

**Disciplinary Exclusion: The impact of  
intervention and influence of school ethos**

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## Abstract

The systematic review set out to explore factors across studies which aimed to reduce rates of disciplinary exclusion amongst ‘at risk’ pupils. 10 studies describing interventions applied across a range of settings were included after inclusion criteria had been applied. Methods of data collection included qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods and participants included pupils of primary and secondary school age. A range of factors (including involvement of parents and taking a holistic approach) were identified as influential in successfully reducing exclusion. Multi-agency working was the most frequently used strategy. The review indicated that interventions can successfully reduce exclusions of pupils already identified as ‘at risk’, however it also highlighted the important influence of the underlying school ethos, in how behaviour is understood and subsequently managed.

The systematic literature review indicated that most studies centred on secondary school aged pupils and schools across mixed socio-economic areas. Therefore the empirical research project focussed on the approaches and beliefs underpinning practices in excluding and non-excluding primary schools in areas of high social deprivation. It aimed to identify differences in beliefs and perceptions of practices in schools between excluding and non-excluding schools. Focus groups and interviews were conducted and thematic analysis identified differences between groups across 10 themes. Statements were used to create a questionnaire which was subsequently completed by 128 school staff across 16 schools. Analysis indicated significant differences in responses between groups on the themes of ‘responsibility’, ‘clarity’, ‘consistency’, ‘behaviour management’, ‘beliefs about inclusion’ and ‘beliefs about reducing exclusion’. These findings provide support for previous literature emphasising the importance of creating a positive, inclusive school ethos that fosters positive behaviour amongst pupils.

The bridging document outlines how the area of research was identified and provides further explanation of the philosophical assumptions underpinning the chosen methodology. Ethical considerations and the broader political context are also discussed.

# Dedication

To Richard, for the support and encouragement that has made this possible.

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# **1.0 A systematic review of interventions aiming to reduce disciplinary exclusions from school**

## **1.1 Abstract**

This systematic review explores interventions that have been implemented to reduce the use of disciplinary exclusion with ‘at risk’ pupils. 10 studies describing interventions applied across a range of settings were included after inclusion criteria had been applied. Methods of data collection included qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods and participants included pupils of primary and secondary school age. A range of factors were identified as influential in successfully reducing exclusion. Multi-agency working was the most frequently used strategy. The use of a holistic approach to address difficulties at a number of levels, and involvement of parents were also common features. The review indicated that interventions can successfully reduce exclusions of pupils already identified as ‘at risk’; however, it also highlighted the important influence of the underlying school ethos, in how behaviour is understood and subsequently managed. A number of studies acknowledged the need to influence the ideologies of staff in order to create a more inclusive environment.

## **1.2 Introduction**

### ***1.2.1 Defining exclusion***

‘Exclusion’ is a term that can be used in relation to children and young people who are not fully participating in school for a number of reasons (Lloyd, Stead and Kendrick, 2003). This could include difficulty accessing the curriculum or mainstream environment as a result of a special educational need (Booth, 1996), being part of a transient population (Billington & Pomerantz, 2004) or having limited knowledge of the spoken language (Miller, 2000).

Throughout this review, the term exclusion will refer to official exclusions made by schools for disciplinary purposes. In England, disciplinary exclusion is the process by which a pupil is formally removed from their registered school setting for a set number of days (fixed-term exclusion) or irrevocably (permanent exclusion). Whilst legislation and terms differ, removal of a child from the school premises is a common disciplinary practice in many countries.

### **1.2.2 Rates of exclusion**

Changes to legislation, educational policy and government have been cited as possible causes for the rise in exclusion rates in England and Wales throughout the 1990s (Parsons, 1999; Parsons & Castle, 1998). ‘Official’ exclusion statistics (DCSF, 2009) illustrated an increase in permanent exclusions between the academic years 1999/2000 and 2003/04. However, from 2004, rates of permanent exclusion steadily declined. Paradoxically, incidences of fixed-term exclusion increased between 2003/04 to 2006/07, indicating that these may have been increasingly used as an alternative to permanent exclusion. Statistics for 2007/08 indicate that the overall incidence of exclusion has begun to decline. Whilst on the surface it may appear that inclusion of challenging pupils may be improving, statistics also indicate that referrals to Pupil Referral Units and Special Schools have also increased (DfE, 2010), perhaps indicating that practices to retain pupils within a mainstream setting have not progressed.

In 2003, the ‘Every Child Matters’ green paper (DfES, 2003) promoted the need for an increase in early intervention and multiagency working. Government guidance on exclusion from school (DCSF, 2008) emphasised the need for early intervention, appropriate policies and positive methods of behaviour management. Despite this, high rates of exclusions continue (approximately 370,000 incidences of exclusions occurred in 2008/09, DfE, 2010). Moreover, these statistics do not account for unofficial exclusions, an issue that will be discussed further, later in this paper.

In addition to government policy, a number of educational factors have been identified as impacting on the rate of exclusion. Munn *et al.*, (2000) highlighted increased pressure on schools to raise standards and improve inclusion whilst Panayiotopoulos and Kerfoot (2007) suggested inadequate teacher training and stretched educational resources may create additional strains. When combined with social factors such as social deprivation and increasing child mental health problems (Rutter & Smith, 1995), it is clear that ‘a complex range of educational and social factors interacting together’ (Hallam & Castle, 2001, p169) are likely to have impacted on rates of exclusion.

### **1.2.3 Who is ‘at risk’?**

Research investigating the demographics of children and young people who are excluded from school indicated that some groups appear to be at a greater risk of exclusion. Looked after children (Brodie, 2000), boys of secondary school age and

pupils identified as having a Special Educational Need (SEN) are at a disproportionate risk of both permanent and fixed-term exclusion (Blyth and Milner, 1996; DCSF, 2009). Furthermore, those experiencing greater social deprivation (Berridge *et al.*, 2001; Hallam & Castle, 2001) and those within ethnic minority groups, including Black Caribbean pupils and those from Traveller families face an elevated risk (DCSF, 2009; Grant & Brooks, 1998). Excluded children and young people are also more likely to be from single parent families (Bennathan, 1992, Parsons, 1999, The Prince's Trust, 2002).

Physical aggression against staff and other pupils has been identified as a reason for exclusion (Berridge *et al.*, 2001). However, in 2007/08, 'persistent disruptive behaviour' was the most common reason given for pupils to be excluded from school, which could encompass a range of behaviours including general disobedience or defiance. Therefore, despite attempts to formalise procedures for managing behavioural issues (DCSF, 2008) the way in which exclusion is used is likely to remain inconsistent across settings.

#### ***1.2.4 Consequences of exclusions***

As discussed above, social and educational factors appear to contribute to the level of exclusions in England. Exclusion can have educational and social consequences for those involved, and can negatively impact the wider community. The DCSF (2008) indicated that a fixed-term exclusion lasting for more than two days can result in the child or young person experiencing difficulty reintegrating into school. Furthermore, a study by Ofsted (2009) suggested that some schools are failing to provide an alternative means of full-time education for pupils who have been permanently excluded. Some permanently excluded pupils fail to return to school (Hallam & Castle, 2001), resulting in a lack of education and the loss of peer support (Parsons, 1996; The Prince's Trust, 2002).

A serious consequence of this path can be future involvement in criminal activities. A study by the Prison Reform Trust (2008) revealed that a significant proportion of the prison population was excluded from school at some stage. It is apparent, therefore, that as a consequence of the outcomes discussed, exclusions can result in great expense for public services through the cost of youth court, crime and unemployment (Parsons & Castle, 1998; Panayiotopoulos & Kerfoot, 2007).

### ***1.2.5 Interventions targeting exclusions***

Interventions developed in an attempt to reduce exclusions can be problematic in design. Research by Hayden (1997) indicated that children with a previous history of exclusion were more likely to be excluded in the future, illustrating that interventions targeting these young people may help to reduce the number of future exclusions.

However, Vulliamy & Webb (2001) identified differences in the way that schools monitor fixed-term exclusions. Their work highlighted the socially constructed nature of exclusions due to the variations that exist in the way schools choose to interpret legislation and use exclusion as a disciplinary procedure. This deviation from policy is evident in the range of literature identifying practices such as unofficial exclusion (Stirling, 1992; Brodie, 2000; Munn, Lloyd & Cullen., 2000). In these cases, a pupil is not formally excluded but instead discouraged from coming to school. Furthermore, practices such as the use of the ‘unauthorised absence’ recording code in the register (Blyth & Milner, 1996) all contribute to an unrealistic picture of a school’s exclusion figures. As a result, school exclusion figures may not accurately represent the number of pupils excluded (Vulliamy & Webb, 2001) and the scale of difficulties some schools are experiencing. Thus, studies attempting to measure the effectiveness of an intervention through a reduction in exclusion statistics may not be able to fully demonstrate the impact of the intervention.

Some studies have focused upon developing a whole school approach to improve inclusion (Jones and Smith, 2004). Whole school approaches such as the Communities in School’s approach in the USA are intended to support teachers in understanding the source of problems that are being experienced (Klein, 1999). Volunteers from the local community provide whole school support to encourage the development of a safe and constructive environment, whilst also providing mentoring to individual students. However, it is unfeasible to establish causal relationships in studies of this nature due to the number of extraneous variables involved, a common issue within educational research (Morrison, 2009). This issue is likely to have implications for the findings of the current review, and will, therefore, be considered further in discussion of the outcomes.

### ***1.2.6 Rationale for undertaking this review***

Government guidance (DCSF, 2008) suggested that exclusion should only be used if a child or young person commits a disciplinary offence that is considered a serious breach

of the school's behaviour policy and presents a risk to the education or welfare of pupils or others. However, Munn *et al.* (2000) suggested that increasingly exclusion is being used as part of a routine disciplinary system, rather than as a last resort.

By critically appraising, summarising and comparing a number of interventions that have targeted a reduction in exclusions, I intend to create a clearer picture of the way 'at risk' pupils can be effectively supported, resulting in better outcomes for schools and the young people for whom they are responsible. Petticrew and Roberts (2006) suggest that a systematic review can be used to 'produce a scientific summary of the evidence in an area' (p10).

### ***1.2.7 The focus of this review***

This review will consider the effectiveness of interventions that have been developed to reduce or prevent disciplinary exclusions for children and young people who have been identified as being 'at risk'.

## **1.3 Method**

The review question was devised to identify a gap in current literature on a chosen topic, with a view to forming the basis of an empirical research study.

The review follows stages two to seven of the seven stage model identified by Petticrew and Roberts (2006). These stages can be found in Table 1.1. Stage one was not required as the Local Authority provided only general guidance on the research area.

- |   |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>1. Clearly define the question the review is setting out to answer, in consultation with anticipated users.</b></li><li><b>2. Determine the types of studies that need to be located to answer the question.</b></li><li><b>3. Carry out a comprehensive literature search to locate studies.</b></li><li><b>4. Screen the results using inclusion criteria.</b></li><li><b>5. Critically appraise the included studies.</b></li><li><b>6. Synthesise the studies and assess heterogeneity among the study findings.</b></li><li><b>7. Disseminate the findings of the review.</b></li></ol> |
|---|

**Table 1.1 Petticrew & Roberts (2006): The 7 Stages of a Systematic Review**

### ***1.3.1 Defining the question***

Initial literature searches established the range of literature and empirical research related to the broad topic of disciplinary exclusion from school. It was evident that much literature existed in relation to this topic, with great variation in the study design, setting, subjects and measures used.

### ***1.3.2 Identifying the types of studies needed***

Systematic reviews have traditionally favoured quantitative forms of evidence (Dixon-Woods *et al.*, 2005). Therefore, attempts were made to identify quantitative studies to include in the in-depth review; however, early exploratory searches yielded a limited number of quantitative studies. Petticrew and Roberts (2006) suggested that qualitative research can provide an important insight into the value that outcomes of an intervention can have for the people involved. Furthermore, Dixon-Woods *et al.* (2001) suggested that, where questions cannot be easily answered by the use of experimental methods, qualitative methods of research can be particularly helpful. A systematic review that includes a variety of study designs and methods may better address the question of “what works”, as well as “what matters” (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006, p57). As discussed in the introduction, evaluating effective methods of reducing exclusions can be challenging. As a result, inclusion criteria for this systematic review allow studies that utilise either a quantitative, qualitative or mixed-methods design to be included.

Increased emphasis on the need for early intervention (DfES, 2003) and the acknowledged negative impact exclusion can have on a child’s access to education at a later stage (Hayden, 1996) indicated that a review of studies implemented at primary school level may be beneficial. However, early searches demonstrated that restricting the target population in this way resulted in too few studies being available to include in the review. As a result, the search criteria were widened to include studies conducted in any mainstream school or nursery setting.

### ***1.3.3 Comprehensive literature search and inclusion criteria***

Following initial exploratory searches, a number of search terms was identified and used to search electronic databases (shown in Table 1.2).

*Setting terms*

**School\*/ nursery**

*Target population terms*

**Children/ young people/ adolescents/ pupil\*/ student\***

*Intervention terms*

**Prevent\*/ reduc\*/ lower**

**Exclusion/exclude\*/expulsion\*/expel\***

**Table 1.2 Terms used for literature search**

All searches were performed between August 13<sup>th</sup> and October 28<sup>th</sup> 2009.

The electronic databases searched were *British Education Index, ERIC (Educational Resource Index and Abstracts), Informaworld, JSTOR, Sage Journals, Science Direct, Scopus, Psycinfo and Web of Knowledge*. In addition, the journal *Educational and Child Psychology* was searched by hand and relevant references from some articles were reviewed.

To establish the range of available studies relating to the chosen research area, initial inclusion criteria were identified as follows:

*Initial Inclusion Criteria:*

- **SETTING:** Mainstream school or nursery setting
- **INTERVENTION:** Any intervention that has been developed to directly target a reduction in exclusions.
- **STUDY DESIGN:** Interventions explicitly targeting the reduction or prevention of official pupil exclusions from school.
- **TIME, PLACE AND LANGUAGE:** Studies were reported in English but the search included studies conducted in other countries.

Following this initial search, 21 articles were identified that fitted within the above criteria (Appendix A provides a flow chart of studies identified at this stage).

*Additional Criteria:*

- **PARTICIPANTS:** Pupils identified as being ‘at risk’ of exclusion
- **INTERVENTION:** Intervention targeting a group of pupils identified as being ‘at risk’ of future exclusion. Excluding whole school approaches due to difficulty in comparing studies.



- **STUDY DESIGN:** Quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods design. Excluding case studies of individual pupils.
- **ACCESS:** Articles accessible free through internet or University links (e.g – Library facilities, inter-library loans).
- Article provides original account of study where possible and does not describe an element of a study that has already been included.

After applying additional criteria, 10 articles remained that would be included in the review. (Appendix B provides a flow chart of studies yielded and excluded at this stage).

#### ***1.3.4 Synthesising included studies***

The 10 studies remaining following application of the additional criteria were coded using a coding appendix based upon the EPPI Centre data extraction and coding tool (2007).

Due to the variation in the designs of included studies, a textual narrative method of synthesis was selected to facilitate the analysis and amalgamation of data within my review. By using this approach similarities and differences in studies can be explored by drawing out and comparing study characteristics, such as context, participants, methods and findings (Lucas, Baird, Arai *et al.*, 2007).

#### ***1.3.5 Assessing study quality***

Weight of Evidence (WoE) was calculated using the EPPI-Centre Data Extraction and Coding Tool (2007) to analyse the quality and relevance of each study included in the in-depth review against the following criteria:

- A. Soundness of study:** Taking account of all quality assessment issues, can the study findings be trusted in answering the study question(s)?
- B. Quality of design:** Appropriateness of research design and analysis for addressing the question of this specific review.
- C. Relevance:** Relevance of particular focus of the study (including conceptual focus, context, sample and measures) for addressing the review question.
- D. Overall WoE:** Taking into account A, B and C.

As indicated by the EPPI-Centre Data Extraction and Coding Tool (2007) studies included in the review were graded as high, medium or low against criteria A, B and C. In order to more accurately identify overall WoE (criteria D), studies were graded as high, high/medium, medium, medium/low or low.

## **1.4 Results**

### ***1.4.1 General characteristics of studies***

Table 1.3 (see pages 11-15) illustrates the key features of the 10 studies included in the review. The majority of studies were conducted within England (n=9) despite inclusion criteria allowing studies from across the world. (Studies from other countries were mostly excluded due to the whole school nature of interventions). The remaining study was conducted in Scotland. Panayiotopoulos and Kerfoot (2007) considered the use of exclusion across England and Scotland and identified a key difference in procedures. In Scotland, the Local Authority governs the decision to exclude. In England, the decision can be made by the headteacher and school governing body. This could provide some indication as to why exclusion figures in England remain higher than Scotland and, consequently, why a greater number of interventions may have been initiated in England in an attempt to reduce figures.

The level of schooling targeted varied between studies; whilst some focussed purely upon secondary (n=4) or primary (n=3) school settings, others (n=3) involved a mixture of primary, middle and secondary school settings. In one case (Lovering *et al.*, 2006), participants were as young as 3 years old at the beginning of the study.

### ***1.4.2 Design***

A range of designs was utilised across included studies (two quantitative, four qualitative and four mixed methods). The length of interventions ranged between four weeks and four years. Randomised Control Trials (RCTs) are considered to be the ‘gold standard’ within many areas of applied research (Robson, 2002), that is, a high quality deductive method of indicating the effectiveness of an intervention. Only one study included within this review (Panayiotopoulos & Kerfoot, 2007) used RCT. One further study utilised an experimental and control group (Powell *et al.*, 2008), however, participants were not randomly allocated to each group; this was instead determined by the headteacher. The remaining studies enlisted the design of cohort study (n=4), one group pre-post test (n=3) and case study (n=1). (Case studies focussing on a single pupil were excluded from the review, however, those undertaken in a single setting were

permitted with the proviso that more than one pupil was involved). Vulliamy & Webb (2001) highlighted ethical and practical difficulties in designs attempting to demonstrate effective interventions due to the range of variables that impact on each case.

### **1.4.3 Participants**

The number of participants varied widely across studies, ranging from 5 to 346. Inclusion criteria dictated that participants must have been identified by the setting or research group as 'at risk' of future disciplinary exclusion. The majority of studies (n=7) considered problem behaviour to be a key indicator of a pupil being 'at risk' of exclusion. Prior exclusion (n=2), referral from external agencies (n=1) and indicators of social deprivation such as Free School Meals (n=2) were also considered to place pupils 'at risk' of future exclusion. These indicators are concurrent with previous literature (Hallam & Castle, 2001; Hayden, 1997). However, pupils selected to take part in the intervention were not always those considered to be most at risk of exclusion within the setting. For example, pupils included in Burton (2006) were among many within school who were considered to be 'at risk' of exclusion by teaching staff, but were identified as those who were not the worst behaved, but were getting in trouble most frequently.

The majority of studies (n=6) did not include any reference to the SEN status of students included in the study. Three studies included pupils with an identified SEN, whilst one study (Lovering *et al.*, 2006) excluded these students from participation. National statistics for England and Wales (DCSF, 2009) indicated pupils identified with a SEN are eight times more likely to be permanently excluded than pupils without an SEN. A rationale for excluding these pupils from the study was not provided, although reference was made to the intervention targeting pupils with 'unmet' needs.

Of the data provided, more males than females were involved in five of the studies, in line with national statistics (DCSF, 2009) indicating that a greater proportion of males experience both fixed-term and permanent exclusion. In some cases (n=2) the impact of interventions varied between genders. For example, Burton (2006) identified that the intervention had a greater impact on the girls involved. Humphrey and Brooks (2006) identified that girls involved in the intervention found it harder to participate due to the majority of participants being male.

**Table 1.3 Coded studies included in review**

Study & Method	Participants		Context	Design	Intervention	Data collection	Outcome measure(s)	Results (* = significant effect, p<0.05)
	N	Age						
Burton (2006)  <b>Mixed</b>	3 male 2 female	12-13 years	1 Secondary  <b>England</b>	One Group Pre-post test 7 month follow up	Small group work, CBT to improve social skills 6 1hr sessions	<b>Questionnaire</b> (social skills assessment form) <b>Interviews:</b> pupils	Improvement in pre-post score  Maintain improved behaviour after 7mths (no exclusions)	Improvement in cumulative scores for all  No exclusions at 7 month follow up
Hallam & Castle (2001)  <b>Qualitative</b>	91	No details given	Primary Secondary  <b>England</b>	Cohort Study	34 In School Centres (ISC) 24 Multidisciplinary Behaviour Support Teams (MDBST) 9 Secondment of teachers to PRU	<b>Questionnaires</b> <b>Interviews:</b> telephone & face to face <b>Exclusion data</b>	Reduction in exclusions rates  Identify strengths and weaknesses  Identify good practice  Assess cost effectiveness	Overall reduction in exclusion figures  Positive features of MBST & ISC identified: Individualised approach MBDST most effective PRU secondment not effective
Harris <i>et al.</i> (2006)  <b>Qualitative</b>	11 male 3 female	11-16 years	7 Secondary  <b>England</b>	Cohort study	11 - Managed transfer between schools 3 - additional support provided  Research over 1 term	<b>Interviews:</b> Senior Management Team, Governors 14 - pupils 5 - parents <b>Focus Groups</b> (7 schools & PRU) <b>Analysis of policies</b> <b>Survey:</b> all staff <b>Observation</b>	Improvements of provision & outcomes for pupils at risk  Identify strengths & limitations	Reduction in problem behaviours  Fresh start New/improved relationships with staff/peers Positive attitudes towards school Motivation to engage

Study & Method	Participants		Context	Study method	Intervention	Data collection	Outcome measure(s)	Results (* = significant effect, p<0.05)
	N	Age						
Humphrey & Brooks (2006)  <b>Mixed</b>	8 male, 4 female	13-14 years	1 Secondary  <b>England</b>	One Group Pre-post test 4 week follow up	Small group work, CBT to manage anger 6 1hr sessions over 4 weeks	<b>Psychometric Tests</b>  <b>Observations</b>  <b>Interviews:</b> pupils	Reduction in scores for total difficulties, Emotional Outbursts, Behaviour conduct and Hyperactive behaviour, Increase in pro-social behaviour score	Significant reduction in total difficulties, emotional outbursts and behaviour conduct following intervention. Gains in pro-social behaviour. Effects sustained at follow-up on all measures except total difficulties
Lovering et al. (2006)  Quantitative	337 completed scheme 316 completed follow-up	3-7 years	Primary Home  England	OGPP & 6 month follow up	Sallywags Community Programme  Range of interventions e.g teacher support, parent group, home support	<b>Psychometric Tests:</b> <b>Eyberg Child Behaviour Inventory (ECBI)</b> <b>Intensity and Problem scales &amp; Parental Stress Index (PSI-III)</b> <b>Interviews:</b> <b>parents- post intervention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Decrease in Frequency of disruptive behaviour. (ECBI)</li> <li>•Decrease in No. Of disruptive behaviours perceived as problematic. (ECBI)</li> <li>•Decrease in Parental stress. (PSI)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* improvement overall for Parents &amp; Teachers ECBI scores – pre/post and pre/follow up</li> <li>* decrease in PSI scores</li> </ul>

Study & Method	Participants		Context	Study method	Intervention	Data collection	Outcome measure(s)	Results (* = significant effect, p<0.05)
	N	Age						
Lloyd <i>et al.</i> (2003)  <b>Qualitative</b>	22 male, 8 female	Not given	6 Secondary  3 LAs  <b>Scotland</b>	Cohort Study	Interagency working	<b>Focus Group:</b> LA policy makers Senior Management Team  <b>Interviews:</b> 30 pupils 30 parents School staff Other professionals Senior LA personnel <b>Analysis of policies</b> <b>Observation:</b> interagency meeting	Investigate effectiveness of Interagency initiatives  Identify factors that facilitate/inhibit development of effective provisions	Interagency meetings = central to effective working Most effective when individualised response & package Solutions are not always inclusive Professional ideologies/ attitudes School ethos Tariff system for discipline Different strategies for different typologies – some responding better to interagency
Maguire <i>et al.</i> (2003)  <b>Qualitative</b>	No details given	Primary age	Primary  1 LA <b>England</b>	Case study	Including Primary School Children programme  3 year project	<b>Interviews:</b> keyworkers & Senior Management Team Key school personnel Parents  <b>Observation:</b> meetings	Reducing exclusions	2 schools better able to manage difficulties 1 school no impact Multiagency team supporting only parents – did not effect change in school Individual support for some children did not address issues

Study & Method	Participants		Context	Study method	Intervention	Data collection	Outcome measure(s)	Results (* = significant effect, p<0.05)
	N	Age						
Panayiotopoulos and Kerfoot (2007)  <b>Mixed</b>	124	Mean age = 10yrs	Primary  Secondary  <b>England</b>	RCT (IG=Index Group CG=Control group)	Intervention group -Multi-disciplinary team  Control group - routine care by LEA  2 years  3 points of data collection	<b>Questionnaires:</b> Strengths & Difficulties (SDQ) Health outcome scale General Health Questionnaire (GHQ)  <b>Interviews:</b> Pupils Teachers	Reduction in no. of exclusions over 6 month follow up.  Reduction in appearance of mental health symptoms  Reduction in emotional & behavioural difficulties	IG = non sign. reduction in excluded days due to non-compliant cases. (In cases where participants engaged/ complied = sign. better results than CG.)  50% reduction in likelihood of future exclusions Decrease in symptomatology & greater reduction in percentage of 'abnormal cases'  Sign. emergence of aggressive & antisocial behavior as predictor of future excl.

Study & Method	Participants		Context	Study method	Intervention	Data collection	Outcome measure(s)	Results (* = significant effect, p<0.05)
	N	Age						
Powell <i>et al.</i> (2008)  <b>Quantitative</b>	107	8-11 years Control: 8:7yrs  Intervention: 9:3yrs	Primary  <b>England</b>	Control group & Intervention group  7mth follow up	Self Discovery Programme (Massage, yoga & relaxation)	<b>Questionnaire:</b> Strengths & Difficulties (SDQ)  Behaviour profile	Comparison of baseline & follow up score from behaviour profile & SDQ	* Improvement in Self confidence, Social confidence, Communication with peers Communication with teachers (p<0.001) and contributions in class (p<0.001)  * Improvement in SDQ total difficulties (p=0.031)
Vulliamy & Webb (2003)  <b>Mixed</b>	208 (62% male & 38% female).	School ages – 11-16yrs (no details)	Middle Secondary  7 schools 2 LAs  <b>England</b>	Cohort Study	Social work trained support worker placed in school	<b>Questionnaire</b>  <b>Interviews</b>  <b>Observation</b>  <b>Analysis of policies</b>	Identification of processes & outcomes  Impact on rates of fixed term & permanent exclusions	Factors: Improved home-school liaison Early intervention Alternative provision Holistic approach Improved multi-agency working  Prevention of some permanent exclusions



#### 1.4.4 Weight of Evidence (WoE)

Criteria used to assess WoE has been described in the method (p8). Table 1.4 gives the weighting of each study included in the review.

	<b>A</b> (Trustworthiness in terms of own question)	<b>B</b> (Appropriateness of design and analysis for this review question)	<b>C</b> (Relevance of focus for this review question)	<b>D</b> (Overall weight in relation to review question)
Burton (2006)	Low	Low	High	Medium
Hallam & Castle (2001)	Medium	Medium	High	Medium/ High
Harris <i>et al.</i> (2007)	High	Low	Medium	Medium
Humphrey & Brooks (2006)	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Lloyd <i>et al.</i> (2003)	Medium	High	High	Medium/High
Lovering <i>et al.</i> (2006)	High	Medium	Medium	Medium
Maguire <i>et al.</i> (2003)	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium/Low
Panayiotopoulos and Kerfoot (2007)	High	High	High	High
Powell <i>et al.</i> (2008)	High	Medium	Medium	Medium
Vulliamy & Webb (2003)	Medium	Medium	High	Medium/high

**Table 1.4 Weight of Evidence**

Four studies were judged have a medium/high or high overall weight (D). These studies shared several characteristics, including an outcome measure of reduced use of exclusion (Table 1.5), the use of multi-agency support, a holistic approach taken to support pupils and improved home/school communication. One study (Maguire *et al.*, 2003) was identified as having medium/low weight due to the lack of clarity around the impact the intervention was considered to have, both in terms of short and long term effectiveness.

### 1.4.5 Outcomes and effectiveness

Table 1.5 demonstrates the measures used to identify the effectiveness of interventions.

Measure targeted	Outcome measure	Study	Effect Size (d) (post intervention)	Effect Size (d) (at follow-up)	
Systemic: Reduction in use of exclusions	Reduction in exclusion rates	Panayiotopolous & Kerfoot (2007)	No data given	0.29	
		Vulliamy & Webb (2003)	No data given	No data given	
		Hallam & Castle (2001)	No data given	No data given	
	Reduced need for exclusion	Lloyd <i>et al.</i> (2003)	N/A	N/A	
		Maguire <i>et al.</i> (2003)	N/A	N/A	
Pupils	Reduction in pupil's problematic behaviours	Lovering <i>et al.</i> (2006)	Parents: 1.12 Teachers: 0.61	Parents: 1.17 Teachers: 0.52	
		Humphrey & Brooks (2006)	0.40 (total difficulties) 0.52 (conduct)	0.04 (total difficulties) 0.32 (conduct)	
		Powell <i>et al.</i> (2008)	No data given	0.37 (total difficulties)	
		Vulliamy & Webb (2003)	No data given	No data given	
		Hallam & Castle (2001)	N/A	N/A	
		Harris <i>et al.</i> (2006)	N/A	N/A	
	Improvement in pupil's social skills	Burton (2006)	No data given	No data given	
		Powell <i>et al.</i> (2008)	No data given	0.44 (self confidence) 0.46 (confidence with peers) .23 (confidence with teachers) .44 (communication with peers) .52 (communication with teachers) .76 (Self control) .02 (concentration/attention) .52 (contribution) .08 (eye contact)	
	Parents	Decrease in parent stress	Lovering <i>et al.</i> (2006)	0.79	No data given

**Table 1.5 Outcome Measures**

Outcome measures varied by targeted population. Examples of measures targeting individuals included a reduction in pupil problem behaviours or a reduction in parental stress. At a systems level, some studies considered a reduction in official exclusion rates. Four studies included multiple outcome measures.

Established quantitative assessment tools were used in four studies, whilst one (Burton, 2006) utilised a non-standardised questionnaire. This study also included the use of self ratings. Whilst it could be argued that self reports may not be reliable, external ratings were also utilised to verify the ratings based on observed behaviours. Qualitative methods of data collection, involving the use of interviews, focus groups, observations, or analysis of policies were included in all studies with the exception of Powell *et al.* (2008).

Of the studies targeting a reduction in official exclusion rates, two studies (Hallam & Castle, 2001; Vulliamy & Webb, 2003) explored a reduction in overall exclusion figures in targeted schools, whilst one study (Panayiotopoulos & Kerfoot, 2007) considered a reduction in exclusions amongst targeted pupils. The disadvantages for using official exclusion figures are discussed further on page 22.

Five studies provided some data to allow effect size to be calculated. Post intervention results indicated medium to very large effect sizes across studies and appeared to illustrate that the largest effect size was apparent in parents' perceptions of a reduction in their child's problematic behaviour (Lovering *et al.*, 2006). The effect size was maintained at the six month follow-up, however it must be noted that only a medium effect size was reflected in scores collected from teachers. Results from Humphrey and Brooks (2006) indicated that the effect size demonstrated after the intervention was not maintained at the four week follow-up period, indicating that the effectiveness of their programme was likely to be only short term.

#### ***1.4.6 Themes***

A number of themes emerged through textual narrative analysis of the studies (see Table 1.6 in Appendix C). Dominant themes will now be given further consideration.

##### *Where does the support come from?*

Pastoral support (n=5) and peer support (n=3) featured in interventions, however, multiagency support was the overwhelming source of support, with all studies (n=10) involving external services in some way. For a number of studies (n=6), multiagency

working involving professionals from a variety of disciplines within health, care and/or education services, was integral to the project. Variation was evident between studies which utilised already established multi-agency teams (Lloyd *et al.*, 2003) and those which were created as part of the intervention (n=5). Qualitative data elicited from some studies indicated that the effectiveness of external support was due to a range of factors, including helping children to understand and manage conflict more effectively (Maguire *et al.* 2003; Burton, 2006) immediate response to crisis (Vulliamy & Webb, 2003) and developing the skills of teachers (Hallam & Castle, 2001) and parents (Lovering *et al.*, 2006).

However, Lloyd *et al.* (2003) identified that interagency working is not necessary for all pupils who experience exclusion, but is an effective approach for some, illustrating the individual differences between pupils. This will be considered further in relation to individualised approaches.

#### *Home-School communications and relationships*

The benefits of multi-agency support in developing relationships with parents was emphasised by five studies, indicating a possible gap in some school services. Panayiotopoulos & Kerfoot (2007) emphasised the range of pressures that many families face (such as marital issues and multiple deprivations), and the lack of time school staff often have to provide support of this nature. Lovering *et al.* (2006) also highlighted the support parents often require to manage their children's behaviour, a need that may not be met through school.

Whilst improved communication between home and school was highlighted, the counselling role of the multi-agency worker in working with both the pupil and parents was also highlighted. This could indicate an area that school staff may struggle to fill, and may provide support for the role of a home-school support worker which is increasingly being integrated into school settings as part of a pastoral support system.

#### *Level of support*

Five of the studies included an individualised approach to the support that was given to participants, and emphasised the need to consider the unique factors that were contributing to the pupil's 'at risk' status (for example, difficulties in their home life). Three interventions delivered a prescribed programme to all pupils involved; two studies utilised Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (Burton, 2006; Humphrey and Brooks, 2006) whilst the other ran the Self Discovery Programme (Powell *et al.*, 2008). Each

intervention included pupil's being removed from the classroom to take part in a group session. Pomerantz (2007) suggested that the higher rate of exclusions at secondary school level may in part be due to a failure to meet the emotional needs of pupils, and therefore an individualised, therapeutic approach may be considered appropriate and beneficial. However, in order for interventions to have a long reaching effect, participants must be able to demonstrate their ability to transfer new found skills into the classroom setting, an issue which was highlighted in the evaluation of one included study (Humphrey & Brooks, 2006). The difficulty some pupils had in doing this may have contributed to the great reduction in effect size at the follow-up assessment.

Where interventions targeted the development of particular skills (n=2), results illustrated improvements in some specific areas. However, as discussed in the introduction, the causes of exclusion are considered to be multiple and wide-ranging. Seven studies took a holistic approach, prompting systemic changes in school or directly intervening with staff, parents and pupils, therefore, aiming to address a range of issues which may be contributing to the difficulties.

#### *Alternative provisions*

In the majority of studies (n=9), interventions attempted to retain pupils within their current mainstream setting. Only one (Harris *et al.*, 2006) enlists the use of managed school moves (whereby a pupil is proactively relocated to another school). However, where studies aimed to maintain pupils within the current setting, preventative measures often resulted in the pupil spending less time within the school premises (Hallam & Castle, 2001; Lloyd *et al.*, 2003; Vulliamy & Webb, 2003). Examples include the use of a part-time timetable, arrangement of a work placement or time within a specialist resource base.

Such practices provide further support for some of the negative consequences of exclusion that have previously been identified (such as limited access to the curriculum and social exclusion). Within this lies one of the difficulties of using exclusion statistics as an indication of effectiveness, as considered by Vulliamy and Webb (2001). Whilst exclusion rates may appear to have reduced, it is possible that pupils are no longer fully involved in the school environment. Therefore, it cannot be assumed that a reduction in numbers reflects an improvement in inclusive practices within the school setting.

### *Inclusion and School Ethos*

Panayiotopoulos and Kerfoot (2007) suggested action was needed at the level of the family/home, teacher and school as an organisation. Targeting interventions at the level of the individual pupil carries an implicit suggestion that the difficulties lie within the child and is contrary to whole school reform (Thomas & Loxley, 2007). Through their research, Humphrey and Brooks (2006) identified the need to look beyond the child and away from pathologising emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Four studies highlighted the influence of staff ideologies and beliefs on practices in school and identified features of an inclusive school ethos such as preventative approaches (creating an environment where positive behaviours are fostered), respect and fairness demonstrated by staff, and a defined behaviour policy followed consistently by those within the organisation. Miller (1996) suggested that the school culture indicates the extent to which staff are willing to work with children who have become labelled as difficult. Whilst the support of external agencies may be temporarily successful in including pupils, unless a change in culture occurs, it is probable that changes will not be long lasting. The Elton Report (1989) emphasised the significance of creating and sustaining an inclusive culture. A key theme drawn from the Harris *et al.* (2006) study was that of the importance of a fresh start and the loss of stigma. This could illustrate the importance of working with staff to explore the constructs they have developed around ‘problem’ pupils, and in considering the school’s ethos and the change needed at a systems level.

### **1.5 Conclusions and Recommendations**

All studies included in the review provided some indication of success, whether through a measured reduction in the use of exclusions or improvement in pupil behaviour. Multi-agency working was identified as the most common approach, indicating that support from external agencies has the capacity to bring about positive change, although the number of factors contributing to the difficulties pupils and schools experience must be taken into consideration.

It also appears evident that a ‘one size fits all’ approach to reducing the use of disciplinary exclusion is unlikely to be adequate or appropriate. Lloyd *et al* (2003) illustrated that the characteristics of pupils vulnerable to exclusion vary greatly, and therefore, a flexible and imaginative approach may be required in each case. The unique situations in which exclusions occur make research in this area challenging,

perhaps providing an indication as to why there is a lack of data that enables effect sizes to be calculated.

Studies have come to acknowledge the importance of factors which can be considered to lie within the area of school ethos. By identifying how an inclusive school culture can be achieved, a preventative approach to the issue of challenging behaviour can be fostered.

### ***1.5.1 Limitations of review***

The problems in identifying causal relationships in educational research have been acknowledged (Morrison, 2009). Therefore, varying methods attempting to measure the effectiveness of interventions within a real world context are always likely to face challenges. Vulliamy & Webb (2001) highlighted the difficulties associated with the use of exclusion statistics as a measurement of effectiveness. They emphasised the unreliability and invalidity of rates reported. As a result, a range of methods was used to explore this area of research and effect size could not be calculated for the majority of studies. It was, therefore, difficult to provide a direct comparison of the effectiveness of studies and instead common themes were highlighted.

Sample sizes and context also varied greatly across included studies, indicating the need for caution in attempts to generalise findings. Further, the subjective nature of WoE judgements should also be highlighted, as these were determined by the author without triangulation.

### ***1.5.2 Recommendations for further research and practice***

The majority of interventions designed to reduce exclusion are targeted at secondary school level, indicating the need for further exploration of effective strategies targeting children of primary school age. Research aimed at a younger age group would provide further support for the ongoing government focus on early intervention and prevention (DfES, 2003; DfE, 2011).

The importance of the ethos underpinning practices in schools has been identified and therefore future research could also attempt to further explore the elements of school ethos that facilitate the inclusion of pupils.

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## 1.7 Appendix A

### 1<sup>st</sup> Screening – Applying Relevance Criteria

#### Step 1

##### Database Searches

Search terms:

**School\*/ nursery**

**Children/ young people/ adolescents/ pupil\*/ student\***

**Prevent\*/ reduc\*/ lower**

**Exclusion/exclude\*/expulsion\*/expel\***

##### Studies located through Informaworld, Scopus, ERIC & BEI:

Burton (2006)	Panayiotopoulos & Kerfoot (2007)
Coldron <i>et al.</i> (2002)	Pelham <i>et al.</i> (2005)
Fitzherbert (1997)	Powell <i>et al.</i> (2008)
Hallam & Castle (2001)	Rausch & Skiba (2004)
Humphrey & Brooks (2006)	Sheldon & Epstein (2002)
Kilian <i>et al.</i> (2006)	Scott (2001)
Lloyd <i>et al.</i> (2003)	Vincent <i>et al.</i> (2007)
Lovering <i>et al.</i> (2006)	Vulliamy & Webb (2003)
McKeon (2001)	

**Total = 17**

**SETTING:** Mainstream nursery/ primary/ middle/ secondary setting  
**INTERVENTION:** Any intervention directly targeting a reduction in exclusions.  
**STUDY DESIGN:** Measures reduction in official pupil exclusions from school.  
**TIME, PLACE AND LANGUAGE:** Reported in English, includes studies from other countries. No restrictions on time period.

#### Step 2

##### Citation Searches

##### Original studies located through alternative accounts:

Maguire *et al.* (2003)

Hallam and Castle (1999)

Harris *et al.* (2006)

**Total = 3**

#### Step 3

##### Hand Searches

##### Studies located through previous assignments:

Jones and Smith (2004)

##### No studies identified through hand search of following journals:

Educational & Child Psychology

**Total = 1**

**Total: 21**

## 1.8 Appendix B

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Screening – Applying Additional Criteria

#### Additional Criteria:

- **PARTICIPANTS:** Pupils identified as being ‘at risk’ of exclusion
- **SETTING:** Pupils must be registered with a school, nursery setting.
- **INTERVENTION:** Intervention targeting a group of pupils identified as being ‘at risk’ of future exclusion. Excluding whole school approaches due to difficulty in comparing studies.
- **STUDY DESIGN:** Quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods design. Excluding case studies of individual pupils.
- **ACCESS:** Articles accessible free through internet or University links (e.g. – Library facilities, inter-library loans).
- Article provides original account of study where possible and does not describe an element of a study that has already been included.

#### Studies included following additional criteria:

Burton (2006)  
Hallam & Castle (2001)  
Harris *et al.* (2006)  
Humphrey & Brooks (2006)  
Lloyd *et al.* (2003)  
Lovering *et al.* (2006)  
Maguire *et al.* (2003)  
Panayiotopoulos & Kerfoot (2007)  
Powell *et al.* (2008)  
Vulliamy & Webb (2003)

**Total = 10**

#### Studies excluded:

Coldron *et al.* (2002) – not targeted ‘at risk’ group  
Fitzherbert (1997) – case studies  
Hallam & Castle (1999) – not full account  
Jones & Smith (2004) – Whole school approach  
Kilian *et al.* (2006) – whole school approach  
McKeon (2001) – element of Hallam & Castle (1999) study  
Pelham *et al.* (2005) – whole school approach  
Rausch & Skiba (2004) – whole school approach  
Sheldon & Epstein (2002) – whole school approach  
Scott (2001) – whole school approach  
Vincent *et al.* (2007) – not original account

**Total = 11**

### 1.9 Appendix C

		Burton	Harris <i>et al.</i>	Hallam & Castle	Humphrey & Brooks	Lloyd <i>et al.</i>	Lovering <i>et al.</i>	Maguire <i>et al.</i>	Panayiotopoulos & Kerfoot	Powell <i>et al.</i>	Vulliamy & Webb
	Holistic Approach			X		X	X	X	X		X
Pupil Centred	Therapeutic (Pupil centred)	X			X			SOME		X	SOME
	Pupil aware of and changes own behaviour	X	X	X	X			SOME			
	Readiness for change		X	X	X						
	Consider individual needs/ circumstances		X	X		X		1	X		X
Where support comes from	Multi-agency working	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
	Peer Support	X			X			X			
	Pastoral Support	X	X	X		X		X			X
Parents	Support for parents			X			X	SOME			
	Parental confidence						X				X
	Improved home/school communication/ relat.		X	X		X		SOME	X		X
	Alternative provision		X	LAST RESORT		SOME					SOME
Factors within school ethos	Professional ideologies/ attitudes of staff	X	X	X		X		X			
	Defined policy		X	X		X					
	Fairness and Respect				X						
	Preventative methods							1			X

**Table 1.6 Themes identified across studies**

## **2.0 Bridging the Gap: From intervention to ethos**

### **2.1 Identifying an area of research**

I became interested in the area of disciplinary exclusion through work I was involved in prior to commencing training as an Educational Psychologist. Although government guidance emphasised the strict guidelines that should be followed by schools (DCSF, 2008), in my experience, the decision to exclude was often made swiftly in an emotive situation, without thorough consideration of the far-reaching consequences this decision could have on the pupil's future experience of education.

### **2.2 Arriving at a research question**

The systematic literature review was undertaken to identify a gap in literature that could be explored through the empirical research study. Through the systematic review I reviewed research that had investigated how the use of disciplinary exclusion could be reduced. I established:

- The majority of research around the area of disciplinary exclusion appeared to focus on pupils of secondary school age.
- Interventions were primarily implemented with pupils already identified as 'at risk' of exclusion by the school, indicating that some concerns had already emerged.
- Principally, studies involved schools from areas with differing levels of social-deprivation.

I therefore decided to explore the practices of primary schools that did not use exclusion and discover how these practices might differ from those in schools based in areas with a similar socio-economic status, where exclusion was sometimes used.

### **2.3 Socio-economic status**

Pupils in areas with a low socio-economic status have been identified as being at increased risk of disciplinary exclusion (Parsons, 1999). Through my own exploration of Local Authority (LA) exclusion statistics, I identified that schools within areas of high social-deprivation often had the highest rates of exclusion. Yet there is evidence that some schools within the most deprived communities have successfully created an environment which encourages achievement (DCSF, 2009) and it was clear from LA statistics that within the most deprived communities, there were also a number of schools that had not used disciplinary exclusion for a number of years.



There is a variety of ways to identify the socio-economic status of a school's intake, all of which can be problematic. For example, Hobbs & Vignoles (2007) identified that, although entitlement to Free School Meals is often used as an indicator of low socio-economic status, the income and employment status of parents differed vastly within this category. I chose to use figures generated by the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) as an indicator of the socio-economic status of the schools approached for involvement in the study. Whilst a range of factors is taken into account to calculate this characteristic (including employment, health, income, education skills and training, living environment and crime), the challenges faced by families and schools in each community may differ greatly and, therefore, the terms 'social deprivation' and 'low socio-economic status' should not be considered to allude to the same experiences across families and communities.

Morrison (2009) highlighted the difficulties in identifying causation in educational research due to the number of social factors that influence a given context. My research did not seek to identify causation, but instead explore some of the factors within a school environment that may influence the way behaviour was managed.

#### **2.4 Identifying excluding and non-excluding schools**

Previous studies (e.g Munn *et al.*, 2000) have compared the practices of high and low excluding schools, suggesting that schools with no record of exclusion may experience fewer pupils demonstrating significantly challenging behaviour. I compared excluding and non-excluding schools (as indicated by LA statistics) as I was keen to explore whether there was a fundamental difference in the way that inclusion and exclusion were understood and managed. It became evident from my focus group discussions that non-excluding schools believed that they effectively managed challenges presented by children which would have resulted in exclusion in a different school, indicating that the level of challenge experienced could be similar across groups.

#### **2.5 School Ethos**

The use of inductive-semantic thematic analysis illustrated that past literature was not taken into consideration when analysing the content of transcriptions for themes. Therefore, until this process had been completed, I had little idea of how the findings of stage one would relate to factors that had previously been explored.

Many terms have been developed to describe the underlying processes within a school. The term 'school climate' makes reference to both the psychological and physical

characteristics of school experienced by pupils (Sink, 2005), yet, in my research, little reference was made to physical characteristics during interview and focus group discussions, aside perhaps from the resources available. Though the term ‘collective efficacy’ can provide a way of defining social influence as a concept (Goddard and Goddard, 2001), it does not encompass staff beliefs about inclusion and exclusion and perceptions of practices throughout school. Therefore, I have identified ‘school ethos’ as a more appropriate umbrella for the factors that were discovered from my data, whilst also acknowledging how social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) could be used to explain how staff beliefs, thinking and actions may have been shaped in part by the way staff have come to make sense of practices in their schools.

Munn *et al.* (2000) suggested that exploring school ethos can be a helpful way of exploring a school as an entity, identifying four aspects as:

- Beliefs about schools, teaching and pupils;
- The curriculum offered
- Relations with others in the outside world (e.g parents)
- Decision-making about exclusion

Having completed the inductive thematic analysis, it appeared that the factors identified by school staff (for example beliefs about inclusion and exclusion and perceptions of practices running throughout the school) could be considered as elements of school ethos.

Lovey and Cooper (1997) warned against the difference between professed and lived ethos, and, therefore, caution was taken when considering how the views of participants related to actual practices within each school. I will now go on to outline the philosophical framework underpinning the research approach, to provide a clearer insight into the way the views of participants were interpreted.

## **2.6 Underpinning Philosophical Assumptions**

Ontology, epistemology and methodology provide an indication of the philosophical assumptions taken by the researcher. Ontology refers to the assumptions that have been made about the nature of the world, or what is ‘real’. Epistemology refers to the nature and limits of knowledge (what can be known and how), and has implications for the methodology adopted by the researcher.

Critical Realism sits between the positions of realism (where the world is assumed to be made up of structures that have a cause and effect relationship on each other) and relativism (where an assumption is made that the world is not orderly and can be interpreted in a number of ways). It assumes that a reality exists (ontological realism), but that our understanding of this will always be fragile and unfixed and may be constructed differently by each individual (epistemological relativism) (Danermark *et al.*, 2002).

Critical realism fits well with the exploration of a concept such as school ethos as it acknowledges that some broader social processes impact on how an experience comes to be understood. In describing critical realism, Danermark *et al.* (2002) suggested that ‘there exists both an external world independently of human consciousness, and at the same time a dimension which includes our socially determined knowledge about reality’ (p5). This provides an indication of the way in which the social context manipulates the meaning individuals have created from an experience (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Contextual constructionism (which sits within the paradigm of critical realism), emphasises the way in which ‘knowledge’ is local, provisional and context dependent (Madill *et al.*, 2000; Willig, 2008). In the context of my research, a contextual constructionist stance can be taken to emphasise how the influence of social processes (for example socio-economic status) will differ across contexts, and, therefore, I would not anticipate that the outcomes of this study would be consistent if repeated.

### **2.6.1 Methodology**

Qualitative methodology aims to better understand human behaviour, and how events are experienced and understood (Todd *et al.*, 2004; Willig, 2008). A mixed methods approach to qualitative research fits well with a critical realist perspective. Critical realism enables different methods (both qualitative and quantitative) to be utilised for different purposes within the data collection, whilst also enabling ontological and epistemological beliefs to underpin the decisions that are made (see Scott, 2007, for further reading).

Attempts to combine the perceptions of individuals, by identifying variables, would be contrary to a more relativist perspective (such as social constructionism) as an assumption would be made that there are only competing versions of reality and the idea of measuring psychological variables would not be considered valid (Willig, 2008). Within critical realism, however, it is acknowledged that there are realities that can be

explored, and whilst this may be interpreted differently by each individual, some social processes influence the way this is constructed. In contextual constructionism, triangulation of data can be used to seek consistency of meaning (Madill *et al.*, 2000).

Nightingale and Cromby (1999) considered representations of reality to include perceptions, thoughts, language and beliefs. Within the realist ontology assumed by critical realism, an external world exists independently of these. The data gathered during focus groups and interviews attempted to gain an insight into the representations of reality, whilst the questionnaire attempted to explore the extent to which these representations were shared by a large group of people, and whether social processes (working within an excluding or non-excluding school) may influence the extent to which these were shared.

## **2.7 Method**

### ***2.7.1 Focus groups and interviews***

The use of focus groups (see on page 52) fitted within the stance I had adopted as a researcher, as an appropriate way of collectively constructing meaning through group discussion and the interaction between participants (Robson, 2002). Participants in focus groups and interviews were asked to talk about the broad area of inclusion and disciplinary exclusion. No set questions were used to aide discussion, instead participants were asked to elaborate further on comments that they had made.

Disadvantages of a focus group approach can be that those volunteering to take part in discussions may be those motivated to share views in a group setting and, therefore, emergent themes may not reflect those of individuals less comfortable talking openly in this forum (Leong & Austin, 2006). There may also be a reluctance to discuss contentious or sensitive topics (Willig, 2008). This disadvantage was realised in the reluctance of staff in excluding schools to take part in the study (discussed further within ethical considerations), which resulted in the use of unstructured individual interviews to gather some data.

Both interviews and focus groups can be flexible and adaptable (Robson, 2002) and, therefore, although the use of two different methods of data collection at this stage was not ideal, I deemed the two methods compatible. However, possible issues arising from this must be acknowledged. Robson (2002) suggested group situations can regulate discussions and, therefore, the views gathered through individual interviews may not be

representative of others in the same setting. Yet, Vulliamy & Webb (2001) highlighted that interviews can be a suitable way of exploring practices in a school, particularly in relation to exclusion, as ‘official’ exclusion figures can be unreliable. Furthermore, the use of open-ended questions in both contexts enabled the perceptions of all individuals to emerge and, therefore, it would be anticipated that even within a group discussion, the views of participants would differ. Analysis of questionnaire data aimed, in part, to consider the consistency of views within each school.

### ***2.7.2 Thematic analysis***

Inductive-semantic thematic analysis was used to analyse data collected at stage one (see on page 51). This approach enabled themes to emerge from the data without any preconceived ideas about what the data should contain. This fits well within the qualitative methodology described above. Had a theoretical thematic analysis been conducted, the themes would instead have been driven by the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Since I had adopted a critical realist stance, inductive analysis allowed themes to emerge that might provide some indication that there are some commonalities in the way reality is experienced and an insight into the social process which may influence this. However, Braun and Clarke (2006) emphasised that whilst inductive-thematic analysis is data driven, as opposed to theory driven, the researcher’s own epistemological position will influence the way in which themes are identified.

This method of analysis was selected over a phenomenological method such as Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) due to the philosophical assumptions that underpinned the research project. IPA may not be considered compatible with the construction of a questionnaire as contrary to the idea of a ‘social world’. IPA emphasises the importance of an individual’s subjective experience and the language they use to describe this (Willig, 2008).

### ***2.7.3 Questionnaires***

Parker (1994) suggested that contextualism, within a critical realist stance, allowed the logic and structure of social practices to be explored. Increasing the number of participants by use of a questionnaire enabled me to consider whether the perceptions of experiences shared by participants in stage one were reflected by others within the broader context.

Holtgraves (2004) raised the issue of social acceptability in relation to self-report measures. To encourage participants to provide a valid response, matters of confidentiality were emphasised (see ethical considerations).

As the statements used to formulate the questionnaire derived from data collected during stage one, issues of questionnaire validity and reliability were difficult to address. However, the questionnaire was piloted to ensure that wording was easy to understand and researcher details were provided with each copy in case participants wished to discuss the meaning of statements further.

#### ***2.7.4 Reflexivity***

Willig (2008) identified personal reflexivity as the need to consider how the researcher's own beliefs and experiences may have shaped the research process. In my current role as a Trainee Educational Psychologist, I have frequently found myself emphasising the importance of inclusion to the school staff I work with, particularly in relation to pupils presenting challenging behaviour. Throughout the research process, I was mindful that my own views around the appropriateness of disciplinary exclusion could influence the way I subsequently analysed and interpreted the data. I aimed to avoid potential researcher bias (Robson, 2002) by remaining open to the views expressed by staff in excluding schools, that exclusion may have some benefits for the school, pupil or family. I also remained aware that my own prior experience of the use of exclusion in one primary school may not be reflective of practices in other schools.

Epistemological reflexivity refers to the need to consider how the assumptions that have been made about knowledge and reality may impact on the research and its findings (Willig 2008). As previously highlighted, inductive thematic analysis was selected to fit with the critical realist stance I had adopted and, therefore, the concept of 'school ethos' arose from the data. By choosing this method of qualitative research, I was not attempting to determine a cause-effect relationship, but instead explore the representations of reality presented by those involved.

#### **2.8 Ethical considerations**

During the planning stages of the empirical research study, approval was gained from Newcastle University's Ethics Board.

The sensitive nature of school exclusion was highlighted when excluding schools were contacted to take part in stage one of the research project. In total, five excluding

schools were approached for involvement in focus group discussions and staff in two schools subsequently consented to only be involved in 1:1 interviews with the researcher as they expressed that school staff and governors were uncomfortable discussing this subject area. This was contrary to a potential benefit of focus group discussions in that a group discussion can provide a 'safer' environment for individuals who find 1:1 discussions threatening (Leong & Austin, 2006).

I received a similar reception when contacting schools regarding questionnaire distribution, though a number of non-excluding schools also declined involvement at this stage. It was interesting to see how the perception of the study altered after headteachers had an opportunity to review the statements included in the questionnaire. In one school the headteacher had agreed that she would complete the questionnaire personally but was reluctant to distribute it to staff. After viewing the questionnaire, she informed me that all staff in school had been happy to complete a copy and she would be interested to hear more about the key outcomes of the study. She also provided an overview of practices in the school, particularly in relation to individual pupils who had presented a challenge to the headteacher's inclusive agenda.

This led me to reflect that whilst the initial overview of the study may have been perceived as a critique of the schools' practices, the statements within the questionnaire were not considered to be threatening, perhaps in part because they had derived from focus group discussions and were, therefore, made by staff working in similar school contexts. This could be taken into consideration in future research, by sharing examples of statements with school staff during the initial request for participation in the study. The agenda of inclusion and the use of disciplinary exclusion is evidently an emotive issue and the response to my study may in some way reflect the pressures schools are placed under to address practices.

Careful considerations were also made throughout the data collection period to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of participants and to encourage open and honest responses. All email contact was made through individually composed messages to ensure that a list of addressees could not be viewed. Individual instructions asked participants to return sealed envelopes to the office where responses would be collated. Names were not requested; instead, each questionnaire contained a code to identify which school the response had come from. A self-addressed envelope was attached to

each copy of the questionnaire to emphasise that the information provided would not be seen by anyone else within the school.

## **2.9 Influence of the broader political context**

The inclusion of all pupils within mainstream education was a primary focus of the Labour Government and was emphasised through publications (e.g. DCSF 2010; DfEE, 1997). Agendas such as Every Child Matters (DfES, 2003) emphasised the importance of early intervention to affect positive change for children, young people and their families. Furthermore, pupils experiencing exclusion often have a history of behavioural difficulties at an early stage of school (Daniels *et al.*, 2003; Panayiotopoulos & Kerfoot, 2007). The shortage of literature in this area partly influenced my decision to explore the use of exclusions in primary schools.

2010 saw a significant change in political climate in England and Wales as the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition Government came into power. With it came an apparent shift in the message being delivered about inclusion, with the release of documents such as the schools White Paper (DfE, 2010) and the Special Educational Needs Green Paper (DfE, 2011), both of which indicated a considerable change in the message being delivered about inclusion of pupils in mainstream settings and the use of exclusion to manage challenging behaviour.

Parsons (2005) considered the influence of the political climate, outlining that punitive approaches traditionally taken within the UK are particularly evident within a conservative political climate. Parsons considered this contrary to a rights-based approach, seen in other countries with lower levels of disciplinary exclusion. It is currently unclear how the position taken by the Liberal Democrats will impact on the approaches taken, however even within a left-wing Labour government, the responsibility side of the rights-responsibility continuum was emphasised. Therefore, it appears that, within this country, the balance between rights and responsibilities should be redressed by placing less emphasis on instilling punishments in an attempt to force pupils to take responsibility. Instead, an increased respect between staff, pupils and parents would enable the rights of all to be considered, whilst also creating a climate that is more conducive to inclusion.

With the change in government has come an increased emphasis on the accountability of communities to manage their own challenges (or the 'Big Society' initiative), perhaps providing an opportunity for inclusive practices to continue to develop. Ainscow *et al.*



(2000) emphasised the need for schools to create a sense of ownership and flexibility around how challenges are managed and subsequently, how attainment is raised. Perhaps Parsons' (2005) suggestion of the need for a right-based approach (for example, the right of the child to attend a school in their local community) and the balance between punitive and restorative positions to be redressed could be realised.

## 2.10 References

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## 3.0 What elements of school ethos impact on primary school exclusion rates?

### 3.1 Abstract

**Background.** Disciplinary exclusion is a strategy used by some schools in response to challenging behaviour. Whilst some studies have explored interventions that can be implemented to reduce the exclusion of ‘at risk’ pupils, others have considered how the underlying school ethos influences how challenging behaviour is understood and managed.

**Aims.** The current study explored factors within school ethos that may influence how challenging behaviour is managed. It aimed to identify differences in school ethos between excluding and non-excluding primary and junior schools in areas with the highest rates of social deprivation.

**Method.** Three focus groups and two interviews were initially conducted to identify factors that staff believed to be relevant to the inclusion and exclusion of pupils. Focus groups and interviews explored staff perceptions of practices in school and beliefs about inclusion and exclusion. Inductive-semantic thematic analysis was performed to identify statements indicating a difference between excluding and non-excluding schools. Statements were used to create a questionnaire that was distributed to 16 schools and completed by 128 staff.

**Findings.** Thematic analysis identified 13 themes, 10 of which indicated a difference in view between excluding and non-excluding schools. Multivariate analysis of variance indicated significant differences in responses between groups on the themes of Responsibility, Clarity, Consistency, Behaviour Management, Beliefs about Inclusion and Beliefs about Reducing Exclusion. Further analysis also indicated greater consistency across responses from non-excluding school staff.

**Conclusion.** These findings provide support for previous literature emphasising the importance of some key features of school ethos in creating an inclusive environment.

## **3.2 Introduction**

Throughout this paper, ‘exclusion’ describes the formal process of disciplinary exclusion, where a pupil is officially removed from education on the school premises permanently or for a fixed period of time. Exclusion rates appeared to rise steadily throughout the 1990s (Parsons, 1996). A more standardised approach to collection of official exclusion statistics began in 2005/06, and, from this period, there has been a downward trend in the use of fixed term and permanent exclusions in England (DfE, 2010a); however, the number of Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and pupils registered at Special Schools and PRUs has increased (DfE, 2010b).

The accuracy of official statistics has been questioned. Stirling (1992) identified a range of ‘hidden’ practices such as unofficial exclusions (where the exclusion is not recorded), parents agreeing to withdraw the pupil and some pupils prompted to take absences from school. Decrease in exclusion rates may not indicate that schools are becoming better at including pupils presenting behavioural challenges. The DfE (2010a) attributed a decrease in permanent exclusions to increasing use of internal exclusion or managed moves, which could be considered as detrimental as official exclusions (Munn *et al.*, 2000)

Fluctuation in exclusion rates over time have been attributed to changes in policy and practice (Theriot, Craun & Dupper, 2010) regarding how disruptive behaviour should be managed (Jull, 2008). Reductions in resources, changes to Local Authority (LA) support services and increased workload have all been cited as reasons why rates of disciplinary exclusion have risen in the past (Blyth and Miner, 1993).

### ***3.2.1 Exclusion as a last resort***

The DCSF (2008) emphasised the use of permanent exclusion as a last resort in response to a serious breach of school policy or if the education or welfare of the pupil or others is at risk. However, the use of exclusion varies greatly between schools. The broad category of ‘persistent disruptive behaviour’ was most commonly identified as a reason for exclusion in 2008/09 (DfE, 2010a). An increased emphasis on children’s rights in the 1990s may have impacted on teachers’ willingness to physically restrain pupils acting violently (Blyth and Milner, 1993), however, in recent years, the battle to redress the balance between the rights of pupils and teachers has been evident (DCSF, 2009c; Education and Inspections Act, 2006).

### **3.2.2 Cost of exclusion**

Jull (2008) considered the potential advantages of exclusion, highlighting the impact of disruptive behaviour on other pupils, teachers, the whole school environment and the pupil demonstrating the behaviour. Jull also questioned whether time away from school could facilitate inclusion of the pupil in the long term. The consequences of exclusion for the individual and society can be far-reaching. For the pupil, school provides an opportunity to progress academically and develop skills required for social functioning (Jull, 2008). Whilst pupils excluded from school are entitled to an alternative education, this is organised at a cost to the LA and the frequency and efficiency with which this is provided can be problematic (Ofsted, 2009). The quality of alternative provision has also been questioned (Blyth and Milner, 1993). For the majority of permanently excluded pupils (85%), exclusion marks the end of formal education (Audit Commission, 1996).

Perhaps of greater concern is the long-term social exclusion these pupils may face. Blyth and Milner (1994) questioned the ability of socially excluded individuals to engage in decision making and contribute to their local community. Excluded pupils may be at increased risk of entering LA care (Bennathan, 1992) and are at greater risk of participation in juvenile crime (Prison Reform Trust, 2010). As a consequence, the financial cost to society can be high (Panayiotopoulos & Kerfoot, 2007).

### **3.2.3 Pupils 'at risk' of exclusion**

Some groups of pupils are at increased risk of disciplinary exclusion. Pupils identified as having special educational needs (DfE, 2010a), particularly those categorised as emotional or behavioural difficulties (EBD), share an increased risk of exclusion (Jull, 2008) which may be due in part to uncertainty amongst teaching staff as to how to effectively meet their needs (Jull, 2008).

Rates of social deprivation differ greatly throughout England. Economic wellbeing and difficulties associated with social deprivation (such as deteriorating home circumstances and lack of parental discipline) are factors suggested to place pupils at increased risk of exclusion (Macrae *et al.*, 2003; Parsons, 1999). Pupils eligible for free school meals were approximately three times more likely to be excluded in 2008/09 (DfE, 2010a). However, schools with similar pupil intakes often differ widely in levels of exclusion (Olser, 1997) and some schools in areas of high social deprivation have demonstrated

that through good practice, pupils can be engaged in the education process (DCSF, 2009a).

### ***3.2.4 Understanding behaviour***

Above average exclusions of particular groups of pupils may indicate a problem in how pupil behaviour has come to be conceptualised. Ainscow (2005) acknowledged that socioeconomic status can render pupils as problematic in the same way as a definition of SEN, highlighting how easily educational difficulties can be pathologised.

The SEN Code of Practice (DfES, 2001) describes possible indicators of an EBD as disruptive or withdrawn behaviour, severe difficulty concentrating, frustration or distress. Jull (2008) applied Fine's (1991) theory of poor goodness-of-fit and Sternberg's (1997) Triarchic Theory of Intelligence (TTI) to the issue of problematic behaviour in school, indicating only three behavioural options are available to an individual who does not feel well matched to their environment: alter beliefs regarding own needs, change the environment to better meet needs or withdraw from the environment.

Teacher attributions for difficulties can influence the way behaviour is managed. Whilst attributions can relate to factors within and outside of the school environment (Gibbs & Gardiner, 2008), attributions about the root cause are also often connected to factors beyond the teacher's control, such as parents (Miller, 1996), which may create a barrier to successful behaviour management (Miller *et al.*, 2002). Gibbs and Powell (2010) identified that teachers working within low excluding schools were less likely to attribute difficulties to external factors relating to socio-economic deprivation.

Stanovich and Jordan (1998) identified two key differences in teacher beliefs in relation to inclusion. Those with 'interventionist beliefs' (that all pupils could benefit from suitable teaching) demonstrated successful inclusive practice. In contrast, those identified as having 'pathognomonic beliefs' (attributing difficulties to a deficit within the child) demonstrated less inclusive practice. Jull (2008) warned that pathologising is an essential step in legitimising inaction or punitive responses, making it difficult to initiate an alternative approach. A poor understanding of difficult behaviour can lead to the use of a punitive approach where a pupil needs to be seen to be punished for their actions; exclusion could be considered to be one form of this.



Bandura's (1977) social learning theory suggested that whilst individuals learn through direct and observational experience, their ability to enact a desired behaviour is mediated by several factors, including motivation and self-efficacy (an individual's belief about their own capabilities of exercising control over events; Bandura, 1986). Although some teachers may profess a desire to become inclusive, they may lack the belief in their own skills to develop this practice (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002; Gibbs, 2007).

Studies have indicated that the views of the headteacher are fundamental in encouraging and predicting an inclusive approach (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002). Ainscow (2005) suggested that social learning processes are key to developing inclusive practices within a school. In addition, Miller (2003) suggested that the staff group as a whole could influence the beliefs and practices of teachers in relation to how successfully they are able to manage behaviour. This provides an indication of how the ethos of the school can influence the way behaviour is managed.

### ***3.2.5 Alternatives to exclusion***

The inclusion of pupils continues to present a challenge to some schools, and understanding different behaviours may be key to facilitating inclusion. Consideration will now be given as to how some schools have worked to include all pupils and minimise the use of disciplinary exclusion.

Head *et al.* (2003) explored the effects of employing a Behaviour Support Teacher (BST) in 21 secondary schools in one Scottish LA over a three year period. Each school chose how the BST would function. At the end of year one, small group work, 1:1 support outside of the classroom and co-operative teaching were the most frequent methods used to support young people identified as demonstrating social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Co-operative teaching was identified by participating staff as the most effective approach. The BST facilitated teachers to understand that a change in the delivery of the curriculum and teaching approach was required, emphasising that the difficulties did not lie within the pupil. Liaison with parents was also considered an effective method to reduce exclusion.

Turner and Waterhouse (2003) explored alternative strategies used to reduce exclusion and improve behaviour and academic success in two secondary schools. Strategies targeted individual pupils (through early identification, recognising individual needs and tailored support) and the whole school level (including encouraging communication

between staff across departments and an inclusive discourse). A Student Support Co-ordinator was employed by both schools to support individuals and work collaboratively with staff. Both schools were successful in reducing exclusions, despite different approaches being taken, illustrating that there appears to be a range of ways of successfully tackling challenges. In both schools, the change in ethos, away from punishment to a more diagnostic and supportive stance, was emphasised as most influential.

Some attempts to reduce exclusion do not necessarily indicate improved inclusivity; Harris *et al.* (2006) explored the practice of ‘managed moves’, identifying that a fresh start in a new setting enabled pupils to develop new peer and teacher relationships. However, the amount of time spent out of school due to delays in the change of setting and concerns regarding limited educational provision troubled parents and pupils. Furthermore, the Secondary Heads Association (SHA, 1992) identified an increasing disinclination amongst some headteachers to accept pupils excluded from other schools.

It appears schools that reduce exclusions without removing problematic pupils to different settings often attribute this success to a change in the ethos of the school. To minimise behaviours that are considered problematic, it is necessary to look beyond the child (Humphrey and Brooks, 2006) and consider reflexively altering the environment, curriculum and pedagogy to encourage better goodness-of-fit (Jull, 2008). Munn *et al.* (2000) concluded that changing the ethos of a school by altering the values and beliefs that underpin practices could be key to initiating a sustainable change in the use of exclusions.

### **3.2.6 School Ethos**

Munn *et al.* (2001) described school ethos as underpinning all practice, touching on ‘all aspects of a school’s operation’ and reflecting a ‘collective understanding of how things are done’ (p30). The ethos of the school influences inclusivity and the use of disciplinary exclusions (Cooper *et al.*, 2000).

Munn *et al.* (2000) explored school ethos as a means of preventing exclusions by gathering the perceptions of school staff, parents, pupils and education professionals (including Educational Psychologists) through interviews. The Scottish study paired high and low excluding schools and identified four key aspects of school ethos:

- *Beliefs about schools, teaching and pupils* - Lower excluding schools acknowledged the importance of personal and social development, professed to educate all pupils and stimulated pupil motivation and enjoyment of learning. Leadership was identified as a key influence on school effectiveness and discipline. Higher rates of exclusion were evident in schools with a narrower view on good academic achievement, and an understanding of acceptable pupils as those who were well behaved and from a home which supported the school.
- *The curriculum* –Lower excluding schools offered a flexible, differentiated and informal curriculum, including personal and social development. Higher excluding schools demonstrated a lack of differentiation and prioritised the academic curriculum over other aspects (such as personal and social development).
- *Relationships with parents* – Lower excluding schools spent time involving parents, whilst higher excluding schools expected parental support without question.
- *Decision making about exclusions* – In lower excluding schools, flexible systems informed by a number of staff were in place and pastoral support was seen as support for mainstream staff. In higher excluding schools, tariff systems led to automatic exclusions and pastoral support staff were expected to remove pupils at times of difficulty.

Sir Alan Steer (DCSF, 2009b) acknowledged the need for a change of ethos in his review of behavioural standards and practices in schools, acknowledging that ‘well disciplined schools create a whole school environment that is conducive to good discipline rather than reacting to particular incidents’ (p73). It appears that this can partly be achieved through flexible ways of working and acknowledging the positive influence pupils can have when they are invited to participate in decision making (Ainscow *et al.*, 2000; Munn *et al.*, 2000; Olser, 2000). The importance of the relationship between pupils, staff and parents was also highlighted (Munn *et al.*, 2000; Olser, 2000). Mayer (2001) identified that inconsistency in leadership, administrative structure and rules were some of the factors that contributed to the development of behaviour problems.

The influence and importance of factors within school ethos have been highlighted (Olser, 2000; Watkins and Wagner, 2000) and their effect on reducing exclusions and improving behaviour management acknowledged (Olser, 2000; Parsons, 2005). In

addition, factors outside school (such as the pupil's individual experience and family circumstances) should also be acknowledged (Munn *et al.*, 2000).

Cooper (1993) highlighted the importance of developing a *lived* ethos. Furthermore, experience within an inclusive school culture is vital for staff to be motivated to develop the practices required to successfully include all pupils (Miller, 2003).

Although a number of studies have explored the influence of school ethos, these have often involved a mix of primary and secondary schools and those ranging in socio-economic status. Although the risk of exclusion at secondary school is greater, Daniels *et al.* (2003) identified that many young people who had experienced permanent exclusion had experienced behavioural difficulties at an earlier age, indicating the need for a preventative approach.

### ***3.2.7 Current study***

The present study aimed to explore differences in school ethos between primary schools in areas with high levels of social deprivation with a view to identifying any differences in perceptions of school practices and attitudes to inclusion and exclusion. This was done by eliciting the views of primary school staff in relation to their beliefs about inclusion and exclusion and their perception of practices within the school environment. The study aimed to uncover how some schools manage behavioural challenges without the use of disciplinary exclusion, irrespective of the high socio-economic status of all schools involved.

## **3.3 Method**

### ***3.3.1 Overview of procedures***

The study consisted of two parts, utilising a mixed methods approach. Focus groups and unstructured interviews were conducted to explore factors within school ethos relating to inclusion and exclusion. The reflexive nature of the qualitative component (focus groups and unstructured interviews) supported the exploratory nature of the study. Themes were identified through inductive-semantic thematic analysis of the data; themes were then used to formulate a questionnaire. Distributed for completion by staff and governors in participating schools, the questionnaire asked participants to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with statements regarding beliefs and practices within school. Questionnaires are frequently used in psychological research to explore the perceptions and beliefs of individuals (Leong & Austin, 2006).

A critical realist perspective was adopted by the researcher, assuming that whilst the view of reality held may differ between participants, a reality exists which can be subjected to analysis and allows social phenomena to be explored (Danermark *et al.*, 2002). Within this, a contextual constructionist position was assumed, whereby the knowledge expressed by participants is understood to be local, provisional and context dependent (Jaeger & Rosnow, 1988). A mixed methods approach fits well with this stance as triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data can attempt to provide a fuller picture (Fielding and Fielding, 1986).

### ***3.3.2 Sample***

The research took place in a large county in the North of England, involving schools from both rural and urban areas. The 20 most socio-economically deprived primary and junior schools were identified based on data formulated by the national Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD; obtained through the County Council). A number of domains across the key areas of employment, health, education and income and weights are applied to provide an overall ranking.

Exclusion data was obtained to identify if a school formally excluded a pupil on at least one occasion during the academic year 2009-2010 and schools were subsequently coded as excluding or non-excluding. The mean rate of fixed-term exclusions across excluding schools was 6.2 instances (no participating schools had permanently excluded during the targeted academic year).

### ***3.3.3 Focus groups and interviews***

For part one of the study, headteachers from six of the 20 most deprived primary and junior schools were approached for participation. Of these, five (from three excluding and two non-excluding schools) consented to form a focus group comprising school staff and governors. The EP from each school was contacted to verify whether practices in the school reflected official exclusion data (in an attempt to overcome the issue of unofficial exclusionary practices). After commencing data collection, two excluding schools reported that only the deputy headteacher in each school was willing to participate. Although this had implications for data collected during stage one (see limitations of study), it was too late to change the method of data collection to maintain consistency across schools and alternative schools approached were unwilling to take part. Therefore, unstructured interviews were agreed as an alternative.

Participants across schools consisted of an opportunity sample of staff and governors (involvement was on a voluntary basis). Table 2.1 provides a summary of the schools and participants involved in stage one.

School	No. Pupils on Roll (approx.)	Excluding/ Non-excluding	Participants
School 1	50	Non-excluding	Headteacher, Governor, Teaching Assistant
School 2	200	Excluding	Member of SMT, Teaching Assistant, Home School Support Worker, Parent
School 3	200	Excluding	Deputy Headteacher
School 4	300	Excluding	Assistant Headteacher
School 5	250	Non-excluding	Headteacher, Teacher

**Table 2.1 Characteristics of schools and participants involved in stage one**

### ***3.3.4 Procedure***

Participants were briefed on the aims. Written consent was obtained following approval of all ethical considerations that had been made, ensuring confidentiality and the right to withdraw from discussion at anytime.

After outlining the research question, participants were asked to share their views about inclusion, making reference to practices within school. A non-directive approach was chosen to encourage participants to share their own experiences (Willig, 2008). Paper and pens were provided to aide discussion if required by participants although these were not used. Discussions were recorded using a Dictaphone.

### ***3.3.5 Analysis***

Recordings were transcribed and analysed using inductive semantic thematic analysis. This method was chosen as the process did not attempt to identify pre-existing themes but instead sought meaning across the whole data set (see Braun and Clarke, 2006). Although meaning was determined from the data without reference to prior research, it was acknowledged that data would be interpreted by the researcher in relation to the question being explored (Willig, 2008).

Thirteen themes were subsequently identified and organised into different elements of school ethos (see Appendix A). Table 2.2 provides an overview of the views expressed by staff from excluding and non-excluding schools in relation to each theme.

**Table 2.2 Views expressed by staff in relation to each theme**

Theme	Non-Excluding School	Excluding School
<b>Clarity</b>	<p>Children understand the behaviour that will result in a sanction or a reward.</p> <p>Staff have a clear understanding of the approach taken to manage behaviour in this school.</p>	<p>The behaviour policy is made up of a complex system of rewards and sanctions.</p>
<b>Behaviour Management Strategies</b>	<p>A whole school approach is taken to behaviour management.</p> <p>Rewards are used much more frequently than sanctions.</p>	<p>The use of pastoral support systems for managing behavioural challenges is emphasised.</p> <p>1:1 support is used where possible.</p> <p>Strategies vary and are often aimed at the individual child.</p> <p>Sanctions and rewards are used equally.</p>
<b>Social Vs Academic Goals</b>	<p>Hard work, determination and effort are valued, regardless of academic progress.</p> <p>Emphasis is placed on social skills/ behaviour over academic achievement.</p> <p>The small steps are recognised over the end result.</p>	<p>Academic achievement and social behaviours are given equal attention.</p>
<b>Relationships with Parents</b>	<p>Parental approval of policies and practices is not considered to be of great importance.</p> <p>The needs of the pupils are prioritised over the views of parents.</p>	<p>Parental approval of the behaviour policy is very important.</p> <p>Attempts are made to involve parents in decision making.</p>
<b>Respect</b>	<p>Staff and pupils are viewed as equal partners.</p> <p>Honesty is recognised and valued.</p>	<p>Pupils are expected to respect staff</p>



<b>Responsibility</b>	<p>Staff take responsibility for all pupils in school (not just those in their own class).</p> <p>Pupils understand that they have a responsibility for their school and community.</p>	<p>Staff are responsible for only the class/ group of children that they work with.</p>
<b>Consistency</b>	<p>The behaviour policy is implemented consistently by all staff.</p> <p>Staff address challenges consistently.</p> <p>Sanctions and strategies are consistent throughout school</p>	<p>A wide variety of strategies and sanctions are used throughout school, with no consistency between staff or classrooms.</p>
<b>Beliefs about Inclusion</b>	<p>The needs of all children can be met in this school environment.</p> <p>Pupils are taught to understand that all children have different needs.</p> <p>Staff views about inclusion are consistent – staff who do not share our beliefs tend to move on.</p>	<p>The needs of some children would be better met in a specialist provision.</p> <p>BESD and learning needs are viewed differently.</p>
<b>Benefits of Exclusion</b>	<p>Exclusion has no benefits for the child.</p>	<p>Exclusion is a useful strategy for some pupils.</p> <p>Exclusion encourages parents and pupils to take responsibility.</p> <p>Exclusion provides a clear signal to the authority that further support is needed.</p>
<b>Resources to Reduce Exclusion</b>	<p>Additional resources and support would not reduce exclusion – the skills and resources of staff within school prevent behaviour from reaching a point where exclusion would be required.</p>	<p>More resources would reduce the use of exclusion.</p> <p>More support from external agencies would reduce exclusion.</p>
<b>Creativity</b>	<p>Staff are creative in the way they overcome challenges.</p>	

<b>Commitment</b>	Staff do 'over and above' to meet pupil needs.
<b>Acknowledgement of Contextual Factors</b>	Staff compensate for deprivation in the child's home life (both in terms of physical objects and in providing nurture).

### 3.3.6 Questionnaire

For stage two, a questionnaire was created reflecting 10 themes and consisting of 27 statements (The questionnaire can be found in Appendix B). As suggested by Leong & Austin (2006), the three themes eliciting no differences between groups were not included in the questionnaire. Table 2.3 provides an overview of how statements were organised into themes.

The number of statements reflecting each theme varied based on the amount of information obtained through focus group discussion. For example, within the theme identified as ‘clarity’, focus group participants made reference to four elements of this (staffs’ understanding of the behaviour policy and pupils’ understanding rewards, sanctions and rules), whilst within the theme of ‘responsibility’, reference was only made to one element (the degree of responsibility taken by teachers for pupil behaviour). Where possible, statements were taken directly from interview and focus group transcriptions to improve face validity (Patton, 2002) and demonstrate interpretive rigor (Rice & Ezzy,1999).

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Item</b>
Consistency	1-4
Clarity	5-8
Beliefs about exclusion	9-12
Relationship with parents	13-14
Respect (between staff and pupils)	15-16
Beliefs about inclusion	17-18
Behaviour management strategies	19-21
Responsibility	22
Recognition of achievement	23-24
Beliefs about reducing exclusions	25-27

**Table 2.3 Organisation of statements within the questionnaire**

Participants were asked to rate each statement on a four-point Likert-type scale: 1= Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree and 4 = Strongly agree. Likert-type scales

with no mid-point have been shown to reduce social-desirability bias (Garland, 1991) and have often been used within this general area of research (for example, Miller *et al.*, 2002). Scores at the higher end of the scale indicated the views and practices expressed by staff from non-excluding schools (e.g. ‘we can find a way to meet the needs of all children in this environment’) and were, therefore, considered to indicate a more inclusive school ethos (although the drawbacks of this assumption are given further consideration later in this paper). 15 statements were reversed to state the viewpoint expressed by staff from excluding schools (for example, ‘Pupils do not know the school rules’) to reduce possible bias through response acquiescence and to make the meaning of statements clearer. The scoring for these statements was also reversed (for example, 1 = strongly agree).

Questionnaires were coded to allow the researcher to identify whether the response had come from an excluding or non-excluding school. The position of the member of staff in school was also requested to aide analysis. Issues of questionnaire validity and reliability were considered.

The questionnaire was piloted with four members of staff in a primary school not involved in the study. Amendments were made based on feedback relating to the wording of some items.

### ***3.3.7 Administration***

16 of the 20 Headteachers approached agreed that questionnaires could be distributed to staff within the school. Headteachers were provided with a written overview of the study and each copy of the questionnaire included an overview of the study, instructions and ethical considerations. A self-sealing envelope was also provided with each individual questionnaire to encourage an honest response. Confidentiality and anonymity were emphasised to encourage honesty and reduce reporting of socially acceptable answers (Holtgraves, 2004).

### ***3.3.8 Response and analysis***

410 questionnaires were distributed (the number of staff and governors was estimated by the researcher based on number of pupils on roll) and a response rate of 31.5% (n=128) was achieved, n=36 (28%) from non-excluding schools and n=92 (72%) from excluding schools. Although headteachers were invited to distribute the questionnaire to all school staff and governors, no responses were returned by governors who did not work within the school. Some staff held a dual role of governor and teacher, teaching

assistant, or senior management. These were subsequently coded with the role the participant held in school. Responses were also obtained from two members of the administration team and one Home- School Support Worker (HSSW).

### 3.4 Findings

Questionnaire responses were analysed to answer the following:

- *Was there a significant difference between groups (excluding and non excluding schools) in response to themes?*
- *Did any statements elicit significant differences in levels of agreement and disagreement from excluding and non-excluding school staff?*
- *Within groups (excluding or non-excluding), how consistent were responses across staff in different roles in school?*

#### 3.4.1 Significant differences between groups

Scrutiny of the raw data indicated the data were reasonably ('normally') distributed with no outliers. Multivariate analysis of variance was applied to identify any significant differences between groups across themes. Pillai's Trace identified a significant difference in responses to themes between groups,  $V=0.29$ ,  $F(10,73) = 2.92$ ,  $p<.004$ . (See Appendix C for technical note).

Since each of the 10 themes contained varying numbers of statements, scores for each theme were converted to proportions of their maximum to allow comparison between groups. A significant difference was found between groups for six themes (Table 2.4).

Theme	F	Sig.	Mean Scores (standard deviation)	
			Non-Excluding	Excluding
Responsibility	13.12	.001	.91 (.122)	.77 (.162)
Clarity	11.06	.001	.92 (.117)	.80 (.152)
Beliefs about Reducing Exclusion	9.66	.003	.68 (.153)	.56 (.138)
Beliefs about Inclusion	7.11	.009	.73 (.178)	.62 (.156)
Consistency	5.55	.021	.74 (.125)	.66 (.136)
Behaviour Management	4.34	.040	.75 (.072)	.70 (.098)

**Table 2.4 Themes indicating a significant difference in responses between groups**

#### 3.4.2 Significant differences in levels of agreement and disagreement

To identify themes and statements eliciting contrasting views between groups, scores were pooled to demonstrate levels of agreement or disagreement by combining

responses of agree and strongly agree, and disagree and strongly disagree. Chi-square analysis indicated significant differences between excluding and non-excluding school staff in relation to 8 statements (see Table 2.5). Although the results indicated that for three statements, 25% of cells had a value of less than 5, the Fisher's exact test indicated that the difference remained significant despite this.

**Table 2.5 Percentages of agreement and disagreement between Non-excluding and Excluding Schools.**

Theme	Asymp. Sig	% Cells count<5	Fisher's Exact	Statement	Non-excluding		Excluding	
					Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
Consistency	.001	0	.000	Each member of staff is consistent in the way they manage pupil behaviour.	97%	3%	30%	70%
Clarity	.000	0	.000	There is a clear behaviour policy, understood by all staff.	100%	0%	72%	28%
	.030	25.0	.033	Pupils have a clear understanding of the behaviour that will result in a sanction.	100%	0%	85%	15%
	.030	25.0	.033	Pupils have a clear understanding of the behaviour that will result in a reward.	100%	0%	88%	12%
Beliefs about Inclusion	.025	0	0.37	We can find a way to meet the needs of all children in this environment.	94%	6%	77%	23%
Responsibility	.036	25.0	0.40	Teachers take responsibility for the behaviour of all pupils in school (not just those in their class).	97%	3%	82%	18%
Beliefs about Reducing exclusion	.000	0	0.00	We would have fewer disciplinary exclusions if we received more funding.	18%	82%	63%	17%
	.012	0	0.16	1:1 support is the most effective way of reducing the frequency of disciplinary exclusions.	36%	64%	62%	38%



Table 2.5 demonstrates that the greatest contrast in views between groups related to statements within the themes of ‘consistency’ and ‘beliefs about reducing exclusions’.

### **3.4.3 Consistency within groups**

Consideration was then given to the consistency of responses within the groups of excluding and non-excluding schools. The theme ‘clarity’ achieved the most consistency in responses from non-excluding schools, with 3 statements achieving 100% agreement and one statement receiving 97% disagreement. No statements elicited this level of consistency in responses from excluding schools.

Standard deviation scores also indicated less deviation in responses from non-excluding schools for four out of the six significant themes (see Table 2.4).

Within groups, chi-square tests were used to identify significant differences in responses from teachers, TAs and SMT members. In non-excluding schools, no significant differences were identified between responses from staff in different roles. Analysis of responses from staff in excluding schools identified a significant difference in views relating to one statement (Table 2.6). However, due to a number of missing responses to individual items, caution should be taken when considering the significance of findings produced through chi-square analysis.

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Statement</b>	<b>Asymp. sig</b>	<b>% Cells count&lt;5</b>	<b>Fisher’s exact</b>
Behaviour Management	Positive behaviour management strategies are used much more frequently than sanctions	.020	44.4	.026

**Table 2.6 Statements eliciting significant differences in responses from staff in different roles in excluding schools**

Summarising the findings, significant differences were found between responses from staff in excluding and non-excluding schools in relation to six themes. Responses from staff in non-excluding schools appeared more consistent than those from staff in excluding schools. The discussion will now give further consideration to how these findings relate to prior research and findings from stage one.

### **3.5 Discussion**

LA statistics demonstrated that schools within areas of high social-deprivation differed widely in the use of exclusion, consistent with Olser (1997) and the DCSF (2009a). Interview data indicated that within these schools, there were similarities in views relating to the influence of contextual factors (such as the need to compensate for the low income in some households by providing equipment and paying for school trips), and the commitment and creativity of staff. These similarities provide support for the critical realist stance taken by illustrating how the broader social context (such as the high level of social deprivation experienced in the communities of all participating schools) may influence an individual's interpretation of the 'reality' they are experiencing (Danermark *et al.*, 2002).

Qualitative data also demonstrated differences between the views expressed by staff, parents and governors from excluding and non-excluding schools. Differences related to elements of school ethos, including perception of school practices and beliefs about inclusion and exclusion. The subsequent questionnaire data reflected the views of school staff only, and identified significant differences between groups in response to six themes. Furthermore, mean scores (Table 2.4) indicated that, on average, responses to these themes from non-excluding schools were higher in score than those from excluding schools, indicating consistency with the more 'inclusive' views expressed by staff in non-excluding schools during stage one of the research. Non-excluding school staff were also the only group to achieve 100% agreement in response to a number of statements, providing an indication that the 'professed' and 'lived' ethos may be closely related (the importance of which was highlighted by Cooper, 1993). The difference in views will now be given further consideration.

#### ***3.5.1 School practices***

##### *Clarity and Consistency*

Thematic analysis indicated that staff in excluding schools believed that staff and pupils did not all have a clear understanding of the behaviour policy and that a consistent approach was not taken to the management of behaviour by staff throughout school. Within non-excluding schools, the behaviour policy was considered to be clear to staff and pupils and there was consistency throughout school in the way behaviour was managed. Questionnaire responses also indicated highly significant differences between excluding and non-excluding schools in this respect. The theme 'clarity' received the

highest rates of agreement in responses from non-excluding schools. Within ‘clarity’ and ‘consistency’, there was also a significant difference between levels of agreement and disagreement across groups. These findings support DCSF recommendations (2009b) that behaviour management strategies and policies should be transparent (understood by staff and pupils) and applied consistently throughout school. Findings provide evidence that these practices enable some schools to manage behaviour without the use of exclusion.

### *Responsibility*

Differences in views expressed in stage one centred on the sense of responsibility teachers had for pupils in school. Whilst staff in excluding schools took responsibility for a particular group of pupils, non-excluding school staff emphasised the importance of overseeing the behaviour of all pupils. The corresponding questionnaire statement elicited highly significant differences in responses between groups. The importance of teamwork and cooperation at a whole school level has been highlighted (DCSF, 2009b). Current findings provide further evidence that a sense of shared responsibility within the school community can foster an inclusive school ethos where the need for exclusion does not arise.

### *Behaviour Management Strategies*

Thematic analysis identified a difference between groups in schools’ use of strategies (whole school Vs individual pupil) and the emphasis placed on rewards or sanctions. Whilst staff from excluding schools described a range of strategies, often aimed at individual pupils, non-excluding school staff placed greater emphasis on preventative strategies implemented at whole school level. A significant difference between groups was also noted in questionnaire responses. In non-excluding schools, staff reported using rewards more frequently than sanctions, whilst in excluding schools, sanctions and rewards were given equal attention. Turner and Waterhouse (2003) found that strategies targeted at the level of the whole school and/or individual pupils contributed to lower exclusion rates, indicating that schools can improve inclusive practices by implementing strategies at a number of levels, whilst also giving attention to the preventative steps that can be implemented (for example, frequently rewarding good behaviour to prevent the emergence of problematic behaviours).

### *Social and Academic Goals*

Qualitative and quantitative data appeared to indicate that views about the recognition of social and academic achievement were mixed across excluding and non-excluding schools and no significant differences between groups were identified.

In non-excluding schools, there also appeared to be a contrast between the views of the SMT (64% disagreed) and those of teachers and TAs (75% agreed) about rewarding social behaviours more frequently than academic achievement. This may indicate that members of the SMT are more aware of national pressures to maintain a focus on academic achievement. Munn *et al.* (2000) highlighted a tension between attempts to be inclusive and to raise academic achievement and identified that often, low excluding schools prioritised the education of all pupils over high expectations for academic achievement and behaviour.

### *Relationships and Respect*

Thematic analysis identified that the importance of relationships with parents differed between groups. Whilst excluding schools highlighted the importance of relationships with parents, non-excluding schools did not consider this to be paramount. This contrasted with one of the four key aspects of school ethos identified by Munn *et al.* (2000) as being important for inclusion.

Gibbs and Gardiner (2008) and Miller (1996) identified that teachers' causal attributions for behaviour often related to external factors, which could result in a sense of absolved responsibility. Findings of the current study could indicate that staff in non-excluding schools were less inclined to attribute difficulties to factors beyond their control and instead work to be inclusive despite challenges that could arise from working with families in areas of high social-deprivation (consistent with Gibbs & Powell, 2010).

The majority of staff in both groups agreed that 'Staff treat pupils with respect' and that 'Pupil views were taken into consideration'. This appears to indicate that the importance of pupil participation (as been highlighted Ainscow *et al.*, 2000, Munn *et al.*, 2000 & Olser, 2000) has been embraced by participating schools.

### **3.5.2 Staff beliefs**

#### *Inclusion*

Thematic analysis identified a clear difference in views about the inclusion of pupils with a range of needs. Non-excluding school staff described the need to consider

behavioural difficulties in the same way as learning difficulties and were confident in their ability to meet the needs of all pupils. Conversely, staff from excluding schools believed the high level of need demonstrated by some pupils could only be effectively met by placement in specialist provision.

Questionnaire responses indicated that significantly more staff from non-excluding schools agreed that the needs of all children could be met within their mainstream setting. This is consistent with research by Stanovich and Jordan (1998) and may provide some support for the findings of Jordan and Stanovich (2003) in relation to the 'pathognomonic beliefs' of some teachers.

Within this theme, it was evident that the views expressed by staff did not always appear to be consistent with practices in the school. In responses from excluding schools, 100% of SMT and the majority of teachers and TAs agreed that the needs of all children could be met in their school environment; however their exclusion statistics appeared to contradict this. This may provide an indication of how a difference in professed and lived ethos can be observed (as highlighted by Cooper, 1993).

### *Exclusion*

Thematic analysis identified a difference in views regarding the potential benefits of exclusion, with excluding schools describing a range of reasons why exclusion may be needed at times. Contrary to this, non-excluding schools expressed doubt about any benefits of exclusion. Quantitative data produced no significant differences between groups in this area and the responses of staff in non-excluding schools were mixed. Whilst the majority of TAs and SMT members agreed that exclusion was an effective strategy to manage behavioural challenges, 55% of teachers disagreed. This outcome was unexpected as it would be reasonable to anticipate that members of the SMT were involved in the decision not to exclude pupils. Staff views of the possible advantages of exclusion may be related to the way in which behavioural difficulties have come to be understood (Jull, 2008, highlighted the issue of poor goodness-fit).

### *Reducing Exclusion*

There was a significant difference in questionnaire responses from excluding and non-excluding schools in relation to this theme. Staff from excluding schools viewed funding and 1:1 support as an important way of overcoming the use of exclusion, whilst the majority of non-excluding school staff disagreed with these statements.

### ***3.5.3 Consistency of response***

Quantitative data indicated that responses from staff in non-excluding schools were more consistent than those from excluding schools. Qualitative data provided some indication of why this might be, as non-excluding school staff highlighted that staff who did not have similar views about inclusion and the approaches taken in school often moved on (paradoxical to the inclusive agenda delivered to pupils).

Stanovich and Jordan (2004) highlighted the importance of resources and support for developing a positive efficacy about inclusion. Miller (2003) also highlighted the importance of experience in an inclusive environment to develop inclusive practices. This has implications for staff working in excluding schools in terms of the lack of opportunity to develop skills to improve inclusive practices.

### ***3.5.4 Limitations of current study***

A number of factors beyond the control of the researcher may have influenced conclusions drawn from the data collected, including changes within the SMT of some participating schools between the period that exclusion figures were released and data was collected. Therefore it is possible that the views of these staff may not have been reflective of the ethos of the school at the time that they were identified as excluding or non-excluding.

The inconsistency in methods of data collection should also be highlighted as a result of staff from excluding schools being reluctant to participate in focus group discussions. However attempts were made to overcome this difficulty by identifying an appropriate alternative method.

Some schools identified as 'excluding' had as few as two exclusions recorded by the LA. Vulliamy and Webb (2001) also highlighted the practice of 'hidden exclusions' and the risk of using 'official' figures to determine how inclusive or exclusive a schools practice is.

The number of pupils on roll at each school varied greatly and as a result participating schools contrasted greatly in size. Therefore caution should be taken in attempts to generalise findings.

## **3.6 Conclusion**

Harris *et al.*, (2006) found that pupils demonstrating social, emotional and behavioural difficulties often pose the greatest challenge to inclusion. Furthermore, schools within

areas of high social deprivation appear to have the most difficulty managing challenges without the use of exclusion. It is likely that a wide range of factors within and outside of school impact on how some schools are able to manage pupil behaviour without the use of exclusion. Nonetheless, this research provides an indication that some primary schools within areas of high social deprivation are successful at including pupils with a range of needs and that some elements of school ethos, may influence how well the goal of inclusion is achieved.

### ***3.6.1 Implications***

The outcomes of this research appear to indicate that schools that are successful in managing pupil behaviour without the use of disciplinary exclusion pertain to have a number of common practices.

In line with the Steer report (DCSF, ), non-excluding schools are:

- Develop a school culture in which positive behaviour is celebrated and challenging behaviours are not given an opportunity to develop and thrive
- Rewards are used more frequently than sanctions

Furthermore, the staff who work within these schools

Educational Psychologists (EPs) are well placed to encourage change at a systems level by supporting school management teams to write and review policies for inclusion and behaviour. EPs can also provide training to staff throughout school to promote a better understanding of behaviour and support the development of inclusive practices.

### ***3.6.2 Future considerations***

In light of the recent review of legislation governing schools, further research should explore the impact this has on the effectiveness of practices in schools. The influence of the pressures of national expectations for academic achievement should also be considered. Research in this area could also be further developed by taking pupil views into account.

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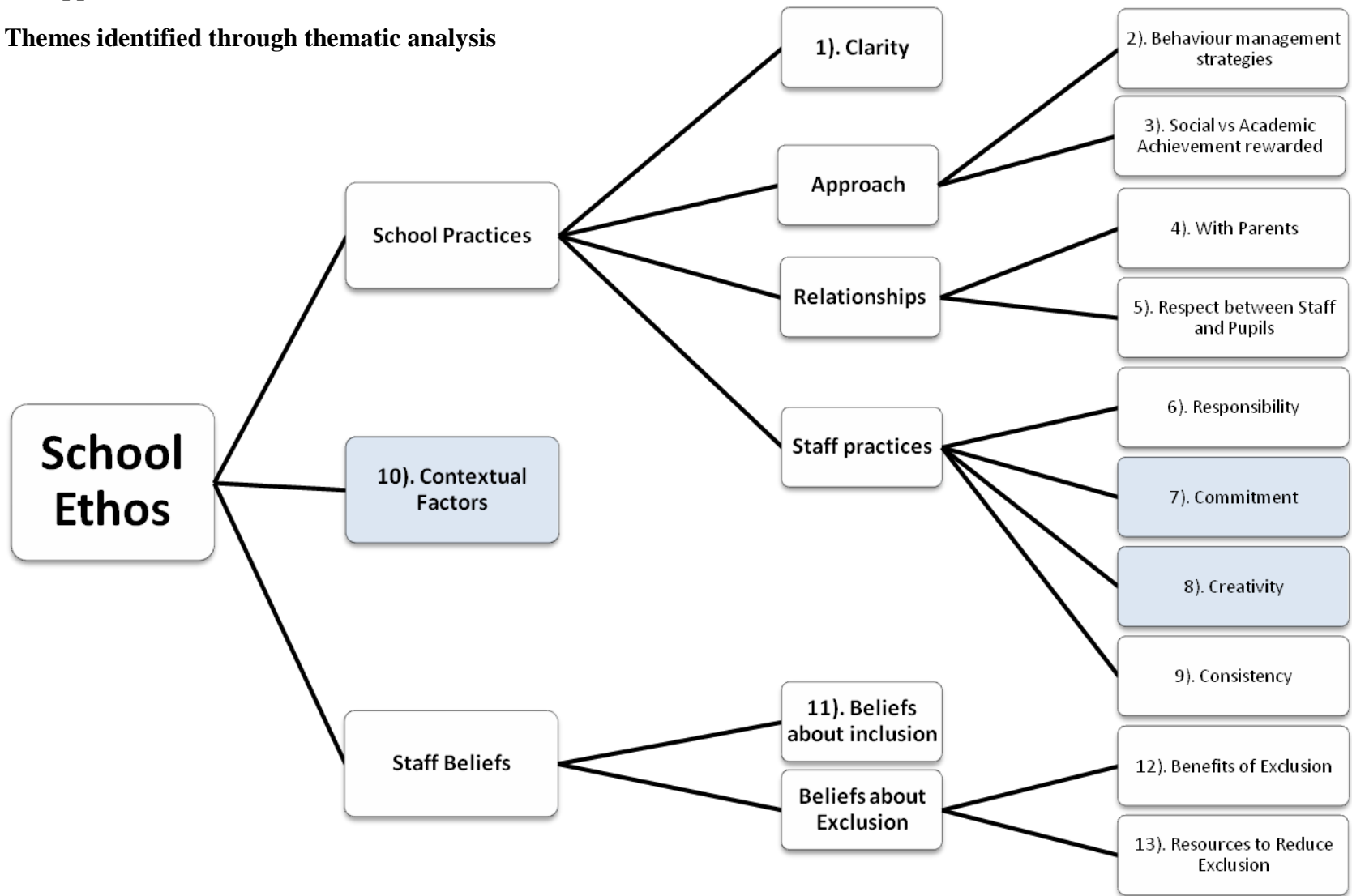
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3.8 Appendix A.

Themes identified through thematic analysis



(Highlighted boxes indicate themes where no differences were elicited between excluding and non-excluding schools)

### 3.9 Appendix B

## Exploring School Ethos

**I am a (tick more than one if appropriate):**

Teacher       Teaching Assistant       Member of Senior Management Team   
 Governor       Admin team       Other role (*please state*) \_\_\_\_\_

<i><b>In this school.....</b></i>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
1. Each member of staff is consistent in the way they manage pupil behaviour (in both recognition of good behaviour and discipline of challenging behaviour).				
2. Staff throughout school respond to pupil behaviour in the same way.				
3. There are different reward systems in each classroom.				
4. Expectations for how pupils should behaviour are quite different for each individual member of staff				
5. There is a clear behaviour policy, understood by all staff.				
6. Pupils have a clear understanding of the behaviour that will result in a sanction.				
7. Pupils have a clear understanding of the behaviour that will result in a reward.				
8. Pupils DO NOT know the school rules.				
9. Disciplinary exclusion encourages parents to take responsibility for their child.				
10. Disciplinary exclusion teaches the pupil that there are consequences for their actions.				
11. Disciplinary exclusion is an effective strategy to address behavioural challenges.				

12. Disciplinary exclusion provides a clear signal to the LA that further support is needed.				
13. The behaviour policy was developed in collaboration with parents.				
14. Parental approval of our behaviour policy is paramount.				
15. Staff treat pupils with respect.				
16. Pupils' views are taken into consideration when decisions are made in school.				
17. We can find a way to meet the needs of all children in this environment.				
18. The needs of some of our pupils would be better met in a specialist setting.				
19. Strategies to improve pupil behaviour are targeted at a whole school level.				
20. Strategies to improve pupil behaviour are targeted at individual pupils.				
21. Positive behaviour management strategies are used much more frequently than sanctions.				
22. Teachers take responsibility for the behaviour of all pupils in school (not just those in their class).				
23. Social behaviours are rewarded/ recognised more frequently than academic achievement.				
24. Social behaviours and academic achievement are given equal attention.				
25. We would have fewer disciplinary exclusions if we received more funding.				
26. 1:1 support is the most effective way of reducing the frequency of disciplinary exclusions.				
27. Multi-agency support reduces the number of disciplinary exclusions.				

***Thank you for your participation!***

Please return your sealed envelope to the school office.



### **3.10 Appendix C**

The data gathered through use of a questionnaire is categorised as ordinal data due to the use of a Likert Scale. Whilst Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) is a parametric test there is no equivalent non-parametric test suitable for the type of data collected in this study, therefore the researcher determined MANOVA analysis to be a reasonable alternative.