongside the content and delivery of teaching sessions. This can affect concentration levels and increase incidents of inappropriate behaviour and in extreme cases can lead them to making the decision to vote with their feet.

7.1.3 Running away

In addition to young people being removed from educational settings through formal mechanisms such as exclusion, pupils were choosing to remove themselves from the classroom. Several of the pupils described making the decision to remove themselves from educational settings. This has often linked to them struggling with the work or becoming disillusioned with what education has to offer them. As noted throughout the study these young people are also more likely to go missing in a competitive education system because they offer little in terms of academic achievement (Barber, 1997). Furthermore NARCO (2003) found that this is particularly true for pupils who do not see themselves as having a successful end to their compulsory schooling. The pupils who participated in the current study acknowledged that due to their chaotic educational journeys their opportunities would be limited.

Pupils labelled with BESD will withdraw themselves in an attempt to avoid stressful situations (Wise, 1997). During the interviews a significant number of pupils stated that they would 'sag' from school. This is a term employed by pupils to describe occasions when they

would truant from school. When pupils struggled with their work this led to them becoming agitated which in turn may cause them to display challenging behaviour in the classroom. For example when discussing Christine's educational journey her teacher's states;

> Academically very weak she came in here and she couldn't do multiplications. She is 14 and in year nine even her timetables were difficult for her. Then when we started doing that with her it was out of her comfort zone, she would get angry, she would run out to the toilet. (Support Centre Teacher)

The teachers provided examples of pupils making the decision to act inappropriately in the classroom to mask their inabilities and escape difficult situations;

> You get some kids who do have learning difficulties but don't want to be recognised as such. They will do anything in the class, they will carry on disruptively rather than do that lesson. (Support centre teaching assistant)

The pupils provided instances of when they would run away from the school or the classroom environment. An example of this behaviour is provided by Martin in the following case study.

MARTIN

'It is like a prison, you can't do nothing'

Martin is currently attending the special school (provision C). He was excluded from mainstream education during his first year of secondary school. He described his behaviour in school as **'just messing around'** the suggestion here being that it is rather low level behaviour. He has received an SEN Statement and has got a diagnosis of ADHD for which he takes medication. Martin's understanding of his condition is **'I have got a mind of a seven to eight year old'**. Interestingly it was only recently that he became aware of his diagnosis. This suggests that pupils were not being kept up to date with what is happening to them and supports the claim that labels are a priority for adults.

> **I only found out I had ADHD this year when I came here and the head teacher reported me to the doctors and all that because I kept running away (Martin)**

During the study it became evident that Martin was a chronic non-attendee as he would often not be present when the researcher arrived in school for group sessions and interviews. On one occasion he was found outside school grounds. When he was available for interview he appeared extremely unhappy with his current provision and often states that he would like to return to mainstream

> **It is not going to be any better in here is it? I would prefer to be in mainstream (Martin)**

The teachers at the special school acknowledged that Martin will often struggle with work and recognised that he will run away as means to escape potentially stressful situations

> I think with Martin his main barrier is he doesn't want to attempt the work because he doesn't want to fail it so he really struggles with the academic side of things and a lot of the time just refuses to do his work and takes himself to the isolation room, he takes himself down there to avoid doing his work a lot of the time. (Special School Teacher)

Martin is an example of a pupil who makes the decision to run away from difficult or challenging situations. He was the only pupil attending the special school who did not acknowledge the support he would receive from attending a specialist provision. He was obviously not enjoying his experience of education.

It became clear that pupils labelled with BESD present a particular challenge to teachers and educators. Most teachers will want to support these young people, teachers who participated in the study were able to highlight why these pupils will be considered "challenging". The pupils making the decision to remove themselves was considered a major obstacle in preventing teachers from being able to support this group of young people;

> Our attendance for last year for example for the whole school population was only somewhere in the region of 70 per cent for the whole school for the year. In fairness some of that is down to the fact that some of our pupils end up on our school roll who

have never set foot in the building...Attendance is a big issue in a school like ours just because we are the end of the continuum. (Special school head teacher)

Those working in alternative and specialist educational settings recognised the pressures that will be placed on their mainstream counterparts. As evidenced with the pupils who took part in the current study those labelled with BESD are likely to have periods where they go missing from education (Visser et al., 2005; Pirrie et al. 2011). This will inhibit the school's ability to support this group of pupils as acknowledged below by one of the teachers;

> ...these children are on the schools books so if they are not attending then it looks bad on the school because their attendance figures are going down. Whereas they might never have been into school, they might have just be allocated right from now on this kid is on your books and for six weeks you never see them. The school don't even know anything about them but they are on their books and it looks bad then as it brings their attendance down. (Support centre manager)

This section has demonstrated the impact exclusion can have on the educational journey experienced by pupils who have "achieved" the BESD label. As pupils continue to be removed from mainstream setting it was considered essential to critically examine where these young people will be placed. The findings indicate they will either be segregated and placed in special schools or a model of "dump and hope" will be employed which saw pupils being placed in a wide variety of alternative educational provisions. The purpose of the chapter is to critically compare the experiences of pupils who had been placed in these two very different types of provision. The study aimed to identify models of good practice and effective provision for this group of young people the following sections will reflect on the importance of the school environment to the pupils feelings of self-worth.

7.2 Segregation

Throughout educational history there has been a long tradition of educating those who present with challenging behaviour in separate provision. During their time in power the Labour Government pushed for an inclusive model to be adopted by all mainstream schools. This led to the closure of many special schools (Priestley & Rabiee, 2002). More recently as noted in chapter two (see section 2.4.1, pg. 34) researchers and policy-makers are becoming increasing critical of the inclusive model (Warnock, 2005; Swinson et al., 2003; Mowart, 2009). Despite the inclusion agenda over the last decade there has been an increase in the demand for special school placements (Rustmeier & Vaughan, 2005). Although there is support for specialist provision both within the literature (Copper, 1989: Farrell & Polat, 2003; Harris et al., 2008) and the context of the study, it became evident from the interviews with pupils that there remains a stigma attached to attending a special

school. The following quote was taken from one of the pupils who had never been placed in a special school and demonstrates the perception of this form of provision;

Yeah everyone in there are proper nutters though (Adam)

The terminology employed by the pupils also highlights the perceptions of mainstream compared with special school, for example the boys referred to mainstream school as "normal" school. The chapter now moves to explore the importance of provision and school environments in determining pupils feelings of self-worth and happiness. The young people demonstrated that they understood why they had been placed in a special school

I think it was because my behaviour was so bad in other schools. I would never go to school and stuff like that I would stay out of school and I would run out of school and stuff like that and I would cause fights and stuff that is really why (Billy)

For some of the pupils their placement in special school was due to them being "different". Although most of the pupils were not aware of the BESD label they demonstrated an understanding of the implications having a label would have on their educational journey

Because you always got blamed for everything in normal schools...because you have got disabilities (Jacob)

All of pupils who were attending the special school had previously been placed in another special school which caters for younger boys aged eight – 13 years old. Once they reached leaving age they would be sent to the upper special school. When recalling this transition Tyrese stated that he would have liked the opportunity to return to a mainstream setting however he felt he was ignored by teachers who would act on his behalf in terms of the decision making processes surrounding his education trajectory. The notion of the teacher determining the educational journey of pupils will be critically examined within chapter eight (see pg. 182). For Tyrese however it was clear that teachers played a significant role in his placement in a special school

You leave when you are in year eight they don't care really they just want to put everyone in this school because they are lazy and don't want to help us (Tyrese)

During the activity sessions the boys discussed the transition between the two specialist provisions they were attending. The first provision was considered to be poor by all of the pupils. Promisingly all of the pupils felt the second special school was an improvement on the first one. This highlights the importance of environment and the significance of the school setting on the young person's feelings of self-worth. This became clear when the pupils recalled their experiences in the first school when compared to the new school;

It was like a shithole really, it was like tiny, it was like a little box. (Tyrese)

It is just well better than (previous special school) because it is modern, that one is just like run down it was horrible (Billy)

The special school attended by the boys had recently been refurbished. As part of the refurbishment process the pupils were provided with the opportunity to "have a say" via the school council. The quote below highlights the significance to the young people of having a nice and happy learning environment;

Because I look at that school to this school this one is a lot happier. That one was like a dark place this one is nice and bright. (Tyrese)

As part of the study the young people were asked to reflect on their experiences of having a voice in their education. In relation to pupil voice there was a significant difference in the experiences of those placed in special schools compared to those placed in alternative educational settings. As those who attended the special school felt they would be provided with opportunities to have a "voice". They appreciated feeling valued by adults as this allowed a sense of ownership to be fostered (Whitty & Wisby, 2007). Research indicates that when schools provide opportunities for young people to contribute to decision-making processes they will feel safe and comfortable which means they are more likely to learn. Furthermore pupils will feel valued and respected (Whitty & Wisby, 2007).

Billy – we had a lot of say with that because pupils in year eleven picked the design and the name of the new school and the clothes we wear because we used to have a polo shirt
Tyrese – looking like scruffs
Billy – now because we want it more like a mainstream we have a tie so it is dead good
Researcher: Are you happy with the uniform then?
Both – yeah
Tyrese – when you are walking down the street you don't have people looking at you thinking you are crazy

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The above extract is interesting these boys clearly do not want to be seen differently to their peers in mainstream. The school council provided them with the opportunity to put mechanisms in place that would allow them to feel more comfortable with their placement in special school. For the majority of pupils their placement in special school had been a positive experience. This was especially the case for Jacob who prior to attending special schools had experienced long periods out of the education system as both his parents and educational professionals struggled to identify a suitable placement.

JACOB

'...yeah special needs was better'

It became clear from discussions with both Jacob and his parents that he was just not able to cope in a mainstream setting. He has been attending specialist provision since he was seven years old. When recalling his time in primary school Jacob states

> **Yeah I was just not behaving, I was running out of class, running about the place, climbing on the climbing frame, hanging upside down, swearing at the teachers. (Jacob)**

There was a sense that Jacob wanted out of mainstream school. In order to achieve this he would use inappropriate behaviour as a mechanism to display his unhappiness. Jacob has received an SEN Statement and has a diagnosis of ADHD for which he takes medication. During the interview with his parents his mum describes his experience in primary school and believes due to his diagnosis of ADHD he was unable to manage his behaviour in a mainstream setting

> He was OK for a short while but then problems started occurring, Jacob didn't like all the noise of the classroom all the different kids were making (Mum)

Since attending specialist provision both Jacob and his parents recognise there has been a change in his behaviour. Jacob felt he would be treated differently if he was placed in a mainstream school and special school is the best option for him. This is because they are able to provide him with the extra support he requires to remain engaged in education. When discussing his behaviour in his current provision his reply was **'I don't really bother'**. His parents also feel his placement has positively influenced his behaviour. This goes against the assertion made by other parents that their child's behaviour had gotten worse since attending special school.

> He has come a long way to where he is now to where he was when he was seven, ten. The school he is in at the present is a lot better for him, there is a lot more structure (Dad)

At the time of the interview with Jacob's parents, Jacob was on a residential placement which meant he would remain in school from Monday evening till Friday evening. The literature (Cooper, 1993) acknowledges the potential benefit for parents residential placement can have as it allows for respite

> That is the main reason he is on residence when he gets too much, he needs a break (Mum)

Although there is a perceived stigma of attending a special school both parents are extremely happy with Jacob's current placement. They both state that they appreciated the support that has been afforded to them and Jacob

> all credit to the school, I have got to give credit to the school to where he is now to be honest I can't take that away from the school and I know all the teachers try. (Dad)

Pupils, parents and teachers from the special school believed that attending this provision was the best option for young people who have been labelled with BESD. When discussing

the prospect of returning to a mainstream setting, a number of the pupils recognised that they may struggle to cope;

I would go yeah but I don't know if I would cope in a class with 30 kids in because I get frustrated in my work and you don't really learn anything but I would rather be staying in this school. (Billy)

Within the previous chapter Tyrese stated that he does not have a problem with his behaviour (see pg. 138). He did however acknowledge the importance of attending the "right" educational provision. Although he stated he would prefer to attend mainstream he was all too aware of the difficulties he would encounter in this setting. When examining his educational grid his happiness levels increased once he was removed from the mainstream setting and placed in a special school. As with other pupils he stressed the specialist support he was being provided with was key to enabling him to progress through education

Graph 7.1: Tyrese's happiness levels throughout educational journey
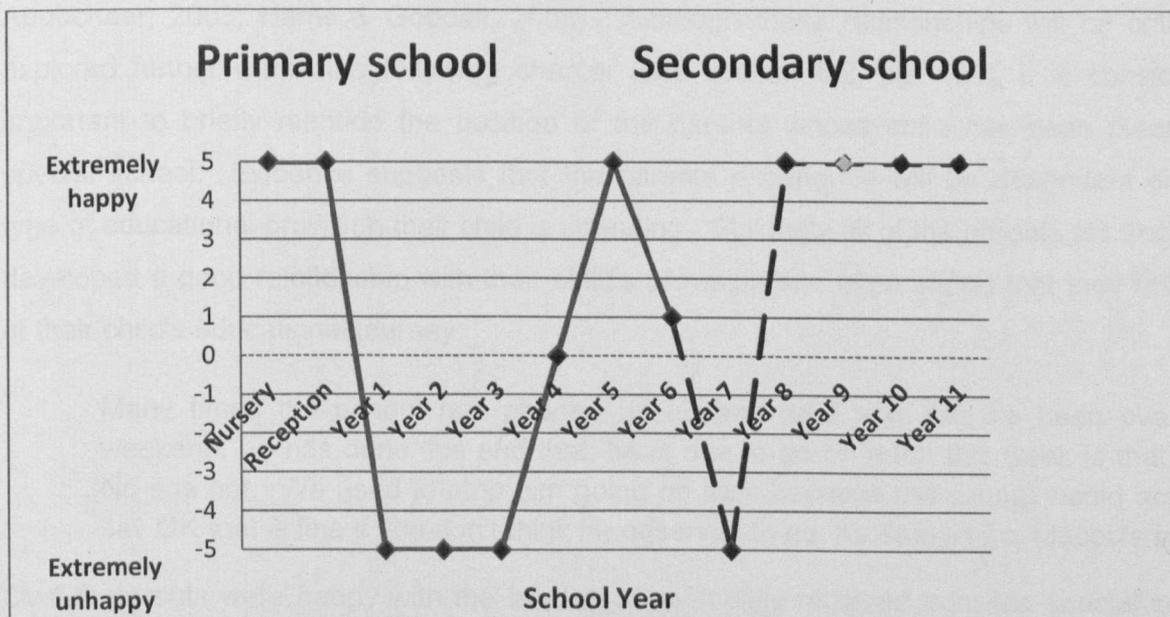
For many of the pupils as demonstrated in table 7.1 (pg. 154) they have been placed in a wide variety of educational settings, those who "achieved" the BESD label and obtained an SEN Statement appear to have more stable trajectories. For example as illustrated in the figure below Tyrese had only attended four different provisions this is one of the lowest number of institutions experienced by pupils in the cohort.

Figure 7.1: Tyrese's educational journey
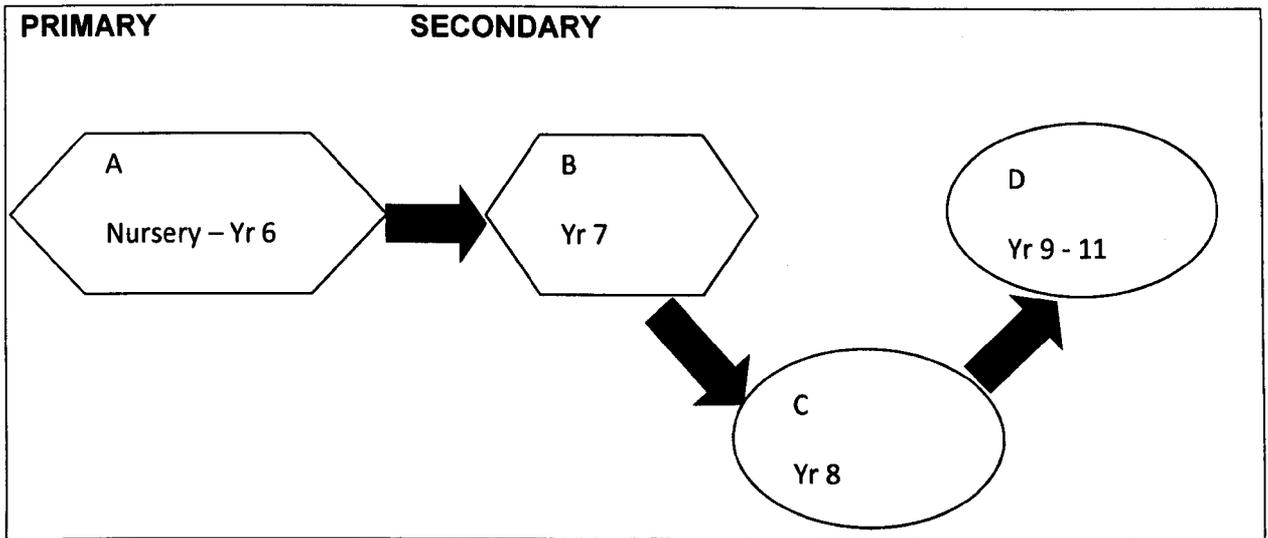
Throughout educational history a great deal of attention has been paid to the relationship between the home and the school (Galloway et al., 1994; Miller et al., 2002; Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003; Harris & Goodall, 2008). Although these relationships will be critically explored further within the following chapter (see section 8.2, pg. 191), it is considered important to briefly mention the position of the parents whose child has been placed in special school. Evidence suggests that the parents experience will be dependent on the type of educational provision their child is attending. Strikingly all of the parents felt they had developed a good relationship with their child's provision and even stated that they felt part of their child's educational journey;

> Many times the school has phoned us up and said how has he been over the weekend, he has done this and that, he is due to go on a trip this week is that OK? No it is not. We used to stop him going on trips because the school would actually say OK that is fine if you don't think he deserves to go, he doesn't go. (Jacob's mum)

Overall parents were happy with the level of support they received from the special school and considered the communication between the school and home to be good. This is clearly significant as evidence suggests that parental engagement in schooling positively influences pupil achievement and attainment (Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003). With parents being kept informed of their child's education they felt a sense of empowerment as the school clearly valued their input which enabled them to feel part of their child's education;

> I like the way they ring me...because half the time Billy doesn't tell me. They have like leaving days or activity days I will always go to school and you are always made dead welcome. (Billy's carer)

Yeah, yeah they always keep me up to date with everything even when he has done something in school. They have got my phone number it is quite good communication as well between us. (Tyrese's mum)

Despite parents highlighting the positive aspects of placement in a special school there seems to be a number of contradictions surrounding this form of provision. Indeed some parents appeared wary of the mechanisms employed to manage behaviour such as restraint;

> The only thing that did scare me, is that you have to sign a form for him to be restrained. I thought oh my god but I thought well he has got to have some kind of education and he got restrained a few times but I think once he learnt I am not going to get away with it he didn't do it and then it all stopped. (Billy's carer)

> I wouldn't agree to let them restrain him or anything. I don't lay a finger on him no-one else is because I knew he wasn't that bad of a child to be put in restraint and touch wood he never has had to. (Boris' mum)

A further concern is that the placing of pupils in special schools brings together seriously disturbed young people with often very different underlying causes of their behaviour (Ofsted, 2007). This concern was identified by a number of the parents who participated in the study, with some believing that their child's placement had exacerbated their child's behaviour;

> His behaviour has changed he can have his moments but I don't think he is as bad as some of the kids there. That bothers me because that rubs off on him. He would never cope in a normal school so it is like he is stuck but school is fabulous. (Billy's carer)

Interestingly these concerns were also expressed by those working within this form of provision;

> I think if you come to a place like this you are going to meet other pupils with behavioural problems and maybe to you that is the norm and misbehaving is OK. I have seen some people who will observe other pupils poor behaviour and take that on. (Special school teacher 3)

For some special school placement is viewed as a "last resort" for young people labelled with BESD (Lawrence, Steed & Young, 1984; Priestly, 1987). This was an accurate reflection of the experiences of many of the pupils who participated in the study. Although it was stated earlier that special school was considered the best option for pupils, for most it was the only real option available to them;

> We are arguably the end of the continuum in terms of a school placement. If it breaks down with us there are very few alternatives available, alternative education provision being one such possibility. If we cannot meet the needs of a pupil in this

school setting it may be decided that their needs might be best met in alternative educational setting instead. (Special school head teacher)

7.3 Dump and hope

Examination of the grids provided by pupils indicated that those not placed in a special school are more likely to experience chaotic educational journeys. Within chapter six the challenges in obtaining SEN Statement were highlighted. This means a high proportion of those labelled with BESD will not receive the additional educational support required for them to successfully progress through education. The following case study illustrates the turbulent trajectories encountered by this group of pupils and the impact this can have on the individual pupil.

CHRISTINE

'I weren't in that school for long, or that one or that one'

Christine is currently attending the Support Centre (provision A). She has experienced an extremely chaotic educational journey which has seen her placed in a wide range of educational settings. So far she has attended 10 different provisions. Alongside her difficulties with maintaining her educational placements, her home life was turbulent, throughout the study she lived between her mum and dad as she had a fraught relationship with both her parents. She has been given a Statement of SEN and has been diagnosed with ADHD. She is currently taking medication for the ADHD diagnosis. Due to her complex home life a number of multi-agency services were involved including social services.

Whilst filling in the educational life grid with Christine she became frustrated when recalling her educational history. She struggled to remember all of her placements and felt the grid was not adequate to capture an accurate picture of her journey. She became angry during the interview however once we had amended the grid to accommodate her journey she calmed down.

> **I don't want to do this I want this worksheet ripped up right now because I have been to loads of schools, you haven't done it right, you haven't put more things for year seven you have only put one column (Christine)**

During the interviews with her teachers it became clear that a major concern for them and all involved with Christine was finding an appropriate educational environment which would be able to meet her needs. The teachers felt her best option would be a placement in a special school however as noted in chapter six due to the inclusion agenda there are limited places available. There was a definite feeling amongst the educational professionals that she would not be able to cope in a mainstream environment. As with many of the pupils who participated in the study an inappropriate placement would lead her to display challenging behaviour

> There is the great fear that she will not settle into mainstream school because there she will be out of her comfort zone. She won't get the attention she gets here and then she probably will no doubt if she does go into mainstream have the outbursts when she is out of her comfort zone (Support Centre Teacher)

Christine was the most challenging pupil to engage in the study, she struggled to stay focused and would get easily distracted. It was clear that she did have difficulties with learning. Christine was clearly upset at having attended so many different provisions.

There remains a great concern amongst researchers, policy makers and educational professionals regarding the quality of provision available to those who have been removed from mainstream education (Cole et al., 1998; Daniels & Cole, 2002; Cole & Visser, 1999). These fears were also relayed by those who participated in the study. It would seem as with special schools there is a stigma attached to this form of provision because it is perceived to have secondary status within the education system (Briggs, 2010). The main focus of the chapter is to critically reflect on how pupils experience the different types of educational settings available to them. The evidence has demonstrated that how they perceive the provision will have an impact on feelings of self-worth;

> **It is better being in school because you are getting more education aren't you? In college and that you don't really do nothing you just like really mess about and do what you want really (Tyrese)**

Those pupils who had been placed within alternative educational settings described their experiences as negative indicating that these pupils are not being provided with adequate educational output;

> **Didn't do one single lesson in there (Martin)**

> **You sit in a white room on your own till three o'clock not even a pen. You don't do nothing (Helen)**

A further concern highlighted throughout the study was the long periods of time pupils were being placed in this form of provision. Research suggests that, because of their past behaviour, there is little motivation to bring these pupils back to school, which causes a backlog of pupils within alternative provision (Atkinson et al 2001). The Law (as cited in chapter three, section 3.1.3 (ii) pg. 52) states that young people should not be permanently placed within alternative provision. The lack of quality educational opportunities was a concern for a number of the pupils who participated in the study;

> **Horrible, horrible really what you did because none of the kids paid attention in lessons you had to go back to the simple stuff, like timetable and that addition, it was just horrible. (Adam)**

When pupils were not being provided with a stimulating curriculum this could lead them to display inappropriate behaviour;

> **Yeah I only kicked off once because I just couldn't be bothered doing easy work. It was just getting on my nerves because I thought to myself if I have to do easy work and then I go back to normal school were I will have to do dead hard work, I will be really confused. (Adam)**

Even though some parents appreciated the support their child received whilst attending alternative provision they expressed concerns regarding the curriculum offered to their children. They questioned whether their children were being provided with adequate life skills to enable them to successfully progress once they left the education system;

> I am not slagging (alternative provision) because it is brilliant what they do, the only thing she is going to leave this school with is learning how to give a hand massage, that is it and that is not skills for life is it? (Helen's mum)

As discussed earlier in the chapter the study sought to explore young people's experience of having a voice. It was also noted that there is a stark difference in the experiences of those attending the special school to those placed in alternative provision. Pupils who had been removed and where attending the alternative provisions provided the following quotes when asked about whether they have a say in their education;

> **You don't get no say in anything in school (Helen)**

> **All we had to do was say if we wanted trips or not...we never went like we just said we wanted to go we never went. Basically we would just say something and we would get ignored. (Adam)**

Evidently, Adam's experiences of the school council is not uncommon with evidence pointing to tokenistic practice, where school staff pay lip service to pupils' suggestions or where serious issues are sidestepped (Olser and Starkey, 2002; Covell and Howe, 2001). Throughout the study Hart's (1992) ladder of participation has been employed to demonstrate the level of participation being afforded to young people. The experiences of these pupils would clearly be placed on the non-participation "rungs" of the ladder. Worryingly in many schools the opportunities for pupils labelled with BESD to make their voices heard are still very limited (Baker 2005; Cooper 2006b; Lewis and Burman 2008).

A prominent theme throughout the educational journeys was the challenge of finding an educational placement that would adequately meet the needs of the pupil labelled with BESD. Whitney-Bob highlights the importance of finding a suitable form of educational provision which will enable the pupil to remain engaged with education.

WHITNEY-BOB

'I have got a thing where I can't stick at things'

Whitney-Bob is 16 years old and at the time of interview was attending a female alternative provision (provision B). Whitney-Bob currently lives with her maternal grandmother as her mother died when she was only four. Alongside her placement in an alternative provision she is registered on a childcare course in college. However throughout the study it became apparent that Whitney-Bob was not able to maintain her college placement. During the interviews with Whitney-Bob we discussed her journey through education. She described being happy in primary school **'I was alright in little school'** despite losing her mum. The difficulties began in secondary school as with many of the pupils who participated in this study. She has attended a wide range of education provisions including mainstream school and alternative provisions.

As highlighted in the chart below she has experienced a range of provisions which she was attended for only relatively short periods of time. Her experiences in mainstream education led to her disengaging from school

> **Hated it, I hated it so much. I just hated it so much it was unbelievable how much someone could hate school. (Whitney-Bob)**

During the interviews she reflects on her educational journey and how her placements within alternative settings exacerbated her behaviour

> **They were putting me in the student support centre and I went from there for a little bit and then they put me in an anger management group...then I had this thing where I wanted to go to units and then I just went even naughtier and I was getting braver and running away for longer...then they put me in some young runaway group and then I went naughtier and then when I got to 15 I started realising and then I was alright and I was being good and that then. (Whitney-Bob)**

However she believes that her behaviour has changed and she has since matured. Despite this she still clearly struggles to settle into a routine and continues to constantly remove herself from challenging situations. Both her grandmother and teachers were concerned regarding the impact her inability to maintain an educational placement would have on her future opportunities.

> She has got no proper education, she has got no certificates, she passed no exams so she is not going to get a job is she (Whitney's Nan)

The figure below highlights Whitney-Bob's turbulent educational journey.

Figure 7.1: Whitney-Bob's educational journey
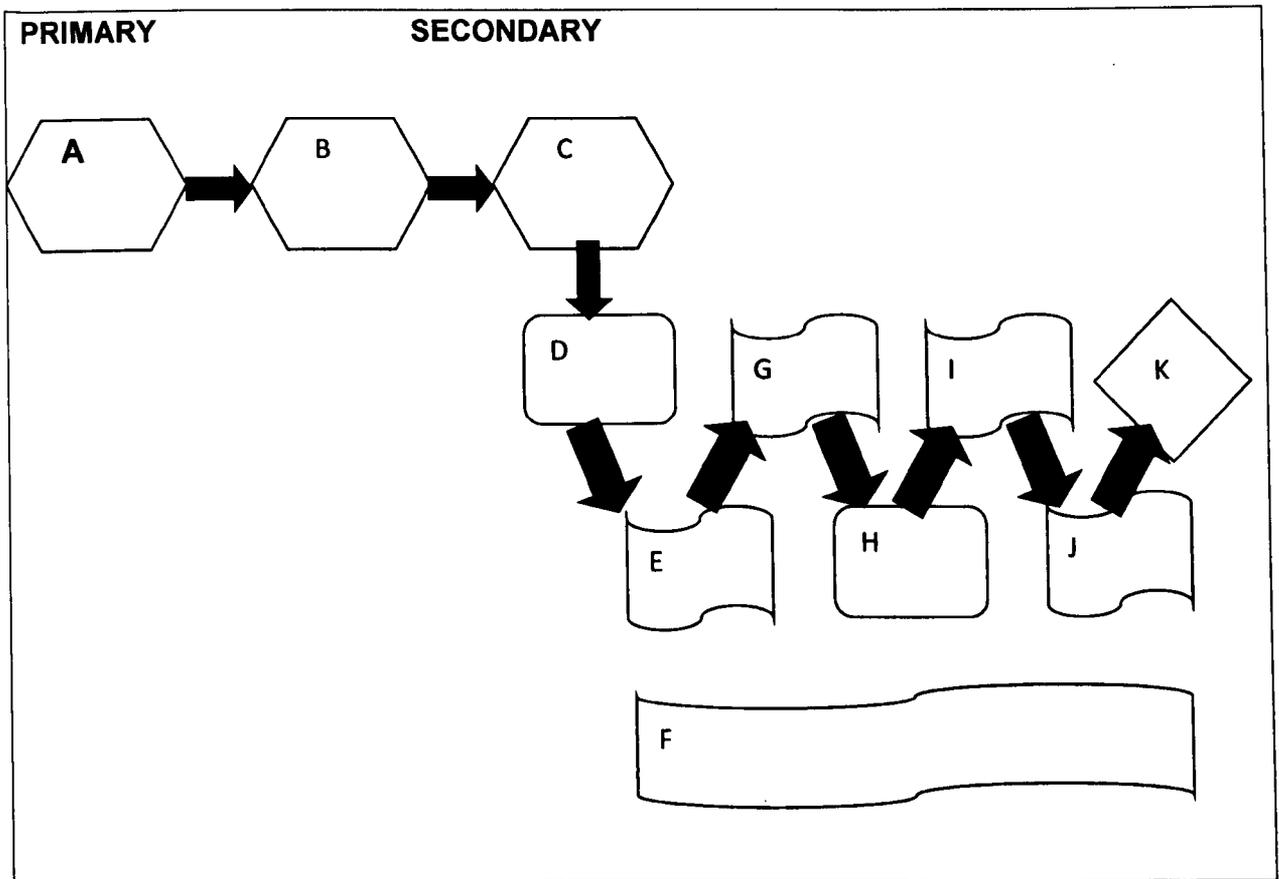
Despite there being a number of concerns regarding alternative provisions of education a number of pupils stated that they would prefer to remain in these settings rather than returning to mainstream. Whilst discussing their educational journeys the young people would often contradict themselves. Although they did not like being seen as "different" they were aware that they would struggle in mainstream. Here they appear to be acknowledging that their position is often one of removal and as such they recognised the need for alternative educational settings. The reasons put forward included preferring smaller groups and being offered one to one support. This would however be dependent on the form of provision being offered to the young person. For example the evidence suggests that young people are keen to attend college. As illustrated in chapter three (see section 3.1.3 (ii), pg. 53) research studies indicate that young people value the feeling of being treated as adults. These environments allow for effective relationships to be built which can have a positive influence on the young people's behaviour and attitudes (Macnab et al., 2008);

College because I know I won't get into trouble then and I will go to college. Whereas I most probably won't go to school...because I am used to small groups now, if I go to school there would be loads (Clare)

Clearly class size as highlighted in previous research (Wise and Upton 1998; Harris et al. (2008) is a significant factor for this group of young people;

Yeah it is calmer and there isn't as many people. I don't like loads of people around me...I am all right in college it doesn't bother me loads of people now but it did use to bother me with loads of people and I used to be angry kid so that made it worse. (Whitney-Bob)

Young people expressed that they would like to go to college as they felt they would be afforded more freedom and independence;

Researcher: Are you starting college now?
Clare: After Christmas
Researcher: So you are leaving here to go to college...
Adam: I don't know why you get to go to college and I don't
Christine: I know
Researcher: Would you rather go to college?
Adam: Yeah I would rather do two days in college three days in school that would be sick...college is suppose to be sick
Researcher: Do you reckon college would be better than school?
Adam: Yeah because you get to go out and everything for your lunch you have to stay in school that is all I care about going out for lunch

The educational journeys experienced by those labelled with BESD highlight that there are professionals working hard to re-engage young people in education. This is supported by previous studies which claim that educational provisions will develop a wide range of "packages" in an attempt to meet the needs of individual young people (Pirrie et al., 2011);

A lot of the time schools are working really hard to work with these children. The frustrating thing from our point of view some of them can do really well here then go to school and do really well for six weeks and then do one thing and mess it all up. (Support centre manager)

The quote above suggests that teachers and schools feel they are doing all they can to support pupils. It is then the pupils fault for "messing it up". The position of pupils and teachers in the development of BESD will be critically explored in chapter eight.

There is a tendency to focus on the negative aspects of the pupil journey for example removal from mainstream. It is important however to acknowledge the evidence which

suggests that educational professionals are working hard to support these young people. Indeed a number of the parents appeared grateful in terms of the work that was being done to ensure these pupils engage with education;

> She found it very supportive and they allowed her to go into mainstream little by little introducing subjects that she enjoyed also the work that she could manage not to have conflict with certain teachers. Her mentor seen to all that and of late they even brought work home for her. It is actually getting Louise to sit and focus on the education. (Louise's carer)

The ethos of both the school and individual teachers attitudes was deemed to be the key determining factor in their willingness to work with pupils labelled with BESD.

> ...there are certain teachers who are very tolerant and willing to work with these type of children and then there are others who think I will scream at you and these are the kind of kids who will scream back at you and then it is like you can't do that I am a teacher. (Support centre manager)

The study aimed to critically explore where young people who have been labelled with BESD will be placed. The findings illustrate this group of pupils will be subject to extremely chaotic trajectories during which they will be removed from mainstream education and placed in either special schools or alternative provision. It is evident that the inclusive model is simply not working in practice and all of the participants recognised the need for alternative educational settings. There are no official guidelines which detail where young people are best placed which has led to teachers making subjective judgements based on their own notions of sensibility. Despite the label not being considered an official diagnosis it continues to be attached to pupils and this will determine where young people will be placed. If pupils are lucky they will be segregated and placed in specialist provision once they have obtained a SEN Statement. More worryingly however a "dump and hope" model will be employed leading to pupils being placed in a variety of different provisions. Concerns have been raised regarding the quality of the educational curriculum offered in this form of provision. The study then highlights the importance of obtaining a SEN Statement if pupils are going to continue to receive the BESD label. Support mechanisms need to be put into place to ensure they can remain engaged in education. With youth unemployment being at its highest level since 1994, these young people are being placed in an extremely vulnerable position as they have little opportunity to gain the educational qualifications which are required to successfully progress into adulthood. The pupils demonstrated awareness of the importance of education and reflected on the impact their educational journey will have on their future prospects. It is evident from the findings of the study that "achieving" the BESD label will have a significant impact on the educational journey experienced by young people. The BESD label remains shrouded in ambiguity. These issues are further complicated by

the emerging culture of blame which sees pupils, parents and teachers all blaming each other for the development of BESD. The study has highlighted the importance of early intervention yet if no-one is willing to reflect on how their behaviour may impact on pupils, this cycle of blame will simply continue. Within the previous findings sections pupils have made clear what they consider to be antecedents to BESD. It would seem that parents and teachers remain trapped in the cycle of mutual blame (Miller, 1994). The following chapter turns to critically reflect on what pupils, parents and teachers consider to be the main antecedents to the development of BESD.

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE CULTURE OF BLAME

The study aimed to establish what pupils, parents and teachers deemed to be the main antecedents of "problematic" behaviour. The position of the current study is that when considering BESD causation it is important to take account of the role societal, family and school environments play in creating and ameliorating young people's social, emotional and behaviour problems (Evans at al., 2003). The final chapter of the findings section will draw together the evidence from the previous chapters to critically review this emerging culture of blame. The pupils claimed that teachers will exacerbate their behaviour in the way they` respond to them. Notably, pupils were also able to link changes in behaviour to traumatic events which were occurring in their home environment. For the teacher home circumstances were highlighted as the major cause of misbehaviour in schools (Croll & Moses, 1985; DfES, 1989; Maras, 1996; Miller, 1995). Parents concur with their children that features of teacher behaviour, especially perceptions of unfair labelling, are equally a major cause of pupil disruption (Miller et al., 2002). Interestingly both parents and teachers reflected on the position of pupil. There was a sense amongst the adults that young people were now being afforded too many rights and they would manipulate their position to get their own way. Seemingly then this is an extremely complex situation and it is the assertion of the study that all these factors need to be considered to fully understand the reasons behind pupils displaying "challenging" behaviour.

To some extent the placing of blame has been determined by adult ideology and the political agenda of the day. Throughout educational history as illustrated in chapter two (see pg. 21) the attribution of blame has shifted from within the child to the school then to the parent and more recently societal issues have been cited as a contributor to the development of BESD. Within chapter two the cycle of mutual blame (Miller, 1994) was introduced which demonstrates the position of teachers and parents in the development of BESD. The study however argues there is now a need to review this cycle and expand it to include the position of the pupil, the Government and wider societal issues. The findings point to a culture of blame, were no-one is willing to take responsibility apart from the young people.

Fig. 8.1 Cycle of Blame
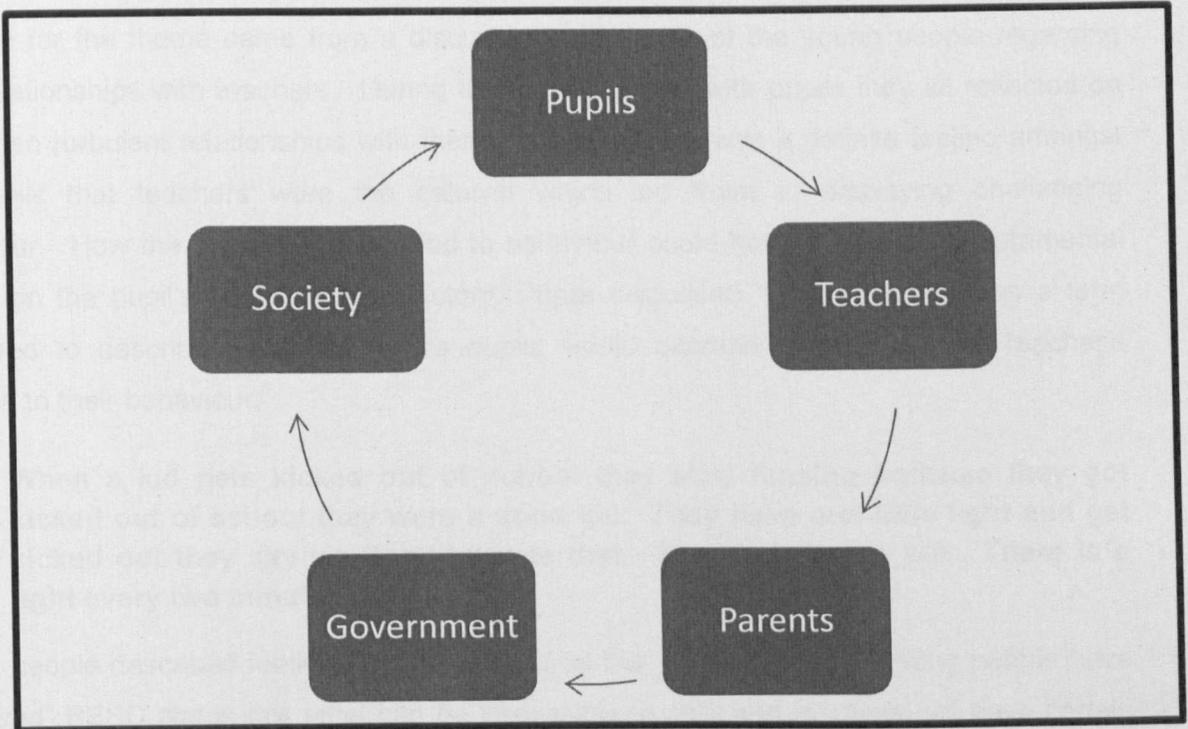
The themes identified in the figure above will be critically explored within the following chapter from the perspective of the pupil, the parent and the teacher. As the main purpose of the study was to "hear" the voice of those labelled with BESD the themes will be set out in order of significance for the young people. Throughout the study the pupils were forthright and openly discussed their educational experiences. During these discussions young people were able to identify a number of influences which could be attributed to the development of BESD, these included;

- The Teacher
- The Parent
- The Pupil

The chapter commences by examining the most prevalent theme for pupils, that of the teacher. Since the publication of the Warnock Report in 1978 both research (Miller et al., 2002; Riley, 2004; Garner, 2009) and educational policy has turned to explore the impact school and teachers have in the development of BESD. For many of the pupils who participated in the study teachers were deemed as a significant contributing factor to them presenting with challenging behaviour.

8.1 Teachers are evil

The title for the theme came from a discussion with some of the young people regarding their relationships with teachers. During the conversations with pupils they all reflected on their often turbulent relationships with their teachers. There was a definite feeling amongst the pupils that teachers were the catalyst which led them to displaying challenging behaviour. How the teachers responded to behaviour could have a potentially detrimental impact on the pupil's educational trajectory. Pupils discussed "flipping" which was a term employed to describe situations where pupils would become agitated by the teacher's reaction to their behaviour;

> **When a kid gets kicked out of school they start flipping because they got kicked out of school they were a good kid. They have one little fight and get kicked out they say we don't tolerate that. Sort their heads out. There is a fight every two minutes (Adam)**

Young people described feeling unfairly labelled as the "bad kid". Once young people have "achieved" BESD status this label can be impossible to shift and teachers will have certain preconceived notions regarding this group of young people. The study has demonstrated that pupils are all too aware of how they are perceived by teachers. It has also been suggested within preceding chapters that relationships with teachers exacerbated the behaviour displayed by pupils (Miller et al., 2002). This had led to mistrust between pupils and parents and their teachers. Whitney-Bob makes clear her perception of teachers by referring to them as "nounces" which was a derogatory term employed to describe teachers;

> **I hated them half of them were nounces and half of them think they can tell you what to do because they are teachers and they just can't. The teachers shout out at you and you are like you are not my mother or my father don't shout at me. If you speak I will listen to you if you shout at me I am not going to listen I will shout back. (Whitney-Bob)**

When exploring the pupils relationships with their teachers there is a need to consider wider factors including the school and the classroom environment. This was clearly demonstrated in chapter seven (see pg. 154) which explored the importance of school environment on the pupils feelings of self-worth and happiness. This would often impact on behaviours displayed by this group of pupils. For example it was revealed that the pupils in the study preferred smaller settings as they felt they were provided with the additional support they required to remain in their educational settings;

> **Because it is better than school because it is not that many people. I haven't got to walk round all day to find all them big buildings. (Clare)**

This position was also supported by educational professionals when they discussed the notion of the ideal of mainstream;

> I don't think it would work for pupils with BESD. I think the classes are too big for them to be able to cope, they don't get the help that they need we have classes of 8 or less than 8, you have got a teacher, you have got support worker in there as well (Special school teacher 1)

Chapter seven (see section 7.1, pg. 156) highlighted the difficulties encountered by pupils, parents and teachers in finding a suitable educational provision to meet the needs of this group of pupils. All of the young people were able to recall provisions in which they had encountered negative experiences. Strikingly this often related to periods in mainstream settings. A number of the pupils when reflecting on their experiences within mainstream education described hating school, for example;

> **I don't know how kids can still go to school. I hated it (Whitney-Bob)**

The study asserts that negative experiences in mainstream can lead young people to misbehave as a means to escape from unhappy situations. The pupils experience of provision as outlined in chapter seven (see section 7.2 and 7.3 pg. 165) was considered a major factor in causing a change in their behaviour. Adam rather than discussing his difficulties with his mother acted out his frustration through displaying inappropriate behaviour. When reflecting on these events he does acknowledge that his exclusion may have been prevented if he had considered alternative responses;

> **I hated it...the kids in there, none of them were nice really, everyone was horrible and they were all like dead mean, teachers were horrible...I hated it proper couldn't bear it I never thought of telling me mum though otherwise I wouldn't have been kicked out (Adam)**

Most of the young people who participated in the study recognised that they were simply not able to cope in a mainstream setting. For Clare this was due to the classroom environment;

> **It is when people make noises in the classroom and I can't concentrate on my work and when people find it funny to give cheek and when they all mess round and when you try and stay calm and do your work and get along with something and you can't because it is like frustrating. (Clare)**

As highlighted in chapter seven (see section 7.2 and 7.3 pg. 165) the educational environment the pupils were placed in was deemed a significant factor for many of the participants. Those attending the specialist provision appeared happier once they had been placed in a more supportive learning environment. When discussing the teacher's role the pupils considered it important for teachers to be tolerant towards the specific needs of pupils. This again highlights the need for alternative provisions were pupils can be provided with

more specialist support. There was a sense that a different approach was needed for this group of pupils;

She expects us to work silently for an hour and we just can't do that in this school (Billy)

A major concern of the study has been to hear the voice of the pupil who has received the BESD label. In light of this it was considered vital to uncover alongside the pupil what they considered to be important aspects of their educational journey. There appears to be a difference between the perceptions of those who have achieved BESD status and their peers. Pupils, parents and teachers all recognised that mechanisms will be put in place to remove those who are deemed "unsuitable" for mainstream. Teachers in chapter seven (section 7.1 pg. 156) made clear their opinions on inclusion. It is becoming increasingly clear that teachers see the only option available to them is to adopt a utilitarian approach to education. For example one professional blamed flaws in the inclusion agenda on the pressures that will be placed on mainstream teachers;

> For some children school is not the answer and there are some young people that we are working with, and school will never meet their needs because they can't function in a big anonymous organisation. Sometimes the staff don't have the time because the staff are driven towards other targets. I think you are on a hiding to nothing because the two sides can't meet in the middle.(Alternative Provision Staff)

The purpose of the study was to explore the pupils understanding of the development of BESD. For some pupils as reported in the pilot study the reasons behind young people displaying challenging behaviour are rather straightforward;

It was the lesson, it's just boring (Jacob)

Within the subtext of this quote there is the suggestion that pupils do not find the curriculum engaging. Previous studies have indicated that the national curriculum is not meeting the needs of all pupils (Garner, 1993; Wise, 1997). For some pupils such as Zoe this could lead to her becoming distracted which meant she was unable to keep up with the lesson;

If I find something boring I tend to just go off into a daydream and when you don't understand the work I have to ask me mate what are we doing (Zoe)

The inappropriate behaviour displayed by this group of pupils was often a result of their frustration at not understanding the work. Previous researchers who have sought the perspectives of young people labelled with BESD found that these pupils often believed their acts of "inappropriate" behaviour as reasonable and justifiable responses to poor teaching (Reid, 1985; Cronk, 1987). The quote below again highlights the significance of the curriculum and amending it to meet the needs of those labelled with BESD;

> **I would start flipping and I can't help it. If I can't explain what I am doing and I get confused, I will start flipping (Louise)**

> **Yeah someone winds you up you are just going to flip aren't you? Some people can just flip. (Adam)**

Chapter seven (see section 7.1, pg. 156) introduced the concept of schools and teachers manipulating the system to remove unwanted pupils. Here schools can be seen to be adopting a utilitarian approach to the "challenging" pupil. The schools will employ this approach to justify the removal of such pupils. Numerous pupils and parents were able to provide examples of schools manipulating the system and employing unofficial mechanisms to remove "naughty" pupils (Gazeley, 2010). Assumptions will often be made of these pupils and one is that they do not want to engage with education (Davies, 1996). However the majority of pupils recognised the importance of having a good education. For Daniel education was considered a high priority, again he felt that the adults placed in a position of power were neglecting his needs;

> **I was literally suspended to a date but they just kept on adding suspension dates on. I was saying this is unacceptable I am missing out on school (Daniel)**

The evidence suggests that young people are being ignored within processes that surround their education such as exclusion. Their voices will be silenced and they will not be kept up to date with what is going to happen to them. Instead adults will make decisions on their behalf. Despite this being in contradiction with current Government guidelines which stipulates that there should be 'opportunities for decision making with children and young people as partners engaging in dialogue' (DfES, 2004, p. 2). Evidently young people do want to have their voices heard however they are being silenced by overriding adult concerns;

> **I don't really know because at the time when I got told that I was not going to that school anymore I was going to (special school) I went why? They wouldn't really tell me, just went I am moving but I didn't really understand exclusion and all that then (Billy)**

It is questionable whether adults such as teachers will be working in the best interests of the child or whether their focus will instead be on the school and removing anyone who may not provide them with academic or financial gain (Adams, 2008). Within the context of the study there was a tendency to blame inappropriate behaviour on deficiencies within the child; it is the pupil who is deemed to be failing to comply with school rules. During the discussions with the teachers it became clear that they see themselves differently to their mainstream

counterparts and even suggested that those based in mainstream were not equipped to deal with these pupils;

> ...Mainstream isn't for everybody as I say schools are mainly focused on exams and results and there isn't the support in mainstreams yet. (Support Centre Teacher)

When comparing themselves to their mainstream partners the educational professionals considered themselves more able to meet the needs of those labelled with BESD. The teachers who participated in the study exhibited understanding of the circumstances that surround pupils;

> Where they are coming from in the morning, are they getting up out of a bed, they might have slept on the floors that night or the sofa or they might not have even slept at home that night so it is all of those social aspects. (Alternative provision staff)

The evidence from the current study intimates that the pupil's relationship with their teacher will differ depending on their educational placement. In chapter seven (see section 7.1 pg. 156) it was argued that due to their specialist training and smaller environments, those based in specialist and alternative provisions were perceived to demonstrate more awareness of the needs of these pupils;

They understood me special needs a lot and they helped me. (Daniel)

How teachers respond to inappropriate behaviour was deemed a substantial factor in causing disaffection amongst pupils. The findings of the study illustrate the importance of teachers considering the role they have in their pupil's inappropriate behaviour. The literature reviewed in previous chapters suggests that teacher perceptions of behaviour will be informed by their individual culture and social values (Ho, 2004). Furthermore teachers who participated in previous studies acknowledged that their own behaviour can have a major influence on their pupil's behaviour (Gibbs and Gardiner, 2008). The clash that occurs between pupils and teachers often led to pupils being removed from educational settings through the process of exclusion. Adam was excluded for assaulting one of his teachers; he had been fighting with a fellow pupil. During the interviews with Adam he recalled this event he strongly felt the situation escalated due to the teachers response **'he was just coming in me face so I punched him' (Adam).** He stated that he did not want to return to that particular school. A significant number of the pupils were able to provide examples of "run-ins" they had experienced with specific teachers. Within these examples the pupils suggested that due to having "achieved" the BESD label they would be singled out by their teachers;

He would just like pick on me to do everything, he would sit there and if he was wound up he would flip on me for no reason. He was horrible and I would tell him to shut up, swear at him (Adam)

Indeed for many of the pupils it was the teacher's response to their behaviour which would cause pupils to "lash out". Pupils would become frustrated during incidents with teachers, this is summarised in the following quote provided by Louise;

I don't know there are loads of teachers in our school that just get in your face. That does my head in if a teacher like gets in my face. I just go to hit them and it just doesn't work for me (Louise)

Pupils it would seem are not adverse to all teachers and during the interviews they were able to provide examples of teachers who they felt they had developed more positive relationships with. Indeed for a number of pupils it would be a specific teacher with whom they would push the boundaries;

I was only really naughty for them two because I didn't really like them I think it is because they didn't like me. (Adam)

The quotes provided above are supported by the literature with studies showing the relationship between the teacher and pupil to be significant in determining the success of lessons and the learning that takes place (Cohen & Manion, 1989; Lund, 1996). Teachers and teaching styles are seen as hugely significant by pupils (Wise, 1999). When pupils are labelled as the naughty pupil a breakdown of trust can occur as pupils feel they are being isolated by teachers. When exploring the pupil's relationship with their teachers it became evident that due to the stigma attached to the BESD label they feel they are unlikely to be believed in a situation where it was their word against the teachers. The following quotes summarise the perceived position of the pupils;

No because nobody would believe us in a special school (Martin)

The teacher all the time...because they think kids are just going to lie (Whitney-Bob)

It would seem then that the findings from the study support the claims made within the literature that young people who have received the BESD label are rarely afforded the opportunity to have their voice heard. The findings support the claims that these are the least listened to, empowered and liked groups of pupils (Baker 2005; Cooper 2006b; Lewis and Burman 2008), and the most likely to be at the receiving end of punitive and exclusionary practices (Cooper, 2001).

In addition to the pupils having tenuous relationships with teachers their parents also described feeling that they would be ignored by educational professionals. Throughout their child's education many of the parents asked for additional help for their child but felt these pleas were ignored. These parents described feeling let down by professionals whose role was to support pupils;

> I was asking for him to be taken out of that school anyway because I don't think they treated him fair, the teachers and stuff they should have acknowledged that a child is struggling and his reading was down. (Tyrese's mum)

For parents the teacher was simply not doing enough to support their child. In many cases difficulties with learning were apparent from an early age and parents felt that if problems would have been picked up earlier their child may have had a more successful educational journey;

> If things would have been picked up in infants to juniors when I asked them to pick things up and I said look I think something is wrong here I wouldn't be here talking to you now because she would be somewhere. She would have been settled, it is not that she doesn't want to learn, she does want to learn, it is everything else around her that she can't cope with. (Helen's mum)

With teachers identified as a key catalyst in the development of BESD, the study sought to explore pupils and teachers perspectives on how these pupils should be "dealt with". For teachers consistency was the key to enabling pupils to successfully progress through the education system. As demonstrated in the following quotes;

> I think for me I say the C word all the time I think consistency with them. You know if you are not consistent with them you are on a hiding to nothing and it is not going to work. (Alternative provision staff)

There is a discrepancy between what teachers consider to be the needs of these pupils and what the pupils themselves considered to be important. As detailed above the teachers believed all pupils required was discipline and structure. Notably the only pupil who agreed with this approach was the one who had successfully re-integrated into mainstream education. Adam believed it was important for teachers to take a hard stance with these pupils;

> **I reckon they shouldn't go to a place like this were the teachers are as kind as they are because they get no respect or nothing. They should go to a place that is dead strict and you can't do nothing, you shouldn't be able to get kicked out of it and teachers should be harsh on the kids so they learn to be good.**

The qualities cited by the other pupils who participated in the study included sense of humour, friendly, experienced and happy. Although the pupils recognised there is a need for

teachers to be firm they felt if they took this too far it would have an opposite effect on pupil behaviour

If they are too tough the kids will start to rebel against them to be honest. (Zoe)

Clearly teachers need to balance the needs of the challenging pupil with the needs of their peers. Evidence from the study indicates that due to the pressures placed on teachers, such as meeting performance targets they will be encouraged to put the needs of the majority first. This lends further support to claims made both within the literature and findings from the study that teacher will adopt a utilitarian approach as a means to remove "unwanted" pupils. The participating young people stressed the importance of teachers demonstrating understanding. Encouragingly a number of teachers did demonstrate awareness of the adverse home circumstances likely to be experienced by this group of pupils. Previous studies have shown that teachers' understanding of behaviour greatly impacts on their ability to respond well to it (Poulou & Norwich, 2002). The study makes clear that the participating teachers did consider these pupils to be a "challenge". Numerous examples have been provided by pupils, parents and teachers which demonstrate that due to the complex nature of the BESD label the pupils needs are unclear. Teachers appear unsure as to what should happen to this group of pupils and where they should be placed. Chapter six highlighted teachers do not have a shared understanding of the term BESD (Goodman & Burton, 2010). It would seem that the relationship between pupil and teacher can be complex this can lead to misunderstandings between the two. The pupils did acknowledge the complex nature of the relationship between the pupil who has received the BESD label and their teachers. Tyrese for example demonstrated awareness of the position teachers are placed in when working with challenging pupils;

I don't know because they have their ups and downs teachers. One day they are OK and then the next day they are horrible. Then it depends on how the class are behaving though really if the class are behaving naughty teachers will go horrible but it is understandable if they go like that though because they are trying to teach us and they probably can't (Tyrese)

For parents the teacher's understanding of their child's specific learning needs was considered imperative. All of the parents were able to provide examples of when they felt schools had not shown awareness of the needs of the pupil;

Well he was just having problems you know learning in school and he got quite a lot of things that he liked doing taken away from him, because obviously the teacher didn't have an understanding of his needs so he was getting into trouble and basically that was because he couldn't understand the work that he was doing.(Tyrese's mum)

Clearly for pupils and parents teachers play a significant role in the development of BESD. Interestingly only one of the teachers who participated recognised the impact they may have on the development of BESD.

> when you have had a big blow up and one of the kids has kicked off or trashed the classroom you go home and think could I have handled that differently what caused that, was that because I spoke that way. You do take it home and you have to really stop and say I can't do this anymore because you are taking stress home with you. (Support centre teaching assistant)

The evidence from the current study suggests that mainstream schools are not coping with these pupils leading to them being removed from such settings. For most pupils the negative experiences they encountered in their educational journeys occurred in mainstream settings. The importance of how teachers respond to behaviour has also been highlighted. The teacher was considered the catalyst leading to the pupil displaying challenging behaviour. Interestingly only one teacher reflected on their own position and how their actions may exacerbate pupil behaviour. It is concerning that the focus for the majority of teachers remained on placing the blame on the pupil's home and family environment. The teachers were forthright in their opinions of parents and clearly had preconceived notions about them, often citing parent ineptitude as the major causal factor in the development of BESD.

8.2 Can't be Arsed (CBA) Parents

During the initial stages of the study the researcher attended a variety of LA meetings to gain an understanding of the wider context of the pupil's educational journey. "Can't be Arsed" (CBA) parents was a term employed by members of the LA to describe parents whose children were considered "challenging". Earlier in the thesis (see chapter two section 2.3.3, pg. 31 and section 2.4.3, pg. 37 and chapter three, pg. 58) the literature detailed that for many educational professionals the culture of blame was solely located with the child and their family. As has been evidenced above only one teacher involved in the study considered how their actions might impact on the behaviour displayed by their pupils. This is an important finding of the study. To further evidence this blame culture data from the teachers, pupils and parents is subject to analysis to critically review the position of the parent within the confines of their child's educational journey. Teachers who participated in the study on many occasions implied that pupils would learn inappropriate behaviour as a result of inept parenting;

> I think family breakdown is the one that seems to stand out for me or parental ineptitude is another really isn't it? To end up at a school like ours is a direct consequence of things having gone wrong at some point in their formative years right up to where we are now and the kind of things that have gone wrong are linked to problems at home be it parents might be alcoholics, chronic drug uses, prostitutes and so forth maybe serving prison sentences. (Special school head teacher)

Indisputably the major causal factor of BESD for teachers who participated in the study was the family and home environment. Notably, the pupils recognised that changes in home circumstances, such as bereavement, would lead to a sudden deterioration in their behaviour (Gross and McChrystal, 2001). Albeit a number of the pupils were willing to openly discuss home circumstances the researcher did not feel it was appropriate to push young people on these matters and therefore data to evidence the pupil's views in this area is sparse. Many of the pupils had previously or were currently experiencing adverse home circumstances including bereavement and being placed in foster care. Instead the researcher ensured space was provided for the individual so they could determine how much they were willing to share.

The study asserts that parents will be blamed for their child's behaviour in school. The parents openly reflected on their position within the emerging culture of blame. There was a feeling of helplessness that was expressed by parents as they felt they were doing all they possibly could to support their child. Having a child who has received the BESD label can be extremely stressful. For over four decades the Government's response has been to establish partnerships with parents (Beveridge, 2005). However parents often described difficult relationships between the home and the school. This suggests that the cycle of mutual blame (Miller, 1994) is still going strong. There was a perception amongst a number of the professionals that parents did not want to engage with their child's educational provision. This becomes clear with comments such as "can't be arsed" parents which were indicative of how parents were perceived. It was the parents not the teachers who needed to change their approach;

> The parents that really annoy me are the ones that don't listen to what you are saying to them, they sort of come back with he is not really like that, he is not that bad or are you sure he did that. They question your every move instead of listening to what you are saying to them. (Support centre teaching assistant)

The teachers who were based within the special school suggested that a pupil's behaviour would change when they were on a break from school. Here they seemed to be implying that all their hard work would be undone once the child returned to their "unstable" home environment. One teacher provided an example of how "inappropriate" behaviour would be learnt from the home;

> Family, family personally family just the general boundaries, all that sort of stuff all the stuff that we do here that the families don't and the biggest one is the boundaries, good parenting that is it really for me. You will always find they will come back now after being home for two weeks (Easter holiday). They have been out of the whole loop and all of everything we will pick up the pieces for about a week and a half and then will we be alright, then you have to let them go again but family yeah. (Special school teacher 2)

The quote provided above contradicts with the perceptions of parents whose children were attending specialist provision. The parents expressed concern regarding their child's behaviour becoming more severe once they had been placed in this form of provision as they would be mixing with other "naughty" pupils. This is clearly an example of mutual blaming between the home and the school with both placing blame at each other's feet and neither willing to reflect on their own actions.

As previous research suggests many of the pupils who participated in the study experienced adverse home environments (Copper, 1993; DCSF, 2009). Two of the young people had been placed in foster care, two had suffered significant family bereavement and there were a significant number who had experienced family breakdown. Most of the pupils had a range of professionals involved in their care including social services and the youth offending team. Daniel acknowledged that the difficulties he was experiencing at home would stay with him and influence his behaviour in school;

> **Sometimes I end up bringing it into school and I end up taking it out on everyone and getting into more fights. (Daniel)**

The teachers discussed the impact problems at home could have on behaviours displayed in the classroom. Encouragingly many of the teachers who took part in the study were able to recognise the often challenging home circumstances surrounding the pupil. For example when discussing Clare's changing behaviour in school, the teacher was able to link this to changes in Clare's home situation;

> ...I think something is wrong at home and that is why she is being like this but she won't open up. She is just clamming up at the moment and saying everything is good but it is not you can see the difference in you. (Support Centre Manager)

Interestingly this was reinforced by Clare who discussed the difficult relationship she was experiencing with her parents and the impact this would have on her behaviour in school. This will probably be true of a high proportion of teenagers; however these tenuous relationships may be exacerbated due to the specific behaviours displayed by those labelled with BESD;

I don't get along with me mum and dad. I always argue with my mum and my dad always shouts. I would argue with my dad and I would just walk out and I would go and stay at me aunties or me mates and I won't go to school the next day and it will make me mum stressed out. (Clare)

For some pupils it was possible to link change in behaviour to specific home events. For example Helen discussed how her behaviour deteriorated following the loss of her father. This finding is consistent with Hayden and Dunne's (2001) research which found that two thirds of parents of permanently excluded pupils mentioned upset, difficulties or change at home just before the exclusion. Helen's teachers also reflected on the impact her family circumstances had on her educational journey;

One of the most significant factors in Helen's history or story is that she had lost her father about two years previously. Her father wasn't at that point with her mother but Helen saw a lot of her father and he was quite a significant person in her life and then he died and Helen was trying to deal with that (Alternative provision staff)

Helen felt this loss had had a significant impact on her behaviour and happiness in school;

Yeah me mum even says that since my dad died my attitude and my behaviour has just gone absolutely pathetic but I think it was because I was a daddy's girl and I wouldn't move without my dad or nothing (Helen)

Adam's difficulties began in year two of primary school and he linked this to his father leaving the family home. Both teachers and mum reinforced the significance of Adam's father with his mum stating 'I think his dad had something to do with it in fact I think he had a lot to do with it'. He would get into fights in school when other pupils would discuss his home circumstances; he provided the example of "filling in" another pupil. This phrase was employed by pupils to describe incidents were they would get into fights;

He said something about my dad so I just filled him in and then from there on out I was just being really naughty in school. (Adam)

Evidently home circumstances can be seen as a trigger point which causes a change in the behaviours displayed in the classroom. When pupils were experiencing sometimes traumatic home events, they would exhibit their unhappiness by presenting with challenging behaviour. The case study below details a significant factor in Billy's family history which would often influence his behaviour in school.

BILLY

'When I was in school I used to never do me work and I used to go there and just hang round'

The above quote describes Billy visiting his mum when he was in foster care. He would often run away from school to maintain contact with his birth mother. As with many of the pupils problems began to emerge in primary school. He was excluded from mainstream secondary school and is now attending a special school, he reflects on his behaviour in mainstream education

> **I didn't use to do lessons or nothing because I used to always run out of the lessons so I use to not do lessons and I use to run out of school and that (Billy)**

Whilst attending primary school Billy's relationship with his birth mother broke down and he was placed with a new foster family. He has been with his current family for a number of years now and since being placed in specialist educational provision there was a feeling his behaviour had calmed down. However Billy's carer felt there was a difference between his behaviour at home and his behaviour in school. She acknowledged that he would use challenging behaviour when he was struggling to cope with his situation at home

> If there is a problem with Billy it always comes out in school I have noticed that over the years. He is as good as gold here but when he goes into school he will just flip, he will take it out on the teacher, he will take it out on one of the kids. (Billy's Carer)

This case study supports the claim that parents will play a role in the behaviours displayed by pupils. His birth mother would encourage Billy to act inappropriately in school. Billy would then become confused as to what was acceptable behaviour and in order to fit in with the school would have to learn appropriate boundaries

> it was hard when he used to see mum because she would say you could F and blind at the teachers and you could be rude to them because it was just school and I said at the end of the day that is someone's mum I said I wouldn't let you speak to me like that so don't do it to them. (Billy's Carer)

Both Billy and his foster carer felt that once he got into a "routine" and "normal environment" he was able to manage his behaviour in school. This case study highlights the importance of having stability in a pupil's home life and finding right provision to meet their needs.

A similar situation occurred with Louise. She had also been placed in foster care and had a turbulent relationship with her birth mother. As with Billy contact would often negatively influence behaviour displayed in school;

> …contact with her mother, her real blood life mother upset what was going on and the package has since disintegrated which just reflects the relationship with the birth mother is so crucial. (Louise's Carer)

When completing the educational life grid with Louise she described her chaotic educational journey. Unusually this began whilst she was attending primary school and continued to be a prevalent feature of her educational journey;

Graph 8.1: Louise's happiness levels throughout educational journey
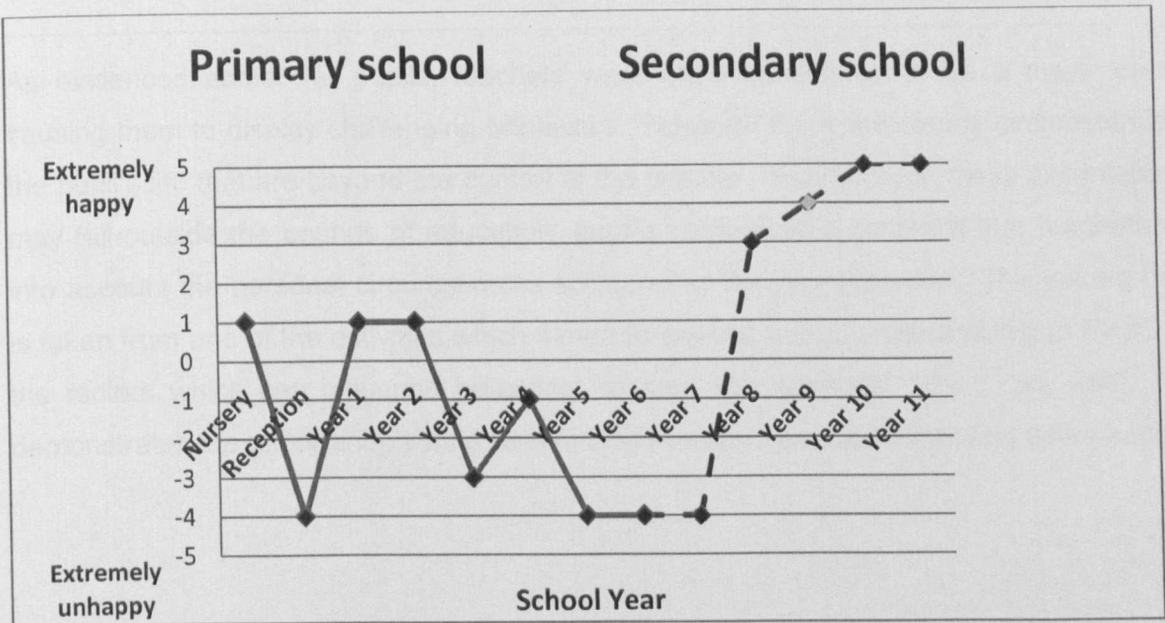
Unlike most of the pupils in the study Louise states that she was unhappy in primary school. This was felt to be due to family circumstances as she moved around a lot when she was younger. This is reflected in the figure below which attempts to capture her journey through education.

Figure 8.2: Louise's educational journey
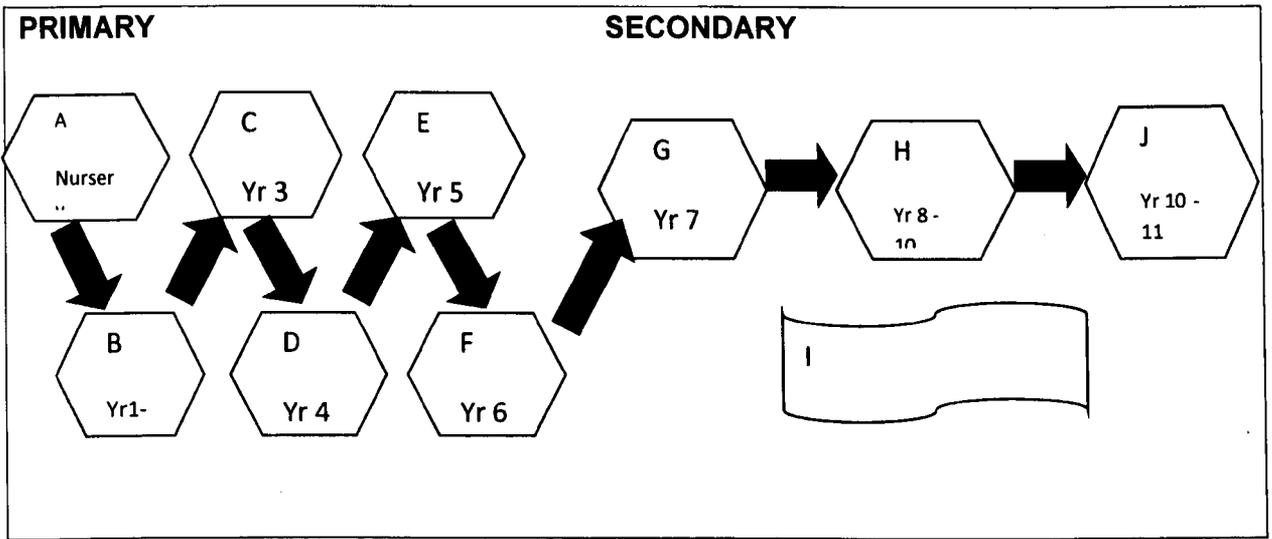
As evidenced earlier for pupils, teachers were often considered to be a major catalyst causing them to display challenging behaviour. However there are clearly circumstances in the pupil's life that are beyond the control of the teacher. Even though these circumstances may fall outside the bounds of education, pupil's considered it essential that teachers take into account the personal circumstances surrounding the young person. The extract below is taken from one of the activities which aimed to explore pupils understanding of BESD and the factors which can influence behaviour (please see appendix 10.4.2, pg. 288). This demonstrates the importance young people place on teachers understanding their needs.

> Zoe – I think the teacher is probably right
> Whitney-Bob – I don't
> Researcher: Why?
> Whitney-Bob – shouldn't shout at kids speak to them nice and they will listen
> Zoe – I do agree with that but in a sense learner A shouldn't be swearing at a teacher, throwing stuff at a teacher and disrupting them because the teacher is only there to help them learn
> Whitney-Bob – yeah but kids don't see it like that do they
> Zoe – I suppose so
> Researcher: Do you think there might have been reasons why they acted like that?
> Whitney-Bob – they might have personal problems or stuff like that
> Zoe – yeah probably
> Whitney-Bob – or they are unhappy with something
> Zoe – either that or there is something going on at home and they feel like they need to be disruptive to let it out
> Whitney-Bob – yeah
> Researcher: And do you think that the teacher could have acted differently?
> Zoe – I think the teacher could have...
> Whitney-Bob – been a bit calmer
> Zoe – and let them try to explain why it is they are acting like that

As noted earlier the researcher was reluctant to push pupils on personal issues, emphasis instead was placed on the pupil deciding how much they were willing to divulge. The literature recognises that building trusting relationships with young people can be beneficial in enabling pupils to remain engaged in education (Poulou & Norwich, 2002). However within all pupil voice research there is an inherent imbalance of power. Due to the position young people occupy within the education system the pupils appeared wary of the researcher (Hill, 2006). The pupil's perception of adults may have been influenced by past events which may have impacted upon their ability to trust "outsiders". Often their educational journeys involved both individual and family stress hence invitations to discuss them were not always welcomed (Davies, 2005). The teachers acknowledged this reluctance to share personal information;

> ...we don't know a lot of the things that go on at home, probably not even half the kids will talk to you about how they feel or what is happening at home (Support centre manager)

So far this section has examined the perceptions of teachers and pupils towards parents, the chapter will now turn to explore how parents themselves experience their position. Over the

last decade Government policy (Green Papers: Supporting Families, 1998; Every Child Matters, 2003; Every Child Matters: Next Steps, 2004) has focussed on the role of parenting in the development of young people displaying challenging behaviour (Rogers et al., 2008). Previous researchers have found that parents who attended parenting programmes valued being listened to and being provided with the opportunity to talk things through (Macdonald & Williamson, 2002). This was certainly true for one of the parents who participated in the study;

> you can off load your stress there and sometimes because we have all got kids of different ages something can be happening and some other woman can go that happened to mine a couple of years ago this is what I did, this is what worked and you can go home and try it 9 times out of 10 it has worked. It is a good group you haven't got to hide anything because they are all in the same boat. (Daniel's mum)

Notwithstanding the experience of the parent above, the majority of those who discussed their experiences and encounters with parent partnership schemes were rather more negative. Within chapter seven (see section 7.2, pg. 166) the position of the parent whose child had been placed in special school was critically examined. The evidence suggested that these parents had managed to develop effective relationships with their child's school. This finding contrasted with that detailed in the literature which claims that parents will have more negative encounters with their child's educational provision (McDonald & Thomas, 2003; Todd, 2003). The chapter now turns to explore the parents' experiences prior to their child's placement in special school and those whose child had been placed in alternative provision. Parents suggested that organisations such as parent partnership work for the authority rather than for them and their child. Evidence gained from the literature makes clear that even when school involvement is labelled "partnership" it is generally on the terms of the professional (Robinson & Timperley, 1996). Furthermore it has been suggested that Parent Partnership Services are considered a further tier of bureaucracy that can prevent parents from accessing the "real" decision makers (Todd, 2003). This is another example of Government rhetoric not quite matching the lived experiences of parents;

> It always seemed to me that when you were on one to one with parent partnership they would always be there to support you. You went into a meeting with doctors, teachers and people like that it was a different ball game, I knew then that something wasn't right. (Boris' mum)

There is an underlying assumption within Government publications that it is the parent who needs to change (Casen and kingdom, 2007; Gewirtz, 2001; Giles, 2005). This is clearly demonstrated in the recent development of parenting classes (Peters, 2012). However this approach is not working from the perspective of the parent;

> No, nothing I have been on two parenting courses like that is going to do any good do you know what I mean…I can't stand someone dictating to me do you know what I mean (Zoe's mum)

The emphasis has been placed on educating the parent of pupils who do not conform to bounds of appropriate behaviour. As with McDonald and Thomas (2003) study parents described feeling they are judged as unworthy parents. These feelings will be further exacerbated by a policy discourse (for example Barriers to Achievement, 2004) which has tended to emphasise the impact of family background on educational outcomes (Gazaley, 2010). Previous research has claimed that parents of young people who have received the BESD label may also have faced difficulties in their school life (Boreham et al., 1995; Galloway, Armstrong & Tomlinson, 1994). This assertion was reinforced by parents who described struggling with school, likewise to their children they stated that they 'hated school'. In some cases this led to a perceived imbalance of power, with parents stating that they felt uncomfortable in the presence of educational professionals (Farrell & Polat, 2003). It was considered important for the study to hear the voices of parents and reflect on their experiences of education. The findings have enabled the study to gain an insight into factors which may work to prevent the parent from engaging in their child's educational journey. The Coalition Government can be seen to be continuing to hold parents responsible for their child's behaviour in the classroom yet evidence from the study suggests that parents are not able to navigate the complex systems that surround their child's education. These parents were not confident in their ability to engage with educational professionals;

> You are intimidated especially with me I am going for a dyslexic test on Thursday and it says on the bottom if you have a problem such as dyslexia we will help. I have told them every time I go, I say I can't read and I can't write I don't understand what you are doing and what you are going on about so that has been confusing and frustrating. (Boris' mum)

> The parents have been through the mill as well because they have been to schools and they go "oh here I go again they will be telling me off" and to go back into school when you have had a bad experience yourself. Very often they don't have education, they might not have education as a high priority or they might be scared or feel unsure themselves. (Alternative provision staff)

Interestingly pupils were also aware of their parent's lack of confidence;

> **My aunty had to write loads of letters to get me in. My mum tried to write letters to get me in but she didn't know what to write so my aunty did it (Zoe)**

The parents whose children were attending the special school all stated that they were happy with the level of support they were receiving. The head teacher of the special school stated that he considered parent engagement as a key priority for his school;

We do have good relationships with parents, you have to in this line of work really I have to. I have to be approachable to parents, I have to be accountable to parents as a head teacher should be of course they are stakeholders after all. I think you have to go the extra mile with BESD pupils parents because in fairness to them they have quite often had years and years of their son being bandied about the school system...parents are often quite downtrodden and vulnerable themselves in this system and need a bit of support. (Special school head teacher)

For those not placed in special school, the parents recalled less positive experiences. They felt ignored and frustrated. Parents described feeling they will be perceived as inferior to the teacher, who will assume they know what is best for the young person

I have been wanting this since junior school...you can imagine how many people have just slipped through the net because the teachers think they know better but no-one knows better about your child than your own mum or dad. (Helen's mum)

Evidence from the current study suggests that the cycle of mutual blame continues to be a prominent feature of the education system. Both teachers and the political agenda have implied that parents are to blame for causing the development of BESD. There was a perception that parents were simply inept and this resulted in them "failing" their child. However the fact that these parents were willing to engage in the study clearly demonstrates that they do have an interest in their child's education. Interestingly the majority of teachers and parents who participated in the study appeared unwilling to reflect on how they may contribute to the development of BESD. There is an implication here that adults feel they are doing all they can therefore the onus is placed on pupils who were considered capable of controlling the behaviours they display. Throughout the study pupils have been willing to reflect on how their actions may impact on their educational journey. They are aware of their needs and the factors that can cause them to display "inappropriate" behaviour. The chapter now turns to consider whether blame should be attributed to young people.

8.3 The "bad kid"

When teachers, parents and even some pupils discussed the BESD label there was an underlying assumption that it is the pupils themselves who are solely responsible for their behaviour. Interestingly adults linked the development of BESD to the children's rights agenda suggesting that young people now have too much of a say in their educational journey. Here there appears to be the emergence of a backlash against the children's rights agenda. They are observed to be manipulative and simply pushing the boundaries for fun (see section 6.2, pg. 135). Although a number of teachers acknowledged the existence of a "condition" and there were numerous examples of parents pursuing the BESD label there remains a stigma attached to young people who have received this label. This chapter

moves to explore how young people experience their position within the emerging culture of blame. It would seem that pupils are willing to reflect on how their actions may affect their educational journey. Strikingly rather than simply "passing the buck" pupils appeared to take ownership of their behaviour. This is evidenced in the following quotes **"I am stupid"**, **"I am dead thick" "I have got too much stuff wrong with me"** and **"I can't even read so I don't know why I am picking words"**. It is perhaps not surprising to hear comments such as these given that adults continue to place blame on young people who are observed to simply not fit with what is deemed acceptable;

> My understanding of BESD is a condition whereby a pupil has failed at all elements of mainstream education and has ended up coming down the special schools route because of elements of this condition they have which is linked to their behaviour. (Special school head teacher)

Here the head teacher is stressing that it is the pupil who has "failed" rather than the education system failing the pupil. It is significant that this is the position of a special school head teacher. Perhaps you would expect more understanding from a teacher who has chosen to specifically work with this group of vulnerable young people. There is a plethora of research (such as McCord, 1979; Wilson, 1980; Riley & Shaw, 1985: Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003) which acknowledges the impact that both social and environmental factors can have on the development of BESD. Worryingly, the perspective that it is a problem within the child could have a potentially damaging impact on the educational support young people with BESD will receive. If the teacher feels it is out of their control they will not change the pupil's educational environment (Thomas, 2005; Lauchlan & Boyle, 2007). Clare felt that even when she informed teachers of her difficulties she would be made to feel it was her fault for not being up to the school standards;

> **Yeah I used to tell him that is not my fault that I can't write he used to say it is you should be able to write at the age of five I used to try my hardest. (Clare)**

It was not only the teachers who refused to take any responsibility for BESD some parents also appeared reluctant to reflect on how they may have impacted upon their child's current situation;

> I am definitely not responsible for Helen not going to school. I get her up and make sure she is ready to go she just never, ever went she would sit ride round on buses all day go to town or whatever. (Helen's mum)

There was disagreement amongst the pupils as to whether they were capable of controlling their behaviour. Chapter six highlighted that some pupils are wary of those who have

received the BESD label. They appeared less sympathetic towards these peers due to behaviours displayed in the classroom;

> **We know whether we are in the wrong. Like if I pick a pen up now and throw it I know I am in the wrong so I know how much (detention) I am going to get…we know what we are doing now (Tyrese)**

These pupils were seen to be making the decision to misbehave; Adam even claimed that pupils will pretend to have a "condition". This again reinforces the notion that these pupils will manipulate those around them;

> **People can I reckon some people just act like they can't because you obviously can control it, people just act like they can't…Everyone has got self-control. (Adam)**

There is clearly a stigma attached to those who have received the BESD label leading to teachers having certain preconceived ideas of this group of pupils. It was argued within chapter six that some teachers will often blame the child for the behaviour they display stating that it is the pupil who does not fit in with the school agenda. The notion of young people not fitting with what is deemed as acceptable is clearly a significant finding of the study. Teachers felt they were doing all they could to support these pupils. They stated that the young people would then make a choice to "challenge" the structures that surround them. They refuse to fit in and change their behaviour. However when you speak to young people they were able to provide rational insights into the reasons behind the behaviours displayed. A reoccurring theme for the pupils is stated to be the teachers response to their "challenging" behaviour;

CLARE

'I used to write dead horrible because I didn't know how to write properly so he would scream at me and tell me to write properly.'

Clare was attending the support centre (Provision A) after being excluded from school for the fourth time in her educational career. It became clear that Clare had an extremely turbulent relationship with her teachers as she did not feel they were adequately supporting her. Clare is another example of a pupil whose behaviour would be exacerbated by how her teachers responded to her

> **He would just shout at me in the middle of the class and tell me to go and sit in time out so I used to just walk out the classroom and then I would just argue with him. My mum would tell me not to argue with him because there is no point and I would go he shouldn't shout at me for writing. (Clare).**

She has been diagnosed with ADHD but does not have an SEN Statement. This case study also highlights the importance of obtaining an SEN Statement as it can be used as a tool to gain access to specialist provision. During the interviews with Clare's teachers it became apparent that a major priority was to find a suitable educational environment for Clare. As with Christine there was a feeling amongst the professionals that she would not be able to cope in a mainstream setting. During the interviews with Clare she does acknowledge that she will often choose to remove herself from the classroom. She is another example of a pupil who will remove herself from challenging situations, this is supported by her teachers

> To be honest with you I would have reservations about her if she did go to a mainstream school whether her attendance would be good or not I think she would probably turn into a non-attendee. (Support Centre Teacher)

There are concerns regarding whether academically she would be able to cope with the work

> I think because she is so academically weak and she has missed that much of school even before she came here through her non-attendance and stuff. She has missed that much she is that far behind and I think she knows that herself and I think she is afraid maybe of going (Support Centre Teacher)

During her time in education Clare had experienced strained relationships with some of her teachers this would cause her to run away from those environments. These continuous periods where she would remove herself from education have had a significant impact on her self-confidence. When she feels she cannot cope with situations she will make the decision to remove herself.

The case study detailed above indicates that within the confines of their educational journey the voices of young people will be ignored. There was a breakdown in the relationship between Clare and her teacher and this clearly due to a lack of communication.

The increasing interest in the notions of pupil voice and participation has been well documented throughout the study. The legislation (for example UNCRC, 1989) on children's rights is contradictory and confusing, with official guidelines stipulating that educational professionals should involve pupils in decisions surrounding their education. Evidence from the study however indicates this notion has been consigned to mere Government rhetoric. In addition, there was a feeling amongst the adults who participated in the study that now have too much of a say;

> I think the situation lately is that the kids are becoming the adults and the adults are becoming the kids because the children now are telling the parents what they want rather than the other way round. (Support centre teaching assistant)

It would appear then that there has been a recent backlash against the children's right agenda. Despite previous studies (Hamill & Boyd, 2002; Ravet, 2007; Thomas, 2007) and the findings from the current study highlighting the voices of those who have received the BESD label frequently being ignored, the parents considered themselves to be powerless. Parents were adamant that they were doing all they possibly could do to support their child. They indicated that they had reached the end of their tether and there was a perceived imbalance of power with children manipulating the rights that have now been afforded to them;

> What are you going to do, she has even threatened to have me arrested if I touch her to get her out of the bed and she would phone the police and say my mum has just assaulted me because I wouldn't go to school or something, anything not to get there. (Helen's mum)

> I can't shout at her, I cannot hit her, she doesn't have to tell me where she is going, who she is going with, where she is and I think it is wrong. (Whitney's mum)

This position was also reinforced by the teachers who appeared cautious of listening to the voice of the pupil. It would appear, as research suggests, teachers are wary of listening to the perspectives of their pupils (Rudduck & Flutter, 2003). Previous studies have indicated that pupil voice is perceived as time-consuming, irrelevant and with no value, only leading to problems and wasting time (Wade and Moore, 1993). One teacher even went as far as to suggest that there should be a return to the "good old days" were children would be "controlled". This leads to the question as to whether schools are really ready to truly hear the voices of young people;

> I would say overall it has got worse, I think the pressure of society is that children rule rather than adults rule. A child's right to be in charge of their destiny is much higher and nobody has told the children their rights are to be educated, to be looked after not to do what they want to do. The child's rights include to be controlled and

somewhere along the line and I think it happened in the mid-eighties to nineties all of a sudden child's rights came in and somebody never said hold it, it is not the rights of the child to have their own way it is the rights of the children to be looked after. (Special school teacher 3)

When talking to pupils the assertions made above did not seem to reflect their experiences. Notwithstanding the experiences of some of the pupils who were attending the special school, most felt they were not listened to and it will be adults who will make decisions on their behalf. Interestingly a number of pupils felt it would be a certain type of pupil who were more likely to be heard

> **They will pick the little geek of the class or something, some nerd they wouldn't pick someone like one of them or me who have been kicked out (Adam)**

Evidently pupils do want to have their voices heard

> **It is important because if we want a say they should listen to what we want instead of them getting their own way. So they should listen to like what we have been doing, what we want to change about the school so they can make it better for us (Billy)**

The chapter attempted to identify what is considered to be the main causal factors leading to the development of BESD. As highlighted throughout the study the issues surrounding the BESD label are tremendously complex. Even within the context of the study, a range of factors have been cited by pupils, parents and teachers. What is evident is that it is not possible to attribute one single factor to the development of BESD. For each individual pupil a range of different factors culminated and led to them displaying challenging behaviour. The notion of blame however is a significant aspect of the pupil's educational journey. The current situation appears to be one of "passing the buck" which has led to the emerging culture of blame. Where blame is placed will depend on your position, for pupils the teacher acted as a catalyst as did changes in home circumstances. Teachers are determined that parent ineptitude is the major causal factor in the development of BESD. Parents on the other hand blamed teachers. Both teachers and parents also deemed pupils responsible for not fitting with the ethos of the school and the increasing children's rights agenda has also been linked to causing pupils to display "challenging" behaviour. There is a discrepancy here between adult perceptions and the lived experiences of young people. Some of the adults suggested that young people will manipulate the rights they have been afforded to "get away" with inappropriate behaviour. However pupils felt their voices will be silenced by overriding adult concerns. Displaying challenging behaviour would be employed by pupils as a mechanism to exhibit their unhappiness within a particular situation.

The findings detailed in the above chapters have demonstrated that pupils who have received the BESD label can offer powerful insights into their educational experiences. There were a range of factors that were deemed to have significance to the pupil's educational journey these included "achieving" BESD status, home circumstances, finding the "right" educational provision and their relationships with teachers. The key findings from the study will now be drawn together to provide an overview of the key concepts and critically reflect on how these have developed throughout the thesis.

CHAPTER NINE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study aimed to move away from research methods which have traditionally worked to silence the voices of young people. From the outset it was considered essential that the study adopted a different stance and explored innovative approaches to really "hear" the voices of young people. The study clearly demonstrates that despite the inclusion agenda, this group of young people continue to remain at the margins of mainstream education. Looking in from the outside is an accurate description of both their educational journeys and experience of research. It was the intention of the study to place the pupil at the heart of the research process but in order to gain the grand narrative of their educational journey the perspective of the adults surrounding the pupil were also obtained. The study placed itself as a vehicle for the voices of not only the pupils but their parents and teachers. The following chapter will provide a brief overview of the central findings of the study and reflect on the process of hearing the pupil voice.

It was determined at the beginning of the study that four key concepts had relevance to the thesis. The chapter will now turn to review these concepts in light of the findings detailed in the preceding chapters.

BESD label

The study aimed to examine how the BESD label is operationalised within the confines of the English education system. The study has illustrated that the labels employed to describe "challenging" pupils are continuously evolving (Frederickson & Cline, 2009). The findings highlight the difficulties encountered by teachers in determining whether a pupil has a "condition" or is simply being naughty. There were pupils, parents and teachers who appeared suspicious of the BESD label claiming that some pupils will simply push the boundaries for fun. Although the BESD label has been with us for well over a decade pupils and parents stated they had never heard of this term. This would suggest that employing labels to categorise pupils is a priority for educators, however, even teachers would refer to old terminology when describing BESD for example EBD. This reinforces the argument that teachers are not being adequately prepared to support this group of pupils yet they are expected to identify those with additional learning needs.

The pupils and parents generally fell into two categories; those who pursued the label and those who denied the existence of a "problem". The findings support the claims made in the literature that those who pursue the label will have to "fight the system" to ensure their child's need are met (Row 2005; Pinney 2002; Pinkus 2005; Paradice and Adewusi 2002; Hess,

Molina and Kozleski 2006). Worryingly a number of the pupils were coming to the end of their educational journey however their SEN Statement had not been finalised which meant that they were not able to access specialist support. Furthermore there was evidence of a postcode lottery of provision (Pinney, 2002; Ofsted, 2010).

The findings indicate that the current system as it stands is simply not working from the perspective of the pupil, the parent or the teacher. However the study is aware that the Coalition Government is currently reviewing the SEN processes. Seemingly though, what has been produced so far is of concern as there is no mention of teacher training. Additionally worrying is the idea that the emphasis remains placed on the parent taking responsibility for their child's education. This becomes a major concern as the findings highlight that parents do not feel confident to navigate the complex systems that surround their child's educational journey.

Educational Journeys

The study aimed to capture the educational journeys experienced by pupils who have received the BESD label. The study confirms the evidence reviewed in the literature that despite the notion of inclusive education, these young people continue to be removed from mainstream settings. It would seem that those who have "achieved" BESD status do present a "challenge" to educators. With no adequate training teachers are unclear what should happen to these pupils and where they are best placed. Teachers discussed the dilemmas they are faced with in terms of identifying BESD. With no guidelines or training it would appear that "make do and mend" is an accurate depiction of the current situation for teachers. This has led to schools adopting a utilitarian approach to the "challenging" pupil. The findings suggest that the inclusive agenda is simply not working. Whilst pressures remain on teachers to meet academic and performance targets there is no room for those who do not fit in with this agenda. All but one of the pupils involved in the study had been excluded from mainstream provision. Following their removal these young people would experience an ad hoc mixture of provision.

During the early stages of the study it was suggested that pupils are likely to experience one of two potential pathways. They will either be segregated and placed in special schools or an alternative "dump and hope" model will be employed. The findings support this assertion. A major consideration of the study was to identify models of good practice and effective forms of provision. Interestingly pupils were able to identify their needs and reflect on what has importance to them throughout their educational journey. Those placed in a special school

acknowledged the extra support they would be afforded in this provision. Young people however would contradict themselves. Although they were not keen to be observed as "different" to their mainstream peers they willingly accepted that they struggle in a mainstream setting. The study highlights the importance of finding the "right" educational placement to ensure the young person is able to successfully complete their educational journey. Unfortunately parents often described the difficulties they encountered accessing the "best" form of educational provision for their child.

Emerging culture of blame

Significantly pupils were the only participants who were willing to reflect on how their actions will impact on their educational journey. The young people involved in the study were frank and honest and able to provide powerful insights into the reasons behind the behaviours they displayed. A number of pupils described removing themselves from potentially stressful situations as a mechanism to control their behaviour. Adults on the other hand were not willing to take responsibility or reflect on how their behaviours may be considered an antecedent to the development of BESD. The evidence therefore indicates that the cycle of mutual blame (Miller, 1994) remains a prominent feature of the pupil's educational journey.

For parents, teachers were the catalyst which led the pupil to displaying challenging behaviour. The pupils also acknowledged the impact the teacher would have on the behaviours they displayed. For some it was the teacher's response to their actions which would exacerbate their behaviour. Once pupils had "achieved" the BESD label they felt they would be treated differently by their teachers and this label would prove impossible to shake. The teacher would then form certain preconceived notions about the pupil and this would shape how they react to the pupil's behaviour. How the teachers responded to behaviour could have a potentially detrimental impact on the pupil's educational trajectory. This process is demonstrated in the figure below;

Figure 9.1 Teacher as the catalyst
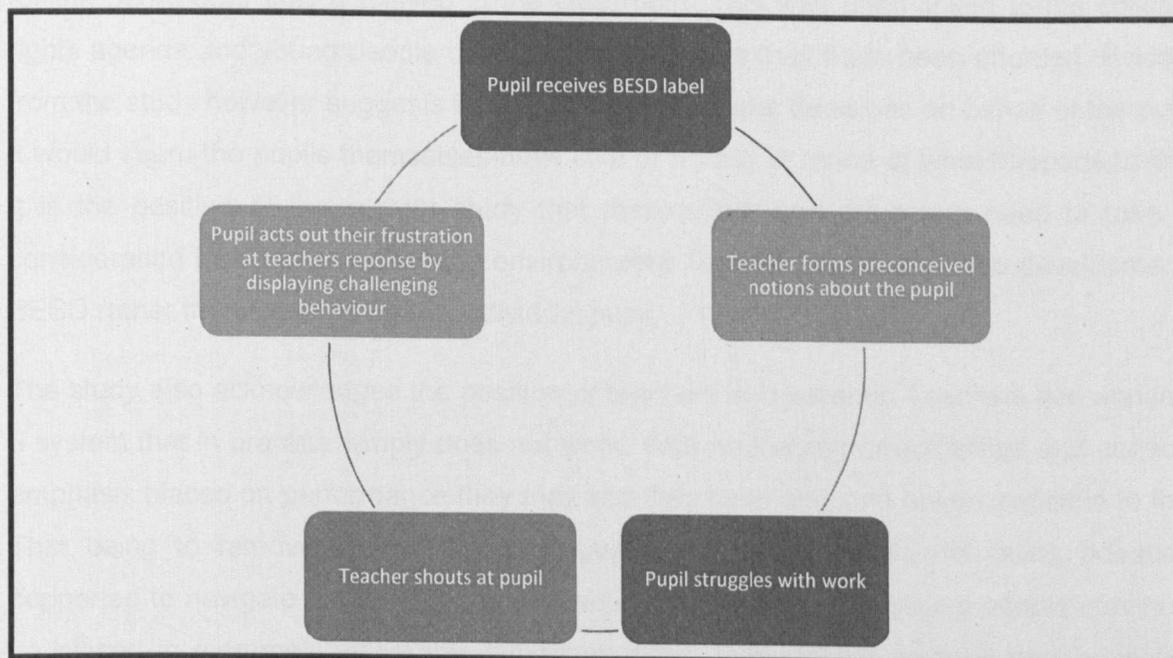
Teachers on the other hand were forthright in their opinions of parents and clearly had preconceived notions about them, often citing parent ineptitude as the major causal factor in the development of BESD. The pupils also reflected on the impact changes in their home circumstances would have on their behaviour. However they also emphasised the importance of teachers having an understanding of pupil circumstances which might be affecting their behaviour. Even if parents or home circumstances were cited as a causal factor for the pupil the teacher still played a significant role as highlighted in the figure below;

Figure 9.2 Home circumstances as the catalyst
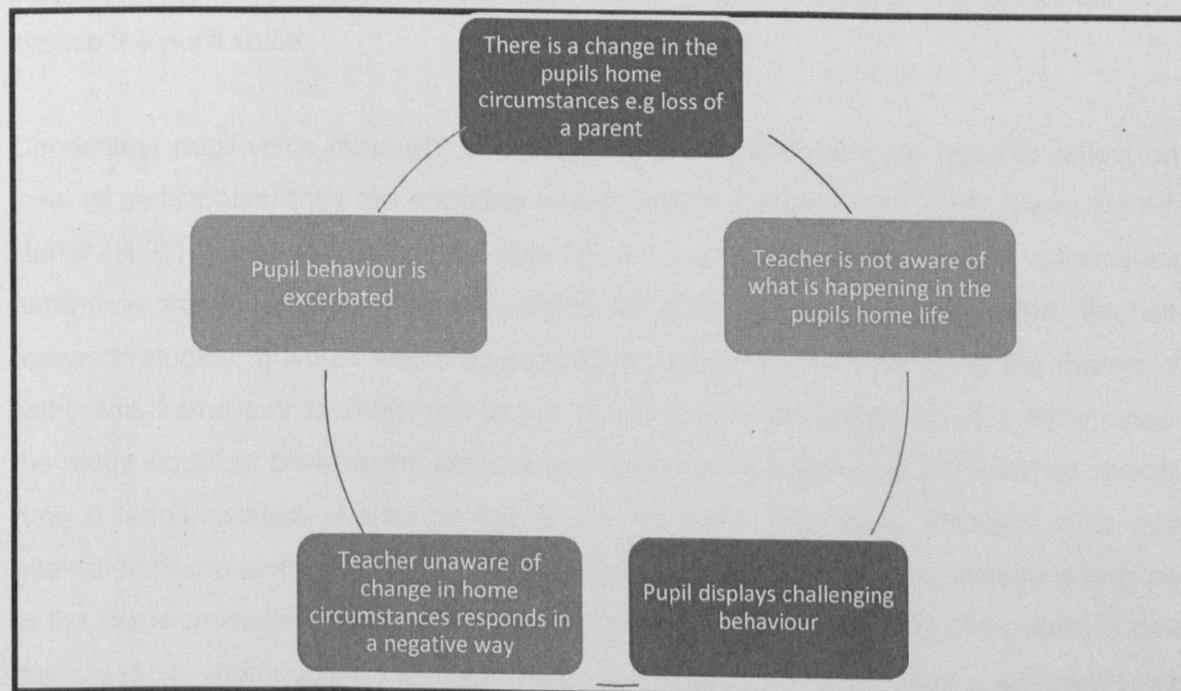
In addition to blaming each other these adults would also claim the pupil was also to blame for the behaviours they displayed in the classroom. This was often linked to the children's rights agenda and young people manipulating the rights they have been afforded. Evidence from the study however suggests it is adults who will make decisions on behalf of the pupils. It would seem the pupils themselves have little or no say in terms of what happens to them. It is the position of the current study that researchers and educators need to take into consideration the impact social and environmental factors can have on the development of BESD rather than focusing on the individual pupil.

The study also acknowledges the position of teachers and parents. Teachers are working in a system that in practice simply does not work. With no training or guidelines and continued emphasis placed on performance they may see they have only one option available to them. That being to remove the "challenging" pupils. Parents are also not being adequately supported to navigate the complex educational systems. It seems young people continue to be placed in extremely vulnerable situations within the confines of their own educational journey. They have no voice and it would seem those surrounding them are not well placed to help them.

Pupil voice
It has been well documented throughout the present study that pupil voice is a complex and multifaceted concept (Groundwater-Smith, 2007; Wise, 1997; Hart, 1992). Several commentators have acknowledged the issues researchers choosing to adopt this approach will need to be aware of, such as location of interviews (Wise,1998). Indeed during the process of the study it became clear that there are numerous mechanisms that can work to silence the pupil voice.

Conducting pupil voice research is challenging and researchers will need to reflect on the level of participation they are affording young people. Earlier in the study it was stated that Hart's (1992) ladder of participation (see fig. 4.1, pg. 66) would be used as a framework to determine the level of participation being afforded to young people within educational research studies. It would seem appropriate to reflect on the position of the current study within this framework to determine which "rung" it would be placed on. It is determined that the study would sit towards the top end and come under degrees of participation specifically rung 6 "adult-initiated, shared decisions with children". The study although adult initiated, attempted to move away from traditional methods of data collection to include young people in the decision making processes. The researcher worked alongside the pupils to develop the research methodology for the study. Although the study began with well-meaning

intentions on the part of the researcher it is questionable whether the study achieved this level of participation due to the location of the study.

All of the data collection took place in educational environments. Clearly this will have had an impact on the pupils and their willingness to share their experiences. The young people may have felt obliged to respond in a way that they believe reflected the adult's perceived position (Christensen and James, 2000). Wise (1998) suggests that researchers need to carefully consider the location for interviewing. Here the researcher was at the mercy of gatekeepers who would determine where the research was to take place. Interestingly the freedom afforded to the study appeared to be determined by the type of provision and ethos of those in charge. It became clear throughout the data collection stages that the head of the special school wished to remain in control. He insisted that the interviews with the young people took place in the room next door to his office and the door remained open at all times. Obviously this was going to have an impact on the responses provided by the pupils. Of further interest is the fact that this was the only provision to have a school council. This is clearly telling of how pupil voice has been interpreted as mere "surface compliance" (Taylor & Robinson, 2009) rather than truly embracing the notion of pupil participation. The adults continue to decide how voices are to be heard.

Due to ethical considerations, unfortunately the study was constrained by the location. The research had to take place within the young person's educational provision. It is important to note that it was the Head teacher or Manager who selected participants thus the young people may have felt they had no option but to participate in the study (Denscombe & Aubrook, 1992). Here ensuring young people were aware of their right to withdraw was essential. Groundwater-Smith (2007) advocates young people being aware of their "right to say no". Whilst conducting the activity sessions with young people, one young person decided they would no longer like to participate in the study. This was clearly significant as it meant other young people were conscious that they could drop out of the study at any time.

Pupils clearly have a desire to be heard yet they remain constrained by overriding adult concerns. It would seem that in many respects the researcher was rather naïve in terms of what could be achieved within a study of this nature. When setting off on this journey into the realm of pupil voice the researcher held rather "cosy" (Roche, 1999) notions of this term. Once immersed in this field it became clear that society continues to view young people as incapable of making decisions regarding their education. The study however clearly demonstrates that if you want to uncover the antecedents of BESD you have to talk to young people themselves. These pupils were able to provide thoughtful and intelligent responses

as to why they displayed "challenging" behaviour in the classroom. They would often be acting out of frustration at the adults surrounding them who would simply dismiss their voices.

The chapter will move to critically reflect on the recommendations of the study. First and foremost a consistent theme developed throughout the study has been the need for teacher training. Teachers discussed the challenges they encounter operationalising the BESD label. It became apparent that they did not have a shared understanding of BESD. The study illustrates the importance of early intervention and pupils being placed in the "right" educational environment. However the study has also demonstrated the ethical dilemmas encountered by teachers. There are numerous external pressures, such as the target-setting agenda, which have worked to inhibit their ability to support "challenging" young people.

In addition, schools have also been encouraged to remove "unwanted" pupils by adopting a utilitarian approach to education. It is clear the ideal of "one size fits all" is simply unworkable. The findings however indicated that special schools are able to meet the needs of this group of pupils. Those working in this form of provision felt their practice had benefited from the additional training they had received. This was also reflected by the pupils attending this type of provision and their parents who acknowledged the additional support which was made available to them. Worryingly within the documentation being produced by the current Government rather than focussing on training teachers, emphasis is instead placed on empowering these professionals. The study believes this will lead to more pupils simply being removed and not having their educational needs met. Although this group of pupils are likely to experience a wide range of provisions "all" will start their journey in mainstream. This signifies the importance placed on those working within these settings to ensure that they have the ability to accurately define BESD.

It is also considered important to reflect on the position of the parent within the confines of their child's educational journey. For over four decades the Government have emphasised the importance of developing partnerships between the school and the home (Beveridge, 2005). The current Coalition Government appear to be continuing the trend of holding the parents responsible for the behaviour displayed by their child in the classroom. When you speak to parents however there is a feeling that they have reached the end of their tether as they believe they are doing all they can to support their child. In addition they described not feeling confident to navigate the complex systems surrounding their child's education. Worryingly both the parents and teachers who participated in the study reinforced the cycle of mutual blame (Miller, 1994) and there was clearly a breakdown in the relationship

between these two conflicting positions. The findings from the study also highlight the importance of establishing positive relationships and levels of communication between the home and the school. Encouragingly within the study there were positive examples of were schools felt they had established effective working relationships with their pupils' parents. The parents whose child was attending the special school, stated that they appreciated the feeling of being involved in their child's education and were able to keep the schools up to date with the pupil's home circumstances. This was also important for pupils who stressed the importance of teachers being aware of changes in their home environment which may potentially impact upon their behaviour. These findings reinforce the significance of the ethos of the school. The Government need to carefully consider the approach they take with parents. Instead of simply placing blame at the hands of the parents they need to develop mechanisms to empower parents to negotiate the complex systems that surround their child's education.

In many ways the young people who participated in the study showed more insight and understanding than the adults. The study highlights the importance of providing opportunities for young people to have their voice heard. The study also advocates the development of participatory methods. Adults are legally required to seek the perspectives of young people yet it is adults not pupils who will determine how these voices will be heard. Evidently this can work to manipulate or even silence the pupil voice. In addition, due to the position young people occupy within society as suggested by Frank (2011) it is unlikely full participation will ever be achieved. The chapter has reflected on the constraints that continue to be placed on researchers working in this field. It is clear that in order for true participation to be achieved there is a need to reconsider how we view young people.

The current study has provided a snapshot into the educational journeys experienced by young people who have received the BESD label. From the data gathered for the purposes of the study it is clear that these young people have a lot to offer. The study advocates any discussions surrounding the pupil's education should include their voices. Previously these young voices have been dismissed by researchers and educators due to the behaviours they display, and seemingly they have been considered unworthy of a voice. Clearly the time has come for a change. It is considered essential that notions of pupil participation and voice are not confined to mere rhetoric. It would seem that adults remain cautious and wary of such concepts to the extent that they are concerned young people now have too much say in what happens to them. Yet when you talk to young people this sentiment does not reflect their lived experiences.

The study aimed to critically examine the educational journeys experienced by pupils who have received the BESD label. This was to be achieved by hearing the perspective of the pupil. Despite the dilemmas encountered throughout the study it is evident that young people do have important messages to share. Worryingly the future for pupil voice is unclear. The study advocates hearing the pupil's perspective. If we as adults continue to ignore their voices we will simply condemn them to an education system that is failing to meet their needs.

When I got excluded I felt left out like they haven't really helped me, they have just given up on me (Tyrese)

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Appendix 10.2 Ethical Approval: Letters to Schools and Parents, Consent forms: and Participant Information Sheets

The following documents were employed to ensure the research followed educational research ethical guidelines (e.g. British Sociological Association (BSA), 2002), and the Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) Research Committee Ethical Guidelines (LJMU, 2009)

10.2.1 University Ethical Approval Certificate

Ethical Approval

Ref: 09/ECL/009

Pupil voice - educational experiences of young people with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD)

Liverpool John Moores University Research Ethics Committee (REC) reviewed the above application and following the satisfaction of provisos, I am happy to inform you the Committee are content to give a favourable ethical opinion and recruitment to the study can now commence.

Approval is given on the understanding that:

☐ any adverse reactions/events which take place during the course of the project will be reported to the Committee immediately;

☐ any unforeseen ethical issues arising during the course of the project will be reported to the Committee immediately;

☐ any substantive amendments to the protocol will be reported to the Committee immediately.

☐ the LJMU logo is used for all documentation relating to participant recruitment and participation eg poster, information sheets, consent forms, questionnaires. The JMU logo can be accessed at www.ljmu.ac.uk/images/jmulogo

For details on how to report adverse events or amendments please refer to the information provided at http://www.ljmu.ac.uk/RGSO/RGSO_Docs/EC8Adverse.pdf

Please note that ethical approval is given for a period of five years from the date granted and therefore the expiry date for this project will be September 2014. An application for extension of approval must be submitted if the project continues after this date.

Yours sincerely
PP:

Brian Kerrigan
Chair of the LJMU REC
Tel: 0151 231 3110
E-mail:a.f.williams@ljmu.ac.uk
CC: Supervisor

LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY

Letter to potential gatekeepers requesting
assistance with recruitment of participants

JMU

Dear X,

My name is Marie O'Connor and I am a full-time PhD student based in the Faculty of Education, Community and Leisure. I am part of a research group led by LJMU Professor, Diana Burton, which is conducting a number of studies into aspects of Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) provision. Following an initial project into the policy contradictions that beset BESD, this study now seeks to explore the educational experiences of young people who have been designated as having BESD. As part of the study I intend to carry out semi-structured interviews with parents and teachers of young people with BESD. The main focus of the research however will be on pupil voice and as part of this I would like to gain the perspectives of young people with BESD. This will be achieved via interviews and a research activity afternoon. The study fully complies with the ethical procedures laid down by the Research Ethics Committee at Liverpool John Moores University.

I am writing to you to ask if you could assist me by identifying suitable participants for this study; I am seeking to talk to young people aged between 14 and 16 who have been excluded from school and have been identified as having BESD. I wondered if it would be possible for us to arrange a meeting to discuss the possibility of you becoming involved in this study. I have attached a Participant Information Sheet which gives the background and aim of the study and details what their participation would entail.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely,

Marie O'Connor

Room H203, Faculty of Education Community and Leisure,
Liverpool John Moores University,
Holmefield Hse, I.M. Marsh campus
Barkhill Road
L17 6BD
Email: M.L.O'Connor@2009.ljmu.ac.uk

LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY

Letter to potential schools

JMU

Dear X,

My name is Marie O'Connor and I am a full-time PhD student based in the Faculty of Education, Community and Leisure. I am part of a research group led by LJMU Professor, Diana Burton, which is conducting a number of studies into aspects of Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) provision. Following an initial project into the policy contradictions that beset BESD, this study now seeks to explore the educational experiences of young people who have been designated as having BESD. As part of the study I intend to carry out semi-structured interviews with parents and teachers of young people with BESD. The main focus of the research however will be on pupil voice and as part of this I would like to gain the perspectives of young people with BESD. This will be achieved via interviews and a research activity afternoon. The study fully complies with the ethical procedures laid down by the Research Ethics Committee at Liverpool John Moores University.

The 'Fair Access Panel' has been asked to identify young people who have been excluded from school for their behaviour. I wondered if it would be possible for us to arrange a meeting to discuss the possibility of your school becoming involved in this study. The study aims to explore the experiences of young people, their parents and teachers. For the purposes of the study young people who have identified as having mental health issues will not be asked to be part of the study.

I have attached a Participant Information Sheet which gives the background and aim of the study and details what their participation would entail. It is anticipated that the data collection will take place during October and November 2009 and will be held in the school.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely,

Marie O'Connor

Room H203, Faculty of Education Community and Leisure,
Liverpool John Moores University,
Holmefield Hse, I.M. Marsh campus
Barkhill Road
L17 6BD
Email: M.L.O'Connor@2009.ljmu.ac.uk

LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY

Letter to potential parents inviting them to take part in the study
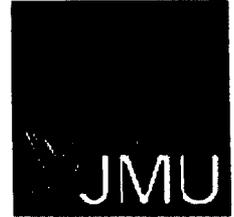
JMU

Dear X,

My name is Marie O'Connor and I am a full-time PhD student based in the Faculty of Education, Community and Leisure. I am part of a research group led by LJMU Professor, Diana Burton, which is conducting a number of studies into aspects of Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) provision. Following an initial project into the policy contradictions that beset BESD, this study now seeks to explore the educational experiences of young people who have been designated as having BESD. As part of the study I intend to carry out semi-structured interviews with parents and teachers of young people with BESD. The study fully complies with the ethical procedures laid down by the Research Ethics Committee at Liverpool John Moore University.

I am writing to you to ask if you would consider taking part in this study. You have been identified by the 'Fair Access Panel' as having a child who has been excluded from school for their behaviour. The study aims to explore the experiences of young people, their parents and teachers. For the purposes of the study young people who have identified as having mental health issues will not be asked to be part of the study.

I have attached a Participant Information Sheet which gives the background and aim of the study and details what their participation would entail. It is anticipated that the interviews will take place during October and November 2009 and will be held in your child's school. If you agree to take part in an interview you will be contacted by the researcher to arrange a convenient time and date.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely,

Marie O'Connor

Room H203, Faculty of Education Community and Leisure,
Liverpool John Moores University,
Holmefield Hse, I.M. Marsh campus
Barkhill Road
L17 6BD
Email: M.L.O'Connor@2009.ljmu.ac.uk

10.2.4 Consent forms

LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY

ASSENT FORM FOR CHILDREN / OTHER DEPENDENTS
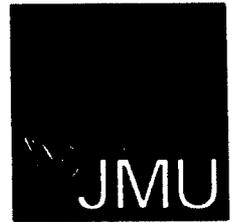
(to be completed by the child and their parent/guardian)

Pupil voice – educational experiences of young people with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD)

Marie O'Connor

Faculty of Education, Community and Leisure

Child (or if unable, parent/guardian on their behalf) / young person to circle all they agree with

Have you read (or had read to you) information about this project?	Yes/No
Has somebody else explained this project to you?	Yes/No
Do you understand what this project is about?	Yes/No
Have you asked all the questions you want?	Yes/No
Have you had your questions answered in a way you understand?	Yes/No
Do you understand it's OK to stop taking part at any time?	Yes/No
Do you understand that the things you say will be recorded and typed up?	Yes/No
Are you happy to take part?	Yes/No

If any answers are 'no' or you **don't** want to take part, don't sign your name!

If you **do** want to take part, you can write your name below

Your name _____

Date _____

The researcher who explained this project to you needs to sign too.

Print Name _____

Sign _____

Date _____

LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY

CONSENT FORM

(Teachers and Parents)

JMU

Pupil voice – educational experiences of young people with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD)

Marie O'Connor
Faculty of Education, Community and Leisure

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information provided for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and that this will not affect my legal rights.

3. I understand that any personal information collected during the study will be anonymised and remain confidential.

4. I consent to interviews with me being <u>audio</u> recorded and transcribed.

5. I consent to the use of verbatim anonymised interview quotes.

6. I agree to take part in the above study.

_____   _____   _____
Name of participant   Date   Signature

_____   _____   _____
Name of researcher   Date   Signature

LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY

CONSENT FORM GATEKEEPERS
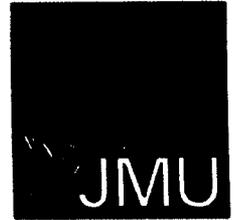
Pupil voice – educational experiences of young people with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD)

Marie O'Connor
Faculty of Education, Community and Leisure

7. I confirm that I have read and understand the information provided for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

8. I confirm that I am willing to refer to suitable participants to take part in this study.

Name of gatekeeper   Date   Signature

---

of researcher   Date   Signature   Name

LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Young people

Marie O'Connor
Faculty of Education, Community and Leisure

1. Title of project
Pupil voice – educational experiences of young people with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD)

2. Invitation

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is taking place and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully and discuss it with your parents and others if you wish. Do ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Please take your time to decide whether or not you wish to take part in this study.

3. The purpose of the study
This study seeks to explore the educational journeys of young people who have been told they have Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD). The study will look at your experiences of being told you have BESD and what happened in school during this time.

4. Why have I been chosen?
I am inviting young people who have been told they have BESD and have been excluded from school. The intention is to produce 10 case studies which will explore the educational journeys of young people with BESD. The study aims to explore the experiences of young people, their parents and teachers. For the purposes of the study young people who have identified as having mental health issues will not be asked to be part of the study.

5. What will happen to me if I take part?
You will be asked to take part in a series of activity sessions with other young people who have told they have BESD. The sessions will last approximately 30 minutes and will take place in your school. During the session I will ask you to take part in activities which will look at your experiences of being told you have BESD. After the activity sessions you will be contacted again and asked to take part in an interview. The interview will last approximately 45 minutes and I will ask you questions about your experiences of school. With your permission, the activity and interview would be tape recorded and the answers you give will be typed up on computer.

6. Do I have to take part?
It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part in this study. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part, you are still free to stop taking part at any time (that is before, during or

after the interview) and without giving a reason. If you withdraw during or after the interview, any data collected on you will be destroyed at your request.

7. Are there any risks involved in taking part in the study?
I hope that both the activity afternoon and interviews will be an interesting experience for you, however, if you do experience any difficulties during the day you will be free to leave at any time.

8. Will there be any benefits to taking part in the study?
Although there will be no direct benefits for you in taking part in this study it is hoped that the findings will help us to understand the experiences of young people who have been told they have BESD. You may also enjoy the opportunity to discuss your experiences of school and have your voice heard.

9. Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?
All the information collected about you during the interview will remain completely confidential, and will not be discussed with anyone else. The only people who will have access to information about you will be you and I. The tape of your interview will be typed up within one month of being made, and then deleted.

10. What will happen to the results of the research study?
We aim to tell people about our findings through written reports. Your name will not be used in any publications or any other information about the study.

11. Contact for further information
If you need more information before you decide whether to take part, or if you have any questions which you want to ask, you can contact me by post, telephone, or email using the contact details given below:

Marie O'Connor (Researcher): Faculty of Education, Community and Leisure, Liverpool John Moores University, H203 Holmefield House, I.M. Marsh Campus, Barkhill Road, L17 6BD. Email: M.L.O'Connor@2009.ljmu.ac.uk

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

(Teachers)

JMU

Marie O'Connor
Faculty of Education, Community and Leisure

1. Title of project
Pupil voice – educational experiences of young people with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD)

2. Invitation
You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being carried out and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Do ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Please take your time to decide whether or not you wish to take part in this study.

3. The purpose of the study
This study seeks to explore the educational journeys of young people with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD). The aim of this investigation is to (a) critically examine how BESD are defined, identified and operationalised for young people within the English education system (b) explore the perceptions of young people who have been identified as having BESD (c) produce peer generated research with a group of young people who have been identified as having BESD (d) identify models of good practice and effective provision for young people with BESD by seeking the perspectives of teachers, parents and pupils; and (e) explore and map the antecedents of 'poor' behaviour.

4. Why have I been chosen?
I am inviting teachers who are working with young people who present with BESD. The 'Fair Access Panel' has identified one of your students as being excluded from school as a result of their behaviour. The intention is to produce 10 case studies which will explore the educational journeys of young people with BESD. The study aims to explore the experiences of young people, their parents and teachers. For the purposes of the study young people who have identified as having mental health issues will not be asked to be part of the study.

5. What will happen to me if I take part?
You will be interviewed on one occasion by a researcher. The interview will take place in school and will last about 45 minutes. You will be asked about your experiences of working with young people who have been designated as having BESD. With your permission, I will audiotape the interview, and then transcribe it later for analysis.

6. Do I have to take part?
It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part in this interview study. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time (that is before, during or after the interview) and without giving a reason. If you withdraw during or after the interview, any data collected on you will be destroyed at your request.

7. Are there any risks involved in taking part in the study?
There are no anticipated risks involved in taking part in this study.

8. Will there be any benefits to taking part in the study?
There will be no direct benefits to you from taking part in this study, but the information obtained will develop our understanding of the educational experiences of young people with BESD, their teachers and parents. The research will highlight how the young people have got to where they are today. It is anticipated that models of good practice and effective provision for young people with BESD will be identified.

9. Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?
All the information collected about you during the interview will remain completely confidential, and will not be discussed with anyone else. The only people who will have access to information about you will be the researchers involved with the study and you. The tape of your interview will be transcribed within one month of being made, and then deleted. The transcript will be marked with a code number, not your name. Recordings and transcripts will be stored securely in locked filing cabinets and destroyed after the study has been completed and written up. You will not be identifiable in any reports of the study. Data collected on you will be stored, handled and destroyed in accordance with the Data Protection Act of 1998.

10. What will happen to the results of the research study?
We aim to tell people about our findings through academic channels, such as conferences, publications, and workshops. Your name will not be used in any publications or any other information about the study. If necessary, details will be changed to preserve your anonymity.

11. Contact for further information
If you need more information before you decide whether to take part, or if you have any questions which you want to ask, you can contact the researcher by post, telephone, or email using the contact details given below:

Marie O'Connor (Researcher): Faculty of Education, Community and Leisure, Liverpool John Moores University, H203 Holmefield House, I.M. Marsh Campus, Barkhill Road, L17 6BD. Tel: 07896193810, Email: <u>M.L.O'Connor@2009.ljmu.ac.uk</u>

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

(Parents)

JMU

Marie O'Connor

Faculty of Education, Community and Leisure

1. Title of project

Pupil voice – educational experiences of young people with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD)

2. Invitation

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being carried out and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Do ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Please take your time to decide whether or not you wish to take part in this study.

3. The purpose of the study

This study seeks to explore the educational journeys of young people with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD). The aim of this investigation is to (a) critically examine how young people with BESD are defined and identified within the English education system (b) explore the perceptions of young people who have been identified as having BESD (c) produce peer generated research with a group of young people who have been identified as having BESD (d) identify models of good practice and effective provision for young people with BESD by seeking the perspectives of teachers, parents and pupils; and (e) explore and map the causes of 'poor' behaviour.

4. Why have I been chosen?

You have been identified by your child's school. The intention is to produce 10 case studies which will explore the educational journeys of young people who have been told they have BESD. The study aims to explore the experiences of young people, their parents and teachers. For the purposes of the study young people who have identified as having mental health issues will not be asked to be part of the study.

5. What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be interviewed on one occasion by me. The interview will take place in school and will last about 45 minutes. It is anticipated that the interviews will take place during October and November 2010, you will be contacted to arrange a time and date that is convenient for you. You will be asked about your experiences of having a child who has been told they

have BESD. With your permission, I will audiotape the interview, and then transcribe it later for analysis.

6. Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part in this interview study. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time (that is before, during or after the interview) and without giving a reason. If you withdraw during or after the interview, any data collected on you will be destroyed at your request.

7. Are there any risks involved in taking part in the study?

There are no anticipated risks involved in taking part in this study.

8. Will there be any benefits to taking part in the study?

There will be no direct benefits to you from taking part in this study, but the information obtained will develop our understanding of the educational experiences of young people with BESD, their teachers and parents. The research will highlight how the young people have got to where they are today. It is anticipated that models of good practice and effective provision for young people with BESD will be identified.

9. Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

All the information collected about you during the interview will remain completely confidential, and will not be discussed with anyone else. The only people who will have access to information about you will be the researchers involved with the study and you. The tape of your interview will be transcribed within one month of being made, and then deleted. The transcript will be marked with a code number, not your name. Recordings and transcripts will be stored securely in locked filing cabinets and destroyed after the study has been completed and written up. You will not be identifiable in any reports of the study. Data collected on you will be stored, handled and destroyed in accordance with the Data Protection Act of 1998.

10. What will happen to the results of the research study?

We aim to tell people about our findings through academic channels, such as conferences, publications, and workshops. Your name will not be used in any publications or any other information about the study. If necessary, details will be changed to preserve your anonymity.

11. Contact for further information

If you need more information before you decide whether to take part, or if you have any questions which you want to ask, you can contact me by post, telephone, or email using the contact details given below:

Marie O'Connor (Researcher): Faculty of Education, Community and Leisure, Liverpool John Moores University, H203 Holmefield House, I.M. Marsh Campus, Barkhill Road, L17 6BD. Email: M.L.O'Connor@2009.ljmu.ac.uk

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Appendix 10.3 Pilot Study Activity Schedule and Interview Schedules

10.3.1 Activity Schedule

Activity afternoon schedule (Young people)

Pupil voice – educational experiences of young people with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD)

12 – 12:15pm Ice breaker (game), explanations about the afternoon and positive ground rules

12:15pm – 12:45pm Activity one

12:45pm – 1:15pm Activity two

1:15pm – 1:30pm Break with refreshments

1:30pm – 2pm Activity three

- For each of the three activities the young people will be split into two groups of five.
- During the afternoon there will be a graffiti poster placed on the wall for the young people to add to throughout the session.

Activity one

The young people will be provided with a picture of a student who has been told they have a behavioural problem. In their groups they will be asked to describe how this feels and what it means to them. They will be asked why they feel students would behave badly.

Activity two

The young people will be provided with paper to draw on and asked to draw two hands. On one of the hands they will be asked to agree on five things that make a good teacher. On the second hand the young people will be asked to agree on five things that make a bad teacher.

Activity three

During the final activity the young people will be asked to pretend they are members of the Government and they have to come up with strategies of encouraging young people who are excluded from school to re-engage with education. This activity will focus on the needs of young people and what they would like to see happen in terms of educational provision.

10.3.2 Interview Schedules

Qualitative interview schedule (Young people)

Pupil voice – educational experiences of young people with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD)

- During the interview the young people will be asked to draw a timeline which will detail their journeys through education and how they got to where they are today.
- If the young person does not feel comfortable writing on the picture the researcher will write down what they say on their behalf.
- The timeline will take into account each year of their education so far and the young people will be asked to try and remember what they would consider to be critical moments with regard to having BESD

Whilst going back through their time in education the researcher will ask questions to prompt the young people

- Can you tell me about one of your best experiences in school?
- Can you tell me about one of your worst experiences in school?
- Can you remember when you were first told you had a problem with your behaviour? How old were you? etc.
- Can you describe how you felt?
- Why do you feel you were told you had a problem with your behaviour?
- Can you tell me as much as you can about your time in school?
- Could you describe your relationships with teachers in your school?
- Do you remember when you were excluded from school?
- Can you tell me about some of the places you have been?
- If you could decide what happened to you with regard to your education what would you want?
- What do you hope to be doing in the future?

Qualitative interview schedule (Parents)

Pupil voice – educational experiences of young people with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD)

Introduction

- Can you tell me about your time in education?

BESD definitions

- Can you describe your understanding of the term Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD)?
- Could you define what your understanding is of poor behaviour with regard to education? (Maybe ask them to provide an example)
- Could you describe what you consider to be the difference between a pupil having a diagnosis of BESD and someone who is 'naughty'?

BESD diagnosis and identification

- Do you remember when your child was given a diagnosis of BESD?
- How did you feel?
- Could you describe what happened?
- Why do you feel your child was given a diagnosis of BESD?

Perceptions of young people with BESD

- What do you consider to be the main causes of BESD in young people?

Engagement with school

- Could you describe your relationship with your child's school?
- Do you remember when your child became excluded from school? Could you describe what happened?
- Could you describe your relationships with the teachers in your child's school?
- Can you tell me about some of the support you have received from the school, if any?
- Can you think of any examples of what you would consider to be effective practice?
- What do you think would work well with your child?

BESD provision

- Are you aware of the different types of provision available for young people with BESD?
- Where do you think young people with BESD should be placed?
- Government initiatives pushing for inclusive education – what is your view on this?
- Could you tell me about the different types of provision that have been provided for your child?
- In your opinion which of these would you consider the most effective and why?
- Have you had any contact with multi-agencies such as social workers?

Qualitative interview schedule (Teachers)

Pupil voice – educational experiences of young people with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD)

Introduction

- How long have you been based at this school?
- Could you please describe your role within the school?

BESD definitions

- Can you describe your understanding of the term Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD)?
- Could you define what your understanding is of poor behaviour with regard to education? (Maybe ask them to provide an example)
- Could you describe what you consider to be the difference between a pupil having a diagnosis of BESD and someone who is 'naughty'?

BESD diagnosis and identification

- Do you know how young people with BESD are identified?
- Could you tell me about the process of how young people come to you? Are they referred? Do you get a say in who comes here?
- Do any of the young people that come here have SEN statements?
- How long will there still here?
- What happens when they leave?

Perceptions of young people with BESD

- What do you consider to be the main drivers for BESD?
- Could you provide a specific example of when you have worked with a young person with BESD?
- Can you tell me a little bit about the young people I have been working with
- Process of exclusion

Parents of young people with BESD

- Could you describe your relationship with the parents of young people with BESD?
- Will the parent engage with the school? How would you describe this engagement?

BESD provision

- Are you aware of the different types of provision available for young people with BESD?
- Could you describe provision that is provided in your school?
- Is this centre similar to a PRU?
- Where do you think young people with BESD should be placed?

- Previous Government initiatives pushing for inclusive education – what is your view on this?
- Will you come into contact with multi-agencies, such as social workers?

Training opportunities

- Can you tell me about some of the training you have undertaken with regard to BESD?
- Do you feel the training you have received so far has been adequate?
- Do you feel you have any specific training needs with regard to young people with BESD?

BESD and effective practice

- Can you think of any examples of what you would consider to be effective practice when working with young people with BESD?
- What do you consider to be the main needs that require addressing for young people with BESD?

10.3.3 Amendments to data collection following pilot study

Difficulties encountered	Description	Strategies developed
Difficulties gaining consent from parents	As noted earlier in this chapter (see page) the researcher encountered difficulties in obtaining consent from the parents/carers of the young people taking part in the study. During the pilot study the young people were willing and eager to participate unfortunately due to difficulties obtaining consent the research processes were held up.	Although throughout the main study attempts will be made to obtain written consent from parents/carers. Where this is not possible the researcher will obtain verbal consent from parents/carers via telephone
Selection of participants	Throughout the pilot study the Managers of the provisions were solely responsible for selecting participants to take part in the study. This clearly leads to questions in terms of whose voice are we listening to and does this work to silence the voices of young people with BESD who are seen as the most challenging	The researcher will work collaboratively with the gatekeepers to select participants and negotiate access.
Ensuring methods of data collection are engaging	Although researchers may consider that they have developed engaging research methods young people themselves may disagree. It became apparent during some of the activity sessions that the young people were becoming bored as they had completed the task faster than expected.	With this in mind the methods of data collection were reviewed and amended to be more interactive and engaging.
Impact of the researcher	It became clear during the pilot study that the presence of a researcher and their role will have an impact on the participants.	As demonstrated throughout the chapter the researcher will need to develop interviewing skills and spend time establishing rapport with the participants. During the main study the researcher will meet with the participants on a number of occasions prior to any data collection taking place.
Follow-up interviews	The fact that it had taken so long to obtain parental consent meant that it was only possible to conduct one interview and complete the life grid. It was felt that there would be clear benefits in conducting follow-up interviews to ensure the data collected is accurate and to track the educational journeys of young people	From the outset of the main study the researcher will develop a timetable for data collection and make clear to all provisions how long the data collection process will take. Developing effective working relationships and establishing trust will also assist in gaining future access to participants if and when required.
Location of interviews	The individual interviews took place in an open room with people constantly running in and out this is likely to have a significant impact on the research as the young person will become distracted. Although all of the provisions have been welcoming and extremely helpful, issues were encountered regarding the location of the meetings with young people. This is an important aspect of the study as the researcher will need to balance the research process with child protection concerns.	During the main study the researcher will need to negotiate with the gatekeepers to ensure the young people are able to fully participate

Appendix 10.4 Main Study Data Collection

10.4.1 Details of provisions for main study

Provision A: Support Centre

> The Support Centre is situated in the grounds of a mainstream secondary school. The Centre is one of six Secondary Centres that provides city wide provision for Key Stage 3 pupils, both boys and girls, who are experiencing barriers to learning.
>
> Each pupil is interviewed prior to embarking on a six week behavioural modification cycle, where short term teaching and support programmes are tailored to the needs of the individual. We provide a caring and supportive environment where all our pupils are offered emotional and learning support. We provide the opportunity to work away from the pressures of mainstream classrooms, providing support for all ability ranges.
>
> Whilst in the Centre, we will
> - Set individual targets for improved learning, behaviour and social needs
> - Address anger management, social skills or offer individual counselling
> - Target raising literacy and numeracy skills
> - Aim to build self esteem and self confidence
> - Provide the opportunity for all pupils to define their own learning and behavioural targets.
>
> Specialist cycles are also offered throughout the year focussing on particular areas of need. These include Literacy and Numeracy Booster Cycles, Attendance, Self Esteem and SEN. The last Cycle of the academic year focuses on the Primary to Secondary School Transition, where we work with Year 6 pupils displaying behavioural issues as well as those deemed as being particularly vulnerable.
>
> We maintain close links with the pupils' host schools during each Cycle, and discuss progress via weekly visits from Learning Mentors, Heads of Year and Support Staff. This enables us to set individual targets for each pupil for their reintegration back into their schools. This takes place during the last week of their placement, with Centre staff visiting the pupils in their schools to monitor progress and any problems that may be taking place. On completion of the Cycle, a Celebration is held on the last day of the Cycle where parents/Guardians, teachers, Learning Mentors etc are invited into the Centre to view the pupils work and to offer praise and encouragement regarding their return to school. This provides the ideal situation for the pupil, parent/guardian, school or Centre staff to raise issues and any worries that they may have prior to this full time return. We strive for a successful return to school for all attending pupils.
>
> We have now begun to work closely with pupils who have been or who are permanently excluded from mainstream schools. These pupils attend the Centre full time and are assessed and monitored until they show that they are ready and prepared to return to mainstream school. We then set up an interview with the Social Inclusion Operations Team and the pupil/parents, where we discuss which school the pupil would like to return to. An application is then made to the Fair Access Panel, who nominate a school and the pupil will have a pre-admission meeting where a support package will be put in place prior to their start.

Provision B: Female alternative provision

Provision B is a programme designed to meet the needs of female pupils exhibiting emotional and/or behavioural difficulties who are excluded or in danger of exclusion. The aims of the programme are to:

- develop good relationships
- develop social and emotional and self knowledge
- develop listening and communication skills
- develop concerns for others
- develop confidence and enable participation
- explore and find ways of resolving conflict

Provision B provides pupils with individual educational packages. These packages are drawn up by a multi-professional team and tailored to meet the specific needs of the individual girl and reflect the nature of the pupils' problems for example those girls whose problems stem from emotional difficulties will have packages heavily weighted in therapeutic work whilst those with overriding behavioural problems will have packages weighted in behaviour management strategies.

Provision B is a city wide service and referrals are made by schools to the Provider Panel. Referrals are taken primarily from key stage three and key stage four, however, it is possible for key stage two pupils to be referred prior to year six.

The programme is delivered in a variety of ways and will be specific to the needs of each child. However, as an example a key stage three pupil could attend mainstream part time with peer support.

Provision C: Specialist BESD school

Provision C is a day and residential school for students aged 13 – 16 years. There are currently 48 pupils registered at the school, all boys. It caters for students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. More than 20% experience additional barriers to learning such as autistic spectrum conditions and all have a statement of special educational needs. Currently, seven students are accommodated in the boarding facility for either four or two nights each week during term time.

Provision C provides extended services that include parental support and family learning, targeted mental health support (TaMHS), a homework club and some extended day activities operated through the boarding facility. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is in line with the national average. Eleven students are looked after by the local authority and the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is much higher than the national average. Provision C has maintained Healthy Schools Status since 2007.

Overall effectivess: how good is the school 2 (good)

10.4.2 Main study activity schedule and interview schedule (pupils)

PhD Data Collection – Information for provisions

- In total will need to identify between 3 and 4 students to take part in the study.
- The students should be aged between 13 and 15 and will have been excluded from school for their behaviour.
- For the purposes of the study young people who experience co morbidity in relation to mental health will not be asked to be part of the study.

The students who have been identified to take part in the study will be asked to take part in a series of activity sessions followed by individual interviews.

Activity sessions

If possible I would like this part of the research to take place between now and the summer holidays.

	Description	Time needed
1.Introduction	During the first session I will introduce myself and the research project. I will provide the identified students with information about the study and what will be asked of them if they choose to take part. Hopefully we will have permission from parents at this stage and will just need to get consent from the students.	30 minutes
2. Ice breaker games	This session will involve the young people taking part in a series of games. The aim of this session will be to establish trust between the young people and the researcher and to provide them with the opportunity to feel comfortable working as a group. The ground rules for the activity sessions will also be established during this session.	30 minutes
3. Activity one What makes a good/bad teacher?	The purpose of this activity is to identify the qualities which were deemed important for young people. This will provide the researcher with the opportunity to examine their relationships and experiences of "good" and "bad" teachers. The young people will be given two pieces of card which they will label good and bad. The participants will then be provided with images and words which they will place on the card.	30 minutes
4. Activity two Learner vignettes	The young people were provided with examples of pupil behaviour. The vignettes were employed to facilitate a discussion of how teachers respond to challenging behaviour and what may cause a pupil to act inappropriately.	30 minutes
5. Activity three Pupil voice	This activity intended to explore their experiences of pupil voice within their educational setting. The participants were provided with a series of themes concerning school matters and asked to rate how much of a say they had and examine whether they felt they were important areas for young people's voices to be heard.	30 minutes
6. Feedback	During the final session I will present the findings of the activity sessions to the young people to ensure I have captured their perspectives accurately.	30 minutes

Individual interviews

Following on from the activity sessions the young people will be asked to take part in a series of one to one interviews. During the interviews the young people will be asked to fill in a grid which will track their journeys through education and how they got to where they are today (see page 290). This aspect of the study will also explore future aspirations of the young people. It is anticipated that I will need to meet with each student on to 2 to 3 occasions. Each interview session will last between 30 and 45 minutes.

In addition to capturing the perspectives of the young people themselves I would also like to conduct interviews with members of staff and the parents of the young people who have been identified to take part in the study.

PRIMARY SCHOOL

	NURSERY	RECEPTION	YEAR ONE	YEAR TWO	YEAR THREE	YEAR FOUR	YEAR FIVE	YEAR SIX
OUTSIDE								
TEACHER								
SCHOOL								

FUTURE

	16 – 21	21+
HOME		
EDUCATION/ EMPLOYMENT		
OTHER		

SECONDARY SCHOOL

	YEAR SEVEN	YEAR EIGHT	YEAR NINE	YEAR TEN	YEAR ELEVEN
OUTSIDE					
TEACHER					
SCHOOL					

16.4.3 main study interview schedule (teachers and students)

Qualitative interview schedule (Student)

Point scale – educational experience (1 to 5) where 5 is very good, 4 is quite good, 3 is ok, 2 is not so good and 1 is not good... this will be used to help structure the interview and inform discussion.

- Can you tell me how your further education is going?

(in other)

- Can you describe what you would like to do when you leave secondary school? (Education/ Employment/ Other)
- Where do you believe you will be living when you leave secondary school? (Home)
- Can you describe what you imagine to be the difference between a good and a bad outcome...

SCHOOL transition and identification

- Do you remember what your first day at secondary school was like? How did you feel?
- How did you feel when you first came to the secondary school?

Experiences of young adults with skills.

- What do you consider to be your strengths within school? How do you get on (now) with school?

- Could you describe your experiences with teachers/staff during your time at secondary school? How did you feel at the time and how do you feel now?
- Could you describe your experience with your peers during your time at secondary school? How did you feel at the time and how do you feel now?
- Is there anything that stands out to you during your time at secondary school that you would like to talk about?

- Can you describe the difference between a good and a bad day at school?
- Where do you like to spend time in school? Describe why...
- Is there anything that you do not like about being at school? Describe why...

10.4.3 Main study interview schedule (teachers and parents)

Qualitative interview schedule (Parents)

Pupil voice – educational experiences of young people with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD)

Introduction

- Can you tell me about your time in education?

BESD definitions

- Can you describe your understanding of the term Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD)?
- Could you define what your understanding is of poor behaviour with regard to education? (Maybe ask them to provide an example)
- Could you describe what you consider to be the difference between a pupil having a diagnosis of BESD and someone who is 'naughty'?

BESD diagnosis and identification

- Do you remember when your child was given a diagnosis of BESD?
- How did you feel?
- Could you describe what happened?
- Why do you feel your child was given a diagnosis of BESD?

Perceptions of young people with BESD

- What do you consider to be the main causes of BESD in young people?

Engagement with school

- Could you describe your relationship with your child's school?
- Do you remember when your child became excluded from school? Could you describe what happened?
- Could you describe your relationships with the teachers in your child's school?
- Can you tell me about some of the support you have received from the school, if any?
- Can you think of any examples of what you would consider to be effective practice?
- What do you think would work well with your child?

BESD provision

- Are you aware of the different types of provision available for young people with BESD?
- Where do you think young people with BESD should be placed?
- Government initiatives pushing for inclusive education – what is your view on this?
- Could you tell me about the different types of provision that have been provided for your child?
- In your opinion which of these would you consider the most effective and why?
- Have you had any contact with multi-agencies such as social workers?

Qualitative interview schedule (Teachers)

Pupil voice – educational experiences of young people with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD)

Introduction

- How long have you been based at this school?
- Could you please describe your role within the school?

BESD definitions

- Can you describe your understanding of the term Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD)?
- Could you define what your understanding is of poor behaviour with regard to education? (Maybe ask them to provide an example)
- Could you describe what you consider to be the difference between a pupil having a diagnosis of BESD and someone who is 'naughty'?

BESD diagnosis and identification

- Do you know how young people with BESD are identified?
- Could you tell me about the process of how young people come to you? Are they referred? Do you get a say in who comes here?
- Do any of the young people that come here have SEN statements?
- How long will there still here?
- What happens when they leave?

Perceptions of young people with BESD

- What do you consider to be the main drivers for BESD?
- Could you provide a specific example of when you have worked with a young person with BESD?
- Can you tell me a little bit about the young people I have been working with
- Process of exclusion

Parents of young people with BESD

- Could you describe your relationship with the parents of young people with BESD?
- Will the parent engage with the school? How would you describe this engagement?

BESD provision

- Are you aware of the different types of provision available for young people with BESD?
- Could you describe provision that is provided in your school?
- Is this centre similar to a PRU?

- Where do you think young people with BESD should be placed?
- Previous Government initiatives pushing for inclusive education – what is your view on this?
- Will you come into contact with multi-agencies, such as social workers?

Training opportunities

- Can you tell me about some of the training you have undertaken with regard to BESD?
- Do you feel the training you have received so far has been adequate?
- Do you feel you have any specific training needs with regard to young people with BESD?

BESD and effective practice

- Can you think of any examples of what you would consider to be effective practice when working with young people with BESD?
- What do you consider to be the main needs that require addressing for young people with BESD?